

SIR THOMAS HENRY HALL CAINE, DRAMATIST,
WITH A SPECIAL STUDY OF *MAHOMET* (1890)
AND ITS CONTEXTS

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester

by

Kristan Tetens
School of English
University of Leicester

2015

Abstract

SIR THOMAS HENRY HALL CAINE, DRAMATIST, WITH A SPECIAL STUDY OF *MAHOMET* (1890) AND ITS CONTEXTS

Kristan Tetens

Sir (Thomas Henry) Hall Caine (1853–1931), one of the most popular authors of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, is all but forgotten now, his once widely read novels dismissed by modern critics and readers for their turgid prose, implausible plots, and didactic tone. Yet he was a literary celebrity during his lifetime: over a career spanning four decades, Caine wrote fifteen novels that grappled with the explosive subjects of adultery, divorce, domestic violence, illegitimacy, infanticide, religious bigotry, and women's rights. Each sold hundreds of thousands of copies, ran to multiple editions, and was translated into dozens of languages.

Caine was also one of the most commercially successful dramatists of his generation. He wrote theatrical adaptations of seven of his novels as well as plays on original subjects that were perfectly pitched to the popular taste of his day.

Part I is the first comprehensive survey of Caine's writing for the stage and his collaborations with leading actors and managers, including Wilson Barrett, Viola Allen, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Louis Napoleon Parker, Mrs Patrick Campbell, George Alexander, and Arthur Collins. It challenges the undeserved obscurity into which Caine's plays have fallen, correcting and extending the cursory treatment they have received to date. Caine emerges as a major dramatist whose work complicates long-accepted distinctions between 'romance' and 'realism' as generic categories.

Part II is the first detailed study of Caine's *Mahomet*, a four-act historical drama based on the life of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, written in 1890 for the actor-manager Henry Irving. The rumour this play would be produced in London prompted protests from Muslim leaders in Britain, caused unrest that threatened British rule in parts of India, and strained the nation's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. Although the play treats Muhammad sympathetically and Islam with respect, it was immediately banned by the Lord Chamberlain in his capacity as licenser of stage plays. This part of the thesis situates *Mahomet* within its political and religious contexts at a specific moment in British imperial history.

For my grandfather, Wayne W. Elliott (1918–1985)

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield...

[...] It shall be lawful for the Lord Chamberlain [...] whenever he shall be of opinion that it is fitting for the Preservation of good Manners, Decorum, or of the public Peace so to do, to forbid the acting or presenting any Stage Play, or any Act, Scene, or Part thereof, or any Prologue or Epilogue, or any Part thereof, anywhere in Great Britain, or in such Theatres as he shall specify, and either absolutely or for such Time as he shall think fit.

– *An Act for Regulating Theatres 1843 (6 & 7 Vict cap 68)*

I think censorship is a very wise and necessary thing; most reasonable, I think.

– *Henry Irving, testimony before the House of Commons Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment, 4 April 1892*

I plead with you, then, to grant liberty to us who are novelists and dramatists to deal with whatever political or religious subjects come into touch with man's moral life. Don't cripple us; don't ask us to let the intellectual activities of the age pass us by. If the great religious public, which has so long stood aloof from the theatre and given the novel a wide berth, are now coming timidly to the one, and are nervously picking up the other, let them be prepared to find their own world there, themselves there, the thoughts and temptations of their lives there [...] This is the condition that is coming. I see it in the near future. We shall not be deep in the twentieth century before religious subjects will be reverently treated on the stage.

– *Hall Caine, 'Moral Responsibility in the Novel and the Drama', an address to the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, 7 November 1894*

Contents

List of Illustrations	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Part I: Hall Caine, Dramatist	
Chapter 1: Dramatic Criticism, 1872–88	24
Chapter 2: Plays before <i>Mahomet</i> , 1872–89	40
Chapter 3: Hall Caine and Henry Irving, 1890	54
Chapter 4: Plays after <i>Mahomet</i> , 1891–1918	65
Part II: <i>Mahomet</i>: Religion, Empire, and Dramatic Censorship in Late-Victorian Britain	
Chapter 1: Composition	102
Bornier's <i>Mahomet</i>	103
Caine's <i>Mahomet</i>	108
Bornier's <i>Mahomet</i> : Controversy in Paris	115
Caine's <i>Mahomet</i> : Synopsis and Analysis	123
<i>Mahomet</i> and Theatrical Orientalism	146
<i>Mahomet</i> and the 'Unrepresentable'	156
Chapter 2: Controversy	173
Chapter 3: Consequences	201
Conclusion	223
Appendix: Hall Caine's Plays: A Handlist	227
Bibliography	234

List of Illustrations

1. (Thomas Henry) Hall Caine	7
2. Henry Irving	15
3. Hall Caine in his study at Hawthorns, Keswick	113
4. Manuscript page from <i>Mahomet</i>	124
5. Abdul Luteef	178
6. Rafiüddin Ahmad	183
7. William Henry (Abdullah) Quilliam	190
8. Sultan Abdülhamid II	194
9. Edward Bootle-Wilbraham, 1st Earl of Lathom	197

Illustrations 1, 2, and 9 are reproduced by permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London; Illustrations 3 and 4 are reproduced by permission of Manx National Heritage, Douglas; Illustrations 5, 6, 7, and 8 are from the author's collection and are no longer in copyright.

Acknowledgements

It gives me tremendous pleasure to acknowledge all those who have assisted me in various ways with this thesis. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Richard Foulkes, emeritus professor of theatre history in the School of English at the University of Leicester, who agreed to take me on as his very last postgraduate research student. His meticulous standards of scholarship, vast knowledge of theatre historiography, and generosity as a mentor are unrivalled. I can never repay the many personal kindnesses he has shown me.

The Victorian Studies Centre at the University of Leicester has provided a supportive home for my interdisciplinary interests. My thanks to its director, Professor Gail Marshall, for her guidance and encouragement as second supervisor.

Gordon Campbell, Julie Coleman, Richa Dwor, Lucy Evans, Louisa Foster, Julian North, and Victoria Stewart, also of the School of English, provided invaluable feedback at various stages.

For their advice and inspiration I wish to thank Jenny Bloodworth, Laura Chakravarty Box, Anjna Chouhan, Katharine Cockin, Anne Connor, Jim Davis, Matthew Dimmock, Michael Gaunt, Mary Hammond, Anselm Heinrich, Alan Hughes, Frances Hughes, Juliet John, Abdur Raheem Kidwai, Michael Kilgariff, W. D. King, Catriona Mackie, Marcia Lusk Maxwell, David Mayer, Jason Mayland, Susannah Mayor, Patrick McConeghy, Michael Meredith, Kate Newey, Janice Norwood, Douglas Noverr, Barbara Ramusack, Jeffrey Richards, Marcus Risdell, Helen Smith, Ingeborg Solbrig, Denise Spellberg, and Richard Storer.

In January 2014 I had the good fortune of hearing Robert Darnton, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library at Harvard, deliver the annual Panizzi Lectures at the British Library. These stimulating talks on censorship in three different historical contexts, including British India, redirected my thinking on dramatic censorship in Victorian Britain and have enriched the discussion in Part II of this thesis.

This thesis had its start as a paper given at the ‘Henry Irving: A Life in the Victorian Theatre’ conference held at the University of Leicester in July 2005. My thanks to those who participated for their helpful comments on that paper, especially Michael Booth, Michael Holroyd, and Laurence Senelick. The book that resulted from the conference, Professor Foulkes’s *Henry Irving: A Re-Evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), included my essay, ‘The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine’s *Mahomet*’, portions of which have been substantially revised and incorporated into this thesis.

Grants from the British Association for Victorian Studies; the College of Arts, Humanities and Law at the University of Leicester; the Houghton Library, Harvard University; the Institute of Historical Research; the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society; the Royal Historical Society; and the Society for Theatre Research made it possible for me to travel to collections throughout the United Kingdom and the United States.

My thanks to librarians, archivists, and curators at the following institutions and organizations: the Bishopsgate Institute Library and Archive Collections; the British Library; the City of Westminster Archives Centre; the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.; the Garrick Club; the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin; the Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University; the Honnold/Mudd Library at the Claremont Colleges, Claremont, California; the Huntington Library, San Marino, California; the Liverpool Central Library; the London Library; the London Metropolitan Archives; the Museum of London; the National Archives, Kew; the National Portrait Gallery; the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth; Smallhythe Place (National Trust), Tenterden, Kent; the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon; Tate Britain; the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Watts Gallery, Guildford, Surrey; and the Wolfson Centre for Archival Research at the Library of Birmingham.

Archives and libraries at Cambridge University, Columbia University (New York), Oxford University, the University of Bristol, the University of Leeds, the University of Leicester, the University of London, and the University of Rochester (New York) provided access to essential material as well as congenial places to read and write. I am especially grateful to Agnes Widder of Michigan State University Libraries for her advice and assistance.

John O’Sullivan of the National Library of Ireland tracked down a nineteenth-century journal article I had prematurely concluded was apocryphal, and Jean Rose, manager of the Random House Group Archive and Library in Rushden, Northamptonshire, expertly guided me through the Heinemann archive. Thanks to Jim and Anne Vogler of Webbooks in Wigtown, Dumfries and Galloway, I was able to acquire a personal copy of the very scarce report of the 1909 Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays.

For assistance on the Isle of Man I am grateful to Wendy Thirkettle, Paul Weatherall, and Roger Sims at Manx National Heritage in Douglas, and to Christopher Gawne, Alison Foster, and Ulla Corkill. Gloria Rukeyser, Hall Caine’s great-granddaughter, took a personal interest in this thesis and I thank her for her support.

Ananda Lal, Helen Schinske, and Sanjay Sircar generously shared their knowledge of Indian archives with me. Alokanda Dutta and Sharba Roy Chowdhury provided invaluable assistance at the National Library of India in Kolkata.

The square-built stone house with black quoins in the shadow of Skiddaw in Keswick, Cumbria, in which Hall Caine wrote *Mahomet* is now a charming bed and breakfast and I thank its proprietors, Peter and Janet Redfearn, for their gracious hospitality during a weeklong stay there in March 2014. Portions of this thesis were written in the very room in which Caine drafted the play.

Many friends provided moral support along the way, including Piril Atabay, Jack Bergeron, George Berghorn, Tiffany Bunge, Carol Huguelet Carpenter, Claudia Drake, Bonnie Muniz Elliott, Scott Elliott, Shawn Elliott, Lisa Farrell, Lora Helou, Tina Sheets Horn, Kerry Humphrey, Bethany Judge, Angelika Kraemer, Tami Kuhn, Kathleen Lavey, Ying Lee, Jean Lyle Lepard, Eric Marvin, Robin Miner-Swartz, Evan Montague, Stephanie Murray, Michael Nealon, Kristin Peterson, Cynthia Mortland Phinney, Scott Pohl, Katherine Belen Regier, Brenda Cummings Resch, Jose San Juan, Jayne Schuiteman, Todd Schulz, Natalie Ebig Scott, Rob South, Mike Sullivan, Francie Crawford Todd, Betsy Weber, Suchitra Hingwe Webster, Kristen Willcut, Angela Willes, and Gwendolyn Wilson.

My brother, Darren A. T. Elliott, has been a steadfast source of good humour and encouragement from start to finish.

John H. B. Irving, great-grandson of Sir Henry Irving, has been unfailingly helpful. The day I spent at his lovely home in Somerset looking at a unique collection of Lyceum Theatre documents while surrounded by Sir Henry's personal stage properties is one I will never forget. John has been an exemplary keeper of his family's distinguished history and I am thankful he has shared it with me.

I am profoundly grateful to Herbert Garelick, professor emeritus of philosophy at Michigan State University, who introduced me to R. G. Collingwood's *The Idea of History* at a crucial point in my development as a historian, and to the late Robert LaBrie and the late Joanne Osborne, legendary teachers of French and of English and Latin, respectively, at St. Johns High School, St. Johns, Michigan, both of whom opened doors to other worlds.

My greatest personal debt is to the late Frank C. Rutledge, professor and chairperson emeritus of the Department of Theatre at Michigan State University. Frank believed that theatre is an essential liberal art, the historical study of which provides unique insight into the human experience, across time and place, at its most profound levels. His faith in me made all the difference.

The Manuscript of *Mahomet*

A single, authoritative text of Hall Caine's *Mahomet* has not survived. Because the play was suppressed early in the writing process, it was never formally submitted for licensing and so was not part of the collection of plays accumulated by the Lord Chamberlain's Office at St James's Palace and later transferred to the British Library. Nor, despite its author's intentions, was the play ever published.

In the course of writing this thesis I have prepared a critical edition of the play assembled from the extant manuscripts in the Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers at Manx National Heritage Library and Archives in Douglas, which holds four versions each of Acts I and II, three versions each of Acts III and IV, and a sheaf of loose handwritten pages of dialogue related to Act I.

In 2011 I became the first scholar to consult this material since it was transferred with the rest of Caine's papers from his heirs to Manx National Heritage after his death in 1931.

The length of the edited play prevents it from being included as an appendix to this thesis. It has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and Film*. For more information, please contact me at kristan.tetens@gmail.com.

Note on Spelling and Dates

For transliterations of Arabic words I have followed the conventions used in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* with the exception of words for which there is a standard or common English spelling (e.g., Muhammad, Mecca, Medina) and direct quotes. I use 'Mahomet' to refer to the literary or dramatic character (following the spelling used by an author) and 'Muhammad' when referring to the historical figure. All dates are given according to the Common Era notation system (BCE and CE).

Translations

Translations throughout this thesis are mine unless otherwise indicated.

This thesis includes some material by the author published in earlier versions as:

“‘A Grand Informal Durbar’: Henry Irving and the Coronation of Edward VII”,
Journal of Victorian Culture, 8 (Autumn 2003), 257–291

‘The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine’s *Mahomet*’ in
Richard Foulkes, ed., *Henry Irving: A Re-evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian
Actor-Manager* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 49–63

This material is used with the permission of the publishers and the School of
English.

Introduction

This thesis began as a case study of a specific act of dramatic censorship during the late-Victorian period: the suppression, in 1890, of a play based on the life of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. Written by one of the most famous novelists in England, Hall Caine, for one of the most famous actors in England, Henry Irving, *Mahomet* is a four-act historical drama that (unusually for its time) depicted Islam as an authentic, divinely inspired religion and its leader as a man of sincerity and piety. Yet the mere rumour it would be produced in London led to a firestorm of protest in Britain's Muslim communities, prompted violent demonstrations across British India, and strained the nation's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. The Lord Chamberlain, in his capacity as licenser of stage plays, banned *Mahomet* even before Caine had finished writing it. I wanted to know why, and to better understand the operation of an institutional system of surveillance that had wielded absolute power over a principal form of artistic expression since the mid-eighteenth century. To do that, I knew I would need to find out more — much more — about the play's author. What I discovered was a very small secondary literature dismissive of Caine as a novelist and almost completely silent on him as a dramatist. Gradually a new thesis took shape in my mind, one that not only situated *Mahomet* within the fullness of its political, cultural, and religious contexts at a specific moment in British imperial history, but also one that began the process of recovering Caine's significant career as a playwright and the position of *Mahomet*, which he later called 'by much the best of my dramatic efforts', within that career.¹ And so, with the blessing of my extremely patient supervisor, this thesis undertakes both projects.

¹ Hall Caine, *My Story* (London: Heinemann, 1908), p. 351.

Overview of Part I — 'Hall Caine, Dramatist'

(Thomas Henry) Hall Caine (1853–1931) was one of the most commercially successful dramatists of his generation. Most, but not all, of his plays are adaptations of his bestselling novels. A few were written with collaborators, including Wilson Barrett and Louis Napoleon Parker. They were produced by some of the period's leading managers, including Barrett, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, and Arthur Collins, at many of London's most distinguished theatres. At any given time between 1890 and 1920, half a dozen touring companies were presenting Caine's West End hits in the English provinces. The plays were performed all over the world, including the United States, Australia, South Africa, and Japan. Their settings are astonishingly diverse: the Isle of Man, Cumbria, and London; Iceland, Sicily, and Rome; Tasmania, Fez, and Mecca. They address subjects that both discomfited and fascinated Caine's contemporaries: adultery, divorce, domestic violence, illegitimacy, infanticide, religious bigotry, and women's rights. The theme of home and exile can be traced through them, as can religious faith and doubt, the bonds between fathers and sons, and charismatic leadership. Caine's frequent use of the love triangle — always two men (often brothers) and one woman — was scorned by the critics but allowed him to explore ideas of fidelity, friendship, honour, sacrifice, repentance, and forgiveness.

Scholarly interest in Caine's plays began in 1973 with Allardyce Nicoll's study of stage melodrama in the first three decades of the twentieth century. 'Maybe not very much of good can be said about Hall Caine as a playwright', Nicoll ventured in his characteristically circumspect way, before describing the 'resounding success' and 'almost frenetic rapture' that greeted three of Caine's most successful plays, *The Prodigal Son* (1905) and *The Bondman* (1906), both of which were produced by Collins as 'autumn dramas' at Drury Lane, and *The Christian* (1908),

produced by H. R. Smith and Ernest Carpenter at the Lyceum Theatre.² Since then, attention to this facet of Caine's literary career has been infrequent and uneven in quality: if there have been very few extended studies of Caine's fiction, there have been none at all of his writing for the stage. He is ignored in nearly every account of playwriting during the Victorian and Edwardian periods and has been equally ill served by his biographers. Vivien Allen's *Hall Caine: Portrait of a Victorian Romancer* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), for example, is flawed throughout with errors of fact regarding Caine's connections to the theatre.³ John Russell Stephens's *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) refers in passing to only one of Caine's plays, and, despite Caine's immense power at the box office and the stature of the actor-managers with whom he worked, he does not rate a single mention in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). In 2002, David C. MacWilliams urged scholars to revisit Caine's fiction because of its potential as a 'most rewarding touchstone' to the period's 'popular literary tastes' but rejected the plays in a single sentence.⁴ In 2004, Mary Hammond used several of his works to explore the 'mutability of boundaries between art and the market in different media', including the stage and cinema; she concluded that Caine was 'far from easily dismissible as a hack' (a welcome corrective to previous scholarship) but did not consider the plays on their own merits.⁵ In 2006, Philip Waller attempted (but largely failed) to resolve 'why it was that Caine became such a controversial figure and especially such a problem for

² Allardyce Nicoll, *English Drama, 1900-1930: The Beginnings of the Modern Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 189, pp. 190-91.

³ Older accounts of Caine's life and work include C. Fred Kenyon, *Hall Caine: The Man and the Novelist*, English Writers of Today No. 4 (London: Greening and Co., 1901), a hagiography that Caine reviewed before publication; Desmond MacCarthy, *Portraits* (London and New York: Putnam, 1931); and Samuel Norris, *Two Men of Manxland: Hall Caine, Novelist, T. E. Brown, Poet* (Douglas, Isle of Man: Norris Modern Press, 1947). All of these focus on Caine's career as a writer of fiction; none consider his plays at length.

⁴ David C. MacWilliams, 'The Novelistic Melodramas of Hall Caine: Seventy Years On', *English Literature in Transition*, 45 (2002), 426-39 (p. 426).

⁵ Mary Hammond, 'Hall Caine and the Melodrama on Page, Stage, and Screen', *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and Film*, 31 (2004), 39-57 (p. 53, p. 54).

fellow authors'.⁶ Despite its shortcomings, Waller's is the best modern assessment of Caine's career; in its painstaking research it surpasses Allen's longer work, although it is very far from comprehensive on the plays.

Part I of this thesis challenges the undeserved obscurity into which Hall Caine's plays have fallen, correcting and extending the cursory treatment they have received to date. Caine emerges as a major dramatist, wholly representative of his era, whose work complicates long-accepted distinctions between 'romance' and 'realism' as generic categories. The thesis contends that his early plays take a more realistic turn following his thwarted collaboration with Irving, becoming darker 'problem plays' in a melodramatic mode in the 1890s. For this reason, and to 'set the stage' for the discussion of *Mahomet* in Part II, I have organised the material of Part I in relation to this collaboration ('Plays before *Mahomet*, 1872–89', 'Hall Caine and Henry Irving, 1890', and 'Plays after *Mahomet*, 1891–1918'). Part I is indebted to scholarship on melodrama as representational style, including the work of Peter Brooks, Elaine Hadley, and Lynn Voskuil. Two important historiographical assumptions underlie this thesis: first, the belief that 'even though documentary evidence is partial and the epistemological problems of historical inquiry are inescapable, it is still possible to discover and understand much about the past'; and second, that melodrama as a theatrical form is 'intimately related to the historical and cultural circumstances in which it appears' and can only be fully explained in the context of those circumstances.⁷ As Herbert Lindenberger has argued, plays set in the historical past are 'at least as much a comment on the playwright's own times as on the periods about which they are ostensibly written', and the same is true of Caine's plays.⁸ The appendix to this thesis is the first comprehensive inventory of

⁶ Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 738.

⁷ Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait, *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), p. 15; David Mayer, 'Encountering Melodrama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. by Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 145–63 (p. 146).

⁸ Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 5.

Caine's produced and unproduced works for the stage and supplements the analysis of individual plays in Part I.

Because seven of his most successful plays were adaptations of his novels, any consideration of Caine as a dramatist must begin with an understanding of his fiction. He was one of the best-known and highest-paid authors of his day — a true literary celebrity and publishing phenomenon whose sales were 'massive and worldwide'.⁹ Over a career spanning more than forty years, Caine wrote fifteen novels with historical and near-contemporary settings: *The Shadow of a Crime: A Cumbrian Romance* (1885), *She's All the World to Me* (1885), *A Son of Hagar: A Romance of Our Time* (1886), *The Deemster: A Romance* (1887), *The Bondman: A New Saga* (1890), *The Scapegoat: A Romance* (1891), *The Fate of Fenella* (1892), *The Manxman: A Novel* (1894), *The Christian: A Story* (1897), *The Eternal City* (1901), *The Prodigal Son* (1904), *The White Prophet: A Novel* (1909), *The Woman Thou Gavest Me* (1913), *The Master of Man: The Story of a Sin* (1921), and *The Woman of Knockaloe: A Parable* (1923).¹⁰ A volume of three short stories (*Capt'n Davy's Honeymoon*, *The Last Confession*, and *The Blind Mother*) appeared in 1893. Vivien Allen conjectures that an astonishing ten million copies of his novels were sold during his lifetime.¹¹ Each title was printed in the hundreds of thousands; most ran to more than twenty editions. *The Bondman*, for example, appeared in twenty-seven editions and in French, Russian, German, Danish, and Japanese translations within twenty-five years of its first publication. *The Manxman* was the bestselling book in Britain in 1894; in all, nearly 400,000 copies were sold.¹² *The Christian* topped the bestseller list in 1897; more than 50,000 copies were sold in the month

⁹ Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p. 731.

¹⁰ There is some disagreement on the number of novels that properly belong to the Caine 'canon'. Allen puts the number at fifteen; Waller excludes *She's All the World to Me* and *The Fate of Fenella*, both of which were published only in the United States, arguing they are merely early sketches for later novels. See Allen, *Hall Caine: Portrait of a Victorian Romancer* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 176, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p. 731.

¹¹ Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 7.

¹² See Troy J. Bassett and Christina M. Walter, 'Booksellers and Bestsellers: British Book Sales as Documented by *The Bookman*, 1891–1906', *Book History*, 4 (2001), 205–236 (p. 228) and John St John, *William Heinemann: A Century of Publishing* (London: Heinemann, 1990), p. 29.

following its publication with total sales exceeding 640,000.¹³ *The Eternal City* is generally acknowledged to be the first British novel to sell more than a million copies. It had an initial print run of 100,000, ran to twenty-six editions, and was translated into thirteen languages.¹⁴ Heinemann published collected editions of the novels in 1905 and 1921, and Cassell a uniform edition in 1923–24. Caine's readership extended to every English-speaking corner of the Empire and beyond: in 1913, *The Dominion*, a New Zealand newspaper, noted that advance orders for *The Woman Thou Gavest Me* had surpassed 200,000 worldwide while pointing out that 'not even the divine Corelli has ever ousted him from the proud position of the best seller of all living British novelists'.¹⁵

Caine identified his stories as romances, often in the subtitles of the books themselves, and indeed his fictional worlds were sites of terrible crimes, desperate suffering, and hard-won redemption. He believed in the value of melodrama, embracing its conventions in his novels and plays without cynicism or any sense they might be seen as ridiculous or simple minded. His American theatrical agent, Elisabeth Marbury, believed that authenticity was the key to his popularity. 'He believes what he writes and personally endorses every lofty sentiment which his characters express', she wrote in her memoirs. A writer of melodrama, she added, 'must be sincere' or he will fail.¹⁶ In 1894 Caine proclaimed that the 'realistic romance' was the future of fiction (and, by extension, drama). 'What is the use of sweeping your books clean of sin while the world is full of it?' he asked in a lecture

¹³ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*, 2nd edn (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), p. 386.

¹⁴ John Sutherland, 'Hall Caine', *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction*, 2nd edn (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), p. 215, and Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 434. Allen disputes *The Eternal City*'s claim to be the first million-seller; she gives that honour instead to *The Christian*; see 'Caine, Sir (Thomas Henry) Hall (1853–1931)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, January 2011
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32237>> [accessed 31 August 2014].

¹⁵ 'Liber's Note Book', *The Dominion*, 27 September 1913. Marie Corelli's novels outsold all those of her closest competitors — including Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, and H. G. Wells — combined. See Annette R. Federico, *Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and Late-Victorian Literary Culture* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 2000), pp. 6–7.

¹⁶ Elisabeth Marbury, *My Crystal Ball: Reminiscences* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1924), pp. 200–01.



Illustration 1: (Thomas Henry) Hall Caine, c. 1890, by the London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company © National Portrait Gallery, London.

delivered that year to Edinburgh's Philosophical Institution. 'May I, without irreverence, say that I dream of a greater novel than we have yet seen — a novel that shall be a compound of the plain nineteenth-century realism of the penny newspaper and the pure and lofty idealism of the Sermon on the Mount — the plainest realism and the highest idealism?'¹⁷ This was his controlling artistic vision. His style was much remarked upon; reviews of *The Bondman*, for example, which was published in 1890 just as Caine was beginning *Mahomet*, noted his 'poetical English'¹⁸ tinged with a 'semi-Scriptural primitiveness'.¹⁹ Caine appreciated the 'elemental strength' of the stories in the Bible and later claimed he had used their 'simple incidents [...] as foundations for [his] modern novels': he maintained that *The Deemster*, for example, was based on the story of the Prodigal Son, *The Bondman* on the story of Jacob and Esau, *The Scapegoat* on the story of Samuel and Eli, *The Manxman* on the story of David and Uriah, and *The Eternal City* on the story of Samson and Delilah.²⁰ Thus it is not surprising to find that his prose features biblical imagery, quotation, allusion, and archaic diction. Inverted sentences and passages begun with adverbial phrases and conjunctions add a Romantic otherworldliness to his stories. The critic Q. D. Leavis asserted that Caine's novels, like those of his contemporaries Marie Corelli, Florence Barclay, and Gene Stratton Porter, played with 'the key words of the emotional vocabulary which provoke the vague warm surges of feeling associated with religion and religion substitutes — life, death, love, good, evil, sin, home, mother, noble, gallant, purity, honour'. His language was 'analogous to a suit

¹⁷ Hall Caine, *Moral Responsibility in the Novel and the Drama*, Mr. Hall Caine's address, to be delivered on opening the session of the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1894 (London: Horace Cox, 1894), p. 14, p. 23.

¹⁸ 'New Novels', *The Academy*, 1 March 1890.

¹⁹ 'Recent Novels', *The Times*, 8 March 1890.

²⁰ Caine, *My Story*, p. 230, p. 283. Vivien Allen is sceptical of this, noting that Caine 'continued to insist over the years that his stories were biblical in origin though it is frequently difficult to see the connection' (*Hall Caine*, p. 202). The influence seems clear enough, however. In 1904, *Punch* joked that Caine was gradually rewriting the Bible with the goal of improving on it. As for the plays based on these novels, Richard Foulkes has noted that as a writer of 'Christian melodrama', Caine 'drew together several important strands in the relationship between the Church and stage', including the Nonconformist ethic, Christian socialism, and 'the theatre's command of a mass audience for religious purposes'. See *Church and Stage in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 205–06.

of Sunday clothes, carrying with it a sense of larger issues' giving the reader 'a feeling of being helped, of being in touch with ideals'.²¹ It was not to everyone's taste. William Barry, the influential literary critic of the *Quarterly Review*, declared that Caine is 'dramatic, epic, and a lover of strong effects in glaring lights [...] there is no grace in his drawing; and though he can feel, he seldom persuades the heart [...] he lives and dies by emotion'.²² Oscar Wilde quipped that although Caine 'aims at the grandiose' he is perpetually writing 'at the top of his voice [...] he is so loud that one cannot hear what he says'.²³ An earnestness reflecting the gravity with which Caine took himself and his position as a professional writer pervades his stories: Vivien Allen felt they could be 'riveting, passionately romantic, or sad to the "three-hanky weepie" level but he almost never makes us laugh' — his fatal flaw, in her opinion.²⁴

Although he longed for an enduring reputation as a serious author, the image of Caine which has persisted is that of a shrill, bombastic self-promoter of epic proportions. He radiated a quivering, febrile energy that was skewered by caricaturists such as Max Beerbohm. 'At tea-parties it was always possible to raise a titter by the mere mention of Hall Caine's name', Beerbohm recalled. 'There had come a time when he got himself interviewed too much, photographed too much, seen too much, advertised in every way too much [...] His popularity was enormous; but he had cheapened his work as well as his reputation'.²⁵ Beerbohm mocked him relentlessly; one particularly savage sketch depicted him wearing a sandwich board on which his name is written in huge capital letters. 'To have seen Mr. Hall Caine is to have read his soul', Beerbohm observed in an essay on Victorian dandies. 'His

²¹ Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1939), pp. 64–65.

²² W. F. Barry, 'Religious Novels – Marie Corelli and Hall Caine', *Quarterly Review*, 188 (October 1898), 306–37 (p. 330).

²³ Oscar Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying', in *Intentions* (London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., 1891), pp. 1–55 (p. 11). This description of Caine was added after the essay's first appearance in the January 1889 issue of *The Nineteenth Century*. Wilde's piece is in the form of a dialogue between two men discussing literature in the library of a country house in Nottinghamshire.

²⁴ Allen, *Hall Caine*, pp. 430–31.

²⁵ Max Beerbohm, *Mainly on the Air* (London: Heinemann, 1957), pp. 69–70.

flowing, formless cloak is as one of his own novels, twenty-five editions latent in the folds of it. Melodrama crouches upon the brim of his *sombrero*. His tie is a Publisher's Announcement. His boots are Copyright. In his hand he holds the staff of *The Family Herald*'.²⁶ Caine was neither the first author to use modern mass-marketing techniques (that honour goes to H. Rider Haggard, who in 1885 was the focus of a publicity blitz arranged by the publisher Cassell for *King Solomon's Mines* that involved strategically deployed sandwich-men, boldly coloured hoardings, contests, innovative display advertising, and puffery), nor the only one (similar campaigns were undertaken by Methuen for Marie Corelli and by Bentley for Mrs Henry Woods, for example), but his name is the one that has become inextricably linked with 'booming'.²⁷

Ironically, given his off-putting manner, Caine, the eldest son of a Manx shipwright who worked in the Liverpool dockyards and a mother born and raised in Cumbria, appears in Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1937) as an example of how one could rise from poverty to enormous wealth and fame through the skilful cultivation and management of relationships with influential men.²⁸ What Carnegie lauded as an admirable trait others saw as an unbecoming obsession with social climbing that carried Caine far beyond the point where his mediocre talents might naturally have taken him. He walked a fine line between his desire for acceptance by the critical establishment and his need to make money — which he knew he could do with novels and plays appealing to a broad, popular audience. He was often accused of intellectual arrogance, was a hypochondriac

²⁶ Max Beerbohm, 'Dandies and Dandies', in *The Works of Max Beerbohm with a Bibliography by John Lane* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1896), pp. 3–29 (p. 23). *The Family Herald* was a weekly magazine that included serialised novels and short stories. The sketch of Caine wearing a sandwich board is reprinted in N. John Hall, *Max Beerbohm Caricatures* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 34.

²⁷ See Nicholas Feltes, *Literary Capital and the Late Victorian Novel* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 114 and pp. 123–24.

²⁸ Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937), pp. 122–23.

prone to bouts of depression and anxiety, and almost never met deadlines agreed with his publishers.

However, my detailed reading of Caine's extensive private papers over a period of four years has presented a more nuanced picture of this complex man. What comes across in his correspondence is a self-deprecating personality who is often unsure of himself. He relied heavily on the expertise and advice of his closest friends, including Bram Stoker and Robert Leighton. The archive at Manx National Heritage is full of letters that demonstrate his concern for the comfort and wellbeing of others, his sense of honour, and his desire to become a better writer. With his strong Christian Socialist beliefs came an acute awareness of the suffering of those on the margins of Victorian society, especially women, religious minorities, and those harmed by what he saw as the nation's ruthless management of its empire. He was a vocal advocate of universal suffrage, expanded educational opportunities for women and girls, and the reform of laws related to divorce and matrimonial property. He was ahead of his time in supporting those fighting to establish or preserve their political and cultural autonomy, writing with particular urgency about the forces reshaping traditional Arab ways of life and with unflinching directness about religious bigotry and racial tension. He praised the nationalist aspirations of Arabs throughout the Maghreb and in Egypt, infuriating Britain's imperial administrators and earning the admiration of George Bernard Shaw. He had extensive contacts in the British Jewish community and in 1891 his sympathetic portrayal of Jews in *The Scapegoat* led to a friendship with Hermann Adler, then Chief Rabbi of the British Empire. On behalf of the Russo-Jewish Committee, Adler asked Caine to visit Russia to investigate the continuing persecution of Jews there following the murderous pogroms of the previous decade. Although Caine was prevented from doing so by an outbreak of cholera along the Russian border, he did manage to visit several Jewish communities in the Pale of Settlement. Moved by what he witnessed, he dared to imagine a reconciliation of the world's great religions that would prevent similar suffering. He was also a generous man whose

unpublicised acts of philanthropy supported many good causes (the value of Caine's estate on his death in 1931 exceeded £250,000, the equivalent, conservatively, of nearly £14 million today, and included Greeba Castle, the crenellated Gothic-style mansion on the Isle of Man that had been his home since 1896). He declined a baronetcy but accepted a knighthood in 1918 and was made a Companion of Honour by King George V four years later. It is time for a major reassessment not only of Caine's literary output and publishing innovations but also his self-fashioning as a celebrity man of letters.

Overview of Part II — Mahomet: Religion, Empire, and Dramatic Censorship in Late-Victorian Britain

The second part of this thesis is the first extended study of Caine's *Mahomet*, a four-act historical drama based on the life of Muhammad written in 1890 for the actor-manager Henry Irving. Irving (1838–1905) and his acting partner Ellen Terry (1847–1928) dominated the English stage during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, offering an array of spectacular entertainments to a new urban population drawn to the theatre as a respectable place of leisure. These included Shakespeare revivals, old melodramas reinvigorated and made relevant to late-Victorian society, and new plays and adaptations commissioned from some of the period's leading writers. Each was produced under Irving's exacting direction with an eye to creating a distinctive unity of aesthetic impression that integrated the technical elements of set, costumes, lighting, and music with well-drilled acting. 'He regarded a play as a single whole; as a whole, no doubt, of which he himself should be the central point; but still neither merely as a field for the exhibition of his own powers nor as an excuse for beautiful scenery and dresses', *The Times* noted. His productions 'could be counted on to reveal not only ingenuity of invention nor artistic beauty, but

propriety and proportion'.²⁹ Irving's achievements on stage were matched by his service to his profession off stage, and his influence extended well beyond his London theatre, the Lyceum, in Wellington Street. He gave lectures at universities and before learned societies; contributed essays to prestigious journals; unveiled monuments and laid foundation stones; dedicated theatres, libraries, and art galleries; and founded and supported charitable organisations. For these services, and in recognition of the respectability and international stature he had brought to the British stage, Irving was knighted in 1895, the first actor to be so honoured.³⁰

In his *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Bram Stoker notes that Irving had long wanted to act the part of Muhammad.³¹ The celebrated actor's interest in producing an 'Eastern play' was first piqued by the explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton at a dinner party at the Hotel Continental in Regent Street, London, on 18 September 1886. Burton told Irving that a play based on a tale from the *Arabian Nights* — an unexpurgated translation of which he had published the year before — would suit the actor perfectly. 'Burton had a most vivid way of putting things — especially of the East', Stoker later wrote. 'Burton *knew* the East. Its brilliant dawns and sunsets [...] its arid fiery deserts [...] its cool, dark mosques and temples; its crowded bazaars; its narrow streets [...] the pride and swagger of its

²⁹ *The Times*, 14 October 1905.

³⁰ See Kristan Tetens, "'A Grand Informal Durbar': Henry Irving and the Coronation of Edward VII", *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 8 (Autumn 2003), 257–291 (p. 259). Irving was the sole lessee of the Lyceum from 1878 to 1899, when he sold his interest in the theatre to a limited liability company. Recent assessments of his career include Jeffrey Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005); *Henry Irving: A Re-evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager*, ed. by Richard Foulkes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), and Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving, and Their Remarkable Families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008). Many of Irving's speeches, lectures, and essays are collected in *Sir Henry Irving: Theatre, Culture, and Society*, ed. by Jeffrey Richards (Keele, Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1994). The still-definitive biography is his grandson Laurence Irving's *Henry Irving: The Actor and His World* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951).

³¹ Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1906), II, p. 118. Stoker (1847–1912) was Irving's business manager from 1878 to the actor's death in October 1905. He is most famous today, of course, for being the author of *Dracula* (1897), which he dedicated to Caine.

passionate men and the mysteries of its veiled women; its romances; its beauty; its horrors'.³²

Seven years before the dinner with Burton, Irving had toured Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and the eastern Mediterranean from Turkey to Egypt with the Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts, one of his early supporters. This voyage is often credited with providing Irving with his conception of Shylock, thought to be based on his observations of Levantine Jews, but it also provided him with first-hand knowledge of Islamic cultures.³³ It seemed to Stoker that Irving's memory of that voyage had been revived by Burton's persuasive proposal: '[he] grew fired as the night wore on, and it became evident that he had it in his mind from that time to produce some such play as [Burton] suggested, should occasion serve'.³⁴ Three years later, occasion did serve, and Irving asked Hall Caine to prepare a play based on the life of Muhammad for his use at the Lyceum. An intense creative partnership ensued. Caine's play rejected the then-common view of Islam as a heresy and Muhammad as an impostor; instead, it treated the religion sympathetically and the prophet with respect. The central figure of the play was especially well suited to Irving, whose physical presence enabled him to excel, according to the playwright Henry Arthur Jones, in portraying the 'dignified, noble, simple, courtly, removed, unearthly, saintly, [and] spiritual'.³⁵ Stoker thought him exquisitely 'tuned to sacerdotalism' and observed that 'the robes of a churchman sat easy on him'.³⁶

³² Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, I, pp. 360–61. Irving and Stoker each owned a set of Burton's *The Book of The Thousand Nights and a Night: A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, which had been published by the Kama Shashtra Society in ten volumes for private subscribers (London and Benares: Kama Shashtra Society, 1885), and its six-volume sequel, which appeared between 1886 and 1888. Burton had travelled to Mecca and Medina in 1853 disguised as a Muslim pilgrim and no doubt shared stories of this experience with Irving and Stoker.

³³ The cruise in the steam yacht *Walrus*, which took place in the summer of 1879 following Irving's first season at the Lyceum, is described in Laurence Irving, *Henry Irving*, pp. 330–34. Irving produced *The Merchant of Venice* for the first time in November 1879; it remained in his repertoire throughout his career and was a popular feature of many of his provincial and American tours. It was in this play on 19 July 1902 that Irving and Terry made their final appearance together on the Lyceum stage.

³⁴ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, I, p. 361.

³⁵ Henry Arthur Jones, *The Shadow of Henry Irving* (London: Richards, 1931), p. 68.

³⁶ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, I, p. 221.

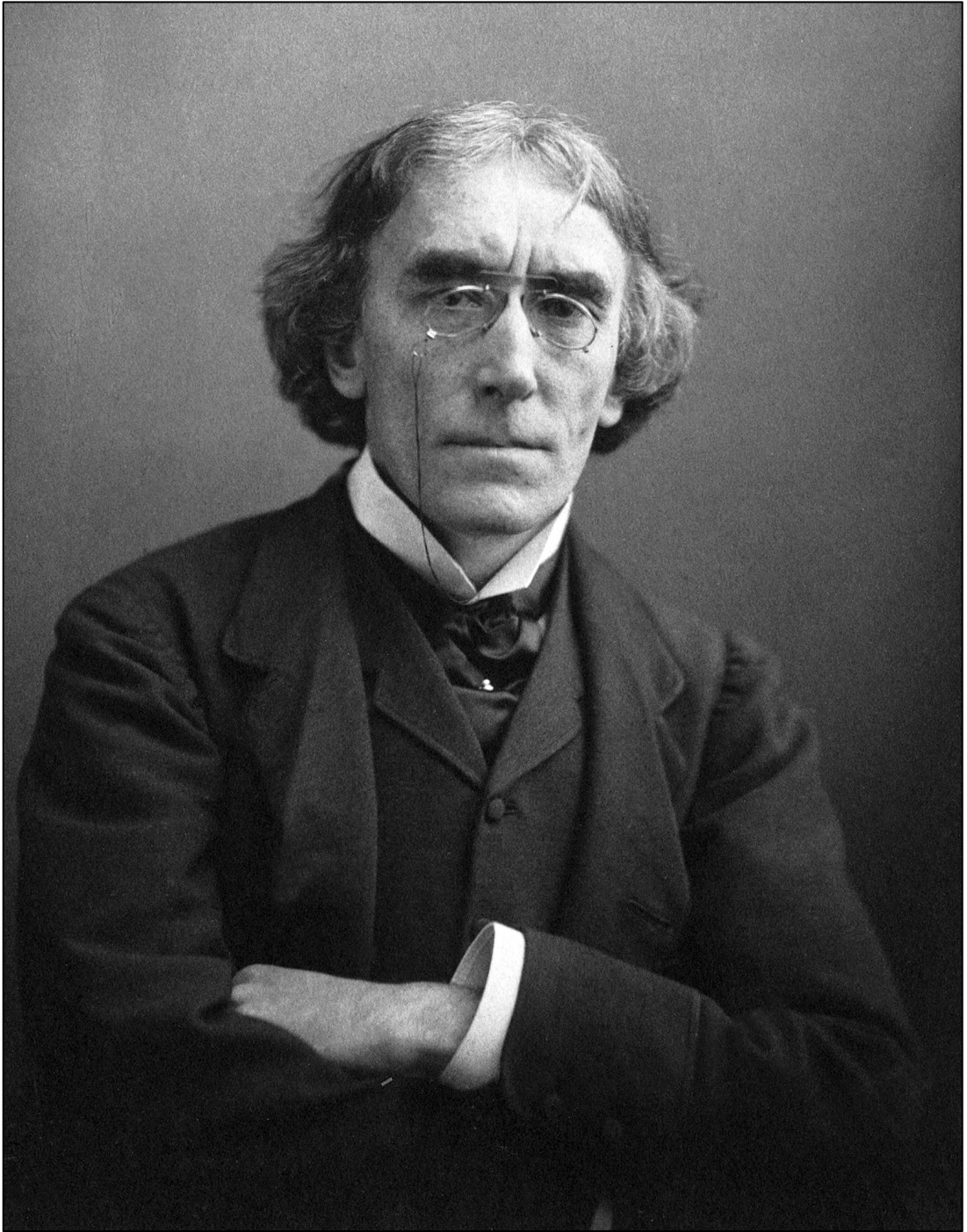


Illustration 2: Henry Irving by Warwick Brookes, 1889 © National Portrait Gallery, London.

William Archer went further, noting that ‘it would be almost impossible for Mr. Irving to fail in an ascetic, a sacerdotal character. His cast of countenance, his expression, his manner, are all prelatical in the highest degree. Nature designed him for a prince of the Church’.³⁷ Over the course of his career, Irving brought a number of religious characters to life, notably Cardinal Richelieu in Edward Bulwer Lytton’s *Richelieu* (1879); Dr Primrose in W. G. Wills’s *Olivia*, an adaptation of Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1885); the ‘statesman-priest’ Cardinal Wolsey in William Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII* (1892); and the ‘hero-priest’ Thomas Becket in Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s *Becket* (1893). The figure of Muhammad (the ‘conqueror-preacher’, perhaps?) would have been both in line with his inclination towards compelling spiritual leaders and a stark contrast with his Christian clerics. In Irving’s hands, a religion that mystified the Victorians would be elevated from its usual haunts — the exotic operas of Covent Garden with their ersatz seraglios and sultans, the ‘sack and slaughter’ Crusade melodramas of the transpontine houses, and the ubiquitous versions of *Arabian Nights* tales on the pantomime boards, which invariably featured pseudo-Muslim characters and settings — to the stage of a venerable theatre patronized by London’s great and good.

Neither Irving nor Caine suspected their plans would set off a chain of events that would result in the play’s suppression by the Lord Chamberlain, a member of the Royal Household who could by law forbid the public performance of any play by paid actors before a paying audience in the interest of preserving ‘good Manners, Decorum, or ... the public Peace’.³⁸ Plays on religious topics had long been thought unsuitable for the stage. A ban on biblical subjects, for example, had been rigorously enforced throughout the nineteenth century and included the prohibition of scriptural

³⁷ William Archer, *The Theatrical ‘World’ for 1893* (London: Walter Scott, n.d.), p. 49.

³⁸ An Act for Regulating Theatres 1843 (6 & 7 Vict cap 68). This act modified the system of play censorship established by the Licensing Act of 1737. See David Thomas, David Carlton, and Anne Etienne, *Theatre Censorship: From Walpole to Wilson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially Chapter 2, ‘Statutory Theatre Censorship, 1737–1892’, pp. 24–68.

subjects, characters, and language. A license could be denied altogether or withheld until the offending portion of the play was removed.³⁹

Muslims in Britain, British India, and the Ottoman Empire had responded to rumours of the production with outrage that was soon channelled into well-publicised meetings, protests, petitions, and letter writing campaigns. They objected to the physical representation of Muhammad on stage: that Caine's depiction of the prophet was sympathetic was irrelevant — the very act of embodiment, or impersonation, was the issue. Although the Qur'an does not proscribe such representations, several hadith (reports of the words and deeds of Muhammad recorded by others) do so, in the belief they encourage idolatry and infringe on God's unique right to create life. Muslims who take a strict view of the matter have challenged — and continue to challenge — representations of Muhammad even when they are created by non-Muslims. Recent examples include controversies over the depiction of Muhammad as a superhero character in an episode of *South Park* in 2001; the decision not to remove a frieze depicting Muhammad from the courtroom of the United States Supreme Court in 2004; the publication of editorial cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005; a production of Mozart's opera *Idomeneo* by the Deutsche Oper Berlin in 2006; a reading of Voltaire's *Le fanatisme, ou Mahomet le Prophète* in Saint-Genis-Pouilly, France, in 2007; the worldwide 'Everybody Draw Muhammad Day' created by Seattle cartoonist Molly Norris in 2010; a short film made by an Egyptian-born American called *Innocence of Muslims* in 2012; and, in 2013, the wearing of shirts depicting Jesus and Muhammad by students at the University of London. Some of these controversies have led to violence and even death: more than 200 people were killed during protests that began as demonstrations against the Danish cartoons.⁴⁰ Radical Islamists pointed to

³⁹ See John Russell Stephens, *The Censorship of English Drama, 1824–1901* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), especially Chapter 6, 'Religion and the Stage', pp. 92–114. Foulkes provides essential context in *Church and Stage in Victorian England*, pp. 18–34.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 12 August 2009. See also Jytte Klausen's definitive *The Cartoons that Shook the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) and 'A Timeline of Threats and Acts of Violence over Blasphemy and Insults to Islam', *New York Times*, 7 January 2015. Muslim outrage over the

the republication of these cartoons and similar images by the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* as justification for the firebombing of its Paris office in November 2011 and the killing of nine members of its staff and three others in January 2015.⁴¹ As a forerunner of today's clashes between freedom of expression and the protection of religious sensibilities, a controversy over a play that was never produced continues to be relevant more than a hundred years after it was written.

The banning of Caine's *Mahomet* was the first time that the prohibition against the representation of sacred Christian figures on stage was extended to sacred Islamic figures, and for this reason the controversy had a significant impact on the practice of dramatic censorship in Britain through the remainder of the nineteenth century and beyond. However, despite its obvious usefulness as a case study in the operation of the Lord Chamberlain's office, *Mahomet* has never been examined in detail. It is described briefly and inaccurately by Tracy C. Davis in *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). It is given half a paragraph in Jeffrey Richards's comprehensive *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2005) but is not mentioned at all by Michael Holroyd in his masterful group biography, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving, and Their Remarkable Families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008) or by Laurence Irving in his biography of his grandfather, *Henry Irving: The Actor and His World* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951). Edward Ziter in *The Orient on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and John M. MacKenzie in *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester

cartoons was channelled into national and local political conflicts: the drawings were used as a pretext by the secular Egyptian government to demonstrate its support of Islam to sympathisers of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, for example, and protests organized by Muslims in Kashmir appeared to be directed at the government in New Delhi. Although the fatwa issued in 1989 by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie for *The Satanic Verses* was based on a literary, not visual, representation of Muhammad, it, too, reflected the conflict between Western ideas of freedom of expression and certain Muslim beliefs about blasphemy (the insulting of the sacred). Rushdie recounts his life under the fatwa in *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2012).

⁴¹ *New York Times*, 8 January 2015.

University Press, 1995) consider theatrical representations of the ‘East’ but ignore Caine’s *Mahomet* and the international controversy it generated. Even the standard histories of British dramatic censorship that cover the relevant period pass over it quickly or ignore it completely: Frank Fowell and Frank Palmer treat it cursorily in a chapter addressing the suppression of plays on political and religious grounds in their pioneering study *Censorship in England* (London: Frank Palmer, 1913); it is included in Richard Findlater’s *Banned! A Review of Theatrical Censorship in Britain* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967) but not in John Russell Stephens’s influential *The Censorship of English Drama, 1824-1901* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), John Johnston’s *The Lord Chamberlain’s Blue Pencil* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), or Dominic Shellard and Steve Nicholson’s *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets....: A History of British Theatre Censorship* (London: The British Library, 2004). Most recently, it has been used to test the applicability of some of Jürgen Habermas’s ideas on the political and social functions of public debate in Christopher B. Balme’s *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

This neglect may be due in part to the relative inaccessibility of the play’s manuscript: because *Mahomet* was suppressed early in the writing process, it was never formally submitted for licensing and so was not part of the collection of plays accumulated by the Lord Chamberlain at St James’s Palace and later transferred to the British Library. Nor has it ever been published. Drafts of individual acts survive only in the Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage Library and Archives [hereafter Manx National Heritage], where in 2011 I became the first person to consult them since they were deposited by Caine’s heirs after his death in 1931. None of the scholars who include the play in their discussion of dramatic censorship during the nineteenth century base their analysis on a reading of the play itself and have as a rule relied on secondary sources for accounts of the controversy it generated. (Balme’s analysis is based on my own essay published by Ashgate in 2008 as ‘The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine’s

Mahomet’, in Richard Foulkes, ed., *Henry Irving: A Re-evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager*).

Furthermore, outside of the fields of art and architectural history, only a few scholars have explored Victorian perceptions of Islam in any depth; these include Rozina Visram in *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indians in Britain 1700-1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), Philip C. Almond in *Heretic and Hero: Muhammad and the Victorians* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989), Clinton Bennett in *Victorian Images of Islam* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1992), and Michael H. Fisher in *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain 1600-1857* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005) — none of whom discuss the role played by the Victorian theatre in shaping popular opinion of the religion. Shahin Kuli Khan Khattak discusses how Victorian writers of fiction depicted Islam in *Islam and the Victorians: Nineteenth-Century Perceptions of Muslim Practices and Beliefs* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007) but omits Caine, who wrote two bestselling novels (*The Scapegoat* in 1890 and *The White Prophet* in 1909) with Muslim themes and characters. New information on British Muslim communities in the nineteenth century is provided by Ron Geaves in *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Markfield, Leicestershire: Kube Publishing, 2010), but the author’s reliance on a small range of sources limits its usefulness. A chapter on Islam in England in Diane Robinson-Dunn’s *The Harem, Slavery, and British Imperial Culture: Anglo-Muslim Relations in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006) rehearses familiar facts about the nation’s earliest Muslim communities in an otherwise illuminating study.

Considerations of European textual and pictorial representations of Muhammad have been more helpful, but as yet there is no comprehensive assessment of how the Victorians perceived the often spurious imagery that lay at the heart of Christian conceptions of Islam for centuries, much less how they understood the life and work of the historical figure. Matthew Dimmock makes a provocative start on this in the final chapter of *Mythologies of the Prophet*

Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) but his primary concern is with representations in circulation between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. The Almond and Bennett books mentioned above focus narrowly on academic and missionary writing and so are of limited help in discerning how representations of the prophet were created and consumed on a wide scale during the nineteenth century.

Part II of this thesis uses a wide range of archival sources, many of them previously unknown, to recover the lost *Mahomet*, building on and extending recent work in the fields of nineteenth-century literary history, theatre history, and imperial history. It is both historicist and formalist in approach; my purpose has been to set *Mahomet* into its many contexts as well as to provide an original (in fact, the very first) close reading of the play as a text for performance. It is in part a positivist project: many basic facts have needed to be gleaned from diverse and often fugitive sources and then assembled into a narrative that represents what happened and when as precisely as possible. The first chapter analyses the composition of *Mahomet* with an emphasis on its characters, plot, and setting. I identify Caine's sources and provide a detailed synopsis of the play. I consider the character of Mahomet in the context of Thomas Carlyle's 1840 lecture on Muhammad and the character of Rachel in the context of Victorian concerns about the treatment of religious minorities and the rights of women. This chapter is informed by the post-colonialist approaches of Edward Said and (especially) his critics; I argue that *Mahomet* cannot be considered a straightforward example of orientalist appropriation. This chapter also situates the play within a tradition of Western plays on the life of the prophet. I connect the concept of 'incarnational drama' developed to explain the post-Reformation antipathy to the physical portrayal of the sacred in sixteenth-century English plays and pageants to the institutionalized suppression of plays with religious themes and figures in the Victorian period. The second chapter presents a detailed account of the response to the rumoured production of *Mahomet* on the part

of Muslims in Britain, British India, and the Ottoman Empire. The third and final chapter describes the fate of the play after its suppression.

In 1909, Caine appeared before a parliamentary committee appointed to consider whether changes should be made in the licensing of stage plays. Recalling his collaboration with Irving on the Lyceum *Mahomet*, he observed that ‘the existence of the Censorship made our act a national act, carrying a sort of national responsibility. It ought not to have been in any sense a national act, but only the individual act — wise or unwise — of two irresponsible persons, Henry Irving and Hall Caine’.⁴² The story of that ‘national act’ and its aftermath is told in the following pages.

⁴² Hall Caine, *Statement of the Evidence in Chief of Hall Caine Before the Joint Committee on Stage Plays, Censorship and Theatre Licensing* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1909), p. 20.

Part I

Hall Caine, Dramatist

When the day has closed in on this great London of ours and the lamps are lit, there is another world always open to us, a world which, thank God, is not real, but a thing of illusion, a dream, with only the truth of dreams, a world in which the first quest is romance, poetry, emotion, love, and sacrifice. And the effect of this world of imagination cannot help but be good on the temper and spirit of the time.

— *Hall Caine, proposal to 'The Drama and the Stage' at the Royal General Theatrical Fund annual dinner, 31 May 1894, chaired by Henry Irving at the Hotel Metropole, London, as reported by the 'Westminster Gazette', 1 June 1894*

Chapter 1: Dramatic Criticism, 1872–88

When the English actor-manager Sir Henry Irving collapsed and died in the lobby of the Midland Hotel in Bradford on the evening of 13 October 1905, shortly after completing his performance in the title role of Tennyson's *Becket* at the Theatre Royal, Manningham Lane, the country tried to measure its loss. 'How much poorer is the stage! How much poorer also is our humanity!' the Bradford *Daily Mail* exclaimed. 'It does not seem possible that the blank caused by Henry Irving's death can ever be filled'.¹ The Manchester *Guardian* observed that Irving's death 'removed from our midst one of the most striking personalities of the time [...] For Irving there was a personal feeling such as even the greatest of his predecessors never inspired'.² The *Daily Telegraph* stated simply, and accurately, 'the whole nation mourns'.³ Managers with plays on in London stepped before the curtain to express their sadness and console their audiences. Nearly all found comfort in the circumstances of Irving's death. At His Majesty's Theatre, Herbert Beerbohm Tree said it was 'the end [Irving] would himself have chosen, having first said "good night" to his public'.⁴ In Birmingham, a distraught Ellen Terry, who had been Irving's acting partner at the Lyceum Theatre from the time he assumed its management in 1878 until he left it in 1902, told that city's *Daily Mail* she had nothing to say 'except that all this has happened as he wished. In full possession of his faculties, he worked to the very last. It rejoices me that he finished his evening's work'.⁵

None of Irving's associates felt his death more keenly than Hall Caine, who received the news in a cable from Bram Stoker, Irving's business manager, while in New York City, where he had gone to supervise the American production of his

¹ *Bradford Daily Mail*, 14 October 1905.

² *Manchester Guardian*, 14 October 1905.

³ *Daily Telegraph*, 16 October 1905.

⁴ *The Stage*, 19 October 1905.

⁵ *Birmingham Daily Mail*, 14 October 1905; Terry was appearing in J. M. Barrie's *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* at the Prince of Wales Theatre.

latest play, *The Prodigal Son*.⁶ ‘To hear of a dear friend’s death across three thousand miles of ocean, to be powerless for any purposes to help and useless for any offices of affection, is to suffer a bereavement that deals a double blow’, he wrote in a widely syndicated article for the *New York Herald*. ‘I had feared it was coming. I had expected it. I had even reckoned with certain contingencies which might arise in connection with it; yet now it has come, as death nearly always does, with a suddenness that is terrible’.⁷

A month earlier, Irving had congratulated Arthur Collins, the manager of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on the success of the London production of *The Prodigal Son*. ‘You will have an “old Drury” triumph tonight’, he wrote to Collins on the day of the play’s premiere. ‘No one is more delighted than I am and give my warmest congratulations to Hall Caine [...] I’m sorry I can’t be with you but look forward soon to that pleasure’.⁸ Irving was part of Collins’s extended family circle: his companion at this time was the society journalist Eliza Davis Aria, whose sister Florette was married to Collins’s brother, Marcus. That Irving did eventually attend Caine’s play, with his eldest son Harry, is attested to by Aria in her autobiography. After the performance, while waiting for Irving in their carriage in Russell Street, she observed father and son ‘so alike beneath the pale light over the door of the Royal entrance, Harry on the higher step with his chin almost against his father’s shoulder, the two spare gaunt figures, the two ultra-tall hats at the same angle, the identical elegance in their attitude whilst they puffed at their cigars’.⁹ Irving began a provincial tour in Sheffield the following week and just days later was dead of syncope exacerbated by a weakened heart, lung disease, and exhaustion.

⁶ The play was based on the novel of the same name (Caine’s ninth), which had been published the year before. It opened at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York, on 2 September 1905, almost a week ahead of its London premiere on 7 September 1905.

⁷ *New York Herald*, 16 October 1905.

⁸ Henry Irving to Arthur Collins, 7 September 1905, Laurence Irving Collection, Department of Theatre and Performance, Victoria & Albert Museum, London [hereafter ‘Laurence Irving Collection’]. Irving’s last new play, Victorien Sardou and Emile Moreau’s *Dante*, had been produced by Collins at Drury Lane in April 1903.

⁹ Mrs. [Eliza Davis] Aria, *My Sentimental Self* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1922), p. 141.

‘Only a few days before he started on the tour, which, alas! has had such a sad and sudden termination, I was chatting with him on the subject of his next visit to us, during the intervals of the performance here’, Collins said in a statement issued to the press on the morning of 14 October. ‘There has never lived a more universal favourite than Sir Henry Irving. He did not appeal to any one particular class or section, but to all, from his Majesty the King down to the humblest subject [...] With him, there was, above all, that wonderful and magnetic personality. He was Henry Irving! And in saying that we say all’.¹⁰ That evening from the Drury Lane stage, George Alexander, star of *The Prodigal Son*, shared his personal grief with the stunned audience. ‘I am sure it must be the wish of every playgoer tonight to join with us in our regrets that the English stage has been deprived of its greatest ornament’, he said, still dressed as Oscar Stephenson, the protagonist of Caine’s Icelandic saga. ‘They say a man is judged by the estimation in which he is held by his comrades. Well, Sir Henry Irving had the loyal and true support of every member of his profession’.¹¹ In New York, Caine observed that Irving had enjoyed the ‘unquestioned loyalty’ of his peers, ‘and here in America no less than in England his loss will be lamented among his own people as that of their friend and comrade as well as their uncrowned sovereign’. He recalled the ‘powers of thought, the capacity for sympathy, the electric touch of human insight and imagination which vitalized some phase of nearly everything [Irving] did’ and lamented he could do nothing but ‘lay a wreath of memory and affection on the name, if not the grave, of one of his earliest and dearest comrades’.¹²

A consideration of Caine’s first interactions with Irving is essential to understanding the full context of their collaboration on *Mahomet* two decades later. Although the record is incomplete — we know only about those interactions that the participants themselves found most meaningful and made note of — it is the record

¹⁰ *The Times*, 16 October 1905.

¹¹ *The Stage*, 19 October 1905.

¹² *New York Herald*, 16 October 1905.

of a flourishing personal and professional relationship based on mutual admiration and respect. That they would never, despite their best efforts, manage to work together was a 'great pity' to Stoker. 'Irving and Hall Caine would have made a wonderful team', he wrote. 'The latter was compact of imagination and — then undeveloped — dramatic force. With Irving to learn from, in the way of acting needs and development, he would surely have done some dramatic work of wonderful introspection and intensity — as he will do yet; though his road has been a rough one'.¹³

In the *New York Herald* remembrance, Caine states that he first met Irving when he (Caine) was just 18 years old and the actor was playing his first engagement in *The Bells*, Leopold Lewis's translation of Erckmann-Chatrian's *Le Juif Polonais*. Whether this was in London, where *The Bells* premiered on 25 November 1871, or in Liverpool, where it was performed for the first time on 10 June 1872 when the actor was on tour as a member of the Lyceum Theatre company under the management of Hezekiah Bateman and his wife, Sidney, is unclear. The latter seems more likely: Caine had returned to Liverpool from a year-long stint as a schoolteacher on the Isle of Man in April of that year to resume his work as a draughtsman in the office of the architect and surveyor John Murray while trying to launch a literary career, and the opportunity to see Irving would have presented itself just two months later, when the play ran for three weeks at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Lime Street.¹⁴ *The Bells* is a psychological portrait of an Alsatian burgomaster who robs and murders a Jewish traveller and then succumbs to a guilt-stricken conscience. Caine was so enthralled by Irving's performance that after seeing it two nights in a row from the gallery, he wrote out the entire play from

¹³ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 118.

¹⁴ Vivien Allen notes that 'when it comes to the story of his life Caine is not the best witness' and that his autobiography and countless interviews with newspapers and magazines are full of 'romantic nonsense'. Often careless with dates and known for exaggerating his connections, Caine may be innocently mistaken or deliberately misleading in this account. Bram Stoker, who knew both Irving and Caine better than anyone else, says their relationship began in 1874; Allen follows Stoker's lead without considering Caine's claim in the *New York Herald*. See Allen, *Hall Caine*, pp. 20–21 and p. 34, and Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 115.

memory (or so he claimed). This marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship with the actor, who was fifteen years his senior. Caine recalled that as a young man in his thirties, Irving was ‘very impulsive, very reckless, very voluble [and] always in a hurry’. The relationship between the two men was to be ‘always affectionate and sometimes intimate’.¹⁵

The connection was renewed in the summer of 1874 as Caine was preparing the first issue of *The Rambler*, a small monthly magazine. He wrote to Irving to ask permission to include the actor’s portrait with an essay called ‘The Very Modern Stage’. Well aware of the benefits of being on good terms with up-and-coming writers, Irving agreed, and his lithograph appeared as the frontispiece of the magazine’s first (and only) issue.¹⁶ Caine was also writing articles and theatre reviews for the Liverpool *Town Crier*, a weekly satirical paper edited by his friend William Tirebuck.¹⁷ It was in Caine’s capacity as drama critic for this paper that he was invited by Irving to attend the London premiere of *Hamlet* on 31 October 1874, an evening ‘as important in the history of the drama as the first night of *Hernani*’ according to *The Times*.¹⁸ Caine’s review of the production, which Stoker called ‘very remarkable considering the writer’s age’, was reprinted as a broadsheet pamphlet.¹⁹ Caine praised the way in which Irving gave every passage ‘its proper

¹⁵ *New York Herald*, 16 October 1905. Irving’s success as Mathias in *The Bells* catapulted him into the front rank of his profession; the play ran for 151 nights in London and remained in Irving’s repertoire for 34 years. See *Henry Irving and ‘The Bells’: Irving’s Personal Script of the Play by Leopold Lewis*, ed. by David Mayer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980). The date of the first Liverpool performance of *The Bells* is provided in R. J. Broadbent, *Annals of the Liverpool Stage* (Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1908), p. 309.

¹⁶ See Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, 115. No copies of *The Rambler* have survived but a printer’s proof of the essay is held in the Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage (MS 09542, Box 54).

¹⁷ Caine and William Edwards Tirebuck (1854–1900) met as students at the Hope Street Unitarian School in Liverpool. Tirebuck became a newspaper editor and then a novelist.

¹⁸ *The Times*, 14 October 1905. Victor Hugo’s *Hernani* opened on 25 February 1830 at the Comédie-Française and represented the triumph of the Romantic drama over what had become a calcified Neoclassicism exemplified by the plays of Racine and Corneille. For a description of Irving’s staging of *Hamlet*, see Alan Hughes, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 27–87.

¹⁹ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 115. In her account of this event, Allen misidentifies the actress who portrayed Ophelia: it was Isabel Bateman, not Ellen Terry. Allen is also mistaken when she suggests Irving had ‘tried out [...] a new production of *Hamlet*’ in Liverpool in the spring of 1874 (*Hall Caine*, p. 34).

pulse' and noted 'the variety, strength, and splendour of the whole conception'. Irving's Hamlet was 'the embodiment of infinite love and tenderness [...] a creature made for love — pure, confiding love. He seeks it everywhere'. The character's hesitation to act was the result of 'a ceaseless contention between the qualities of the heart and the faculties of the mind — the one prompting to and the other impeding revenge [...] Only because the provocations to revenge accumulate until they become too great for simple man to bear [do] his generous feelings in the end succumb'. Caine felt himself in the thrilling presence of something new: he saw in Irving an actor respectful of theatrical tradition but free of its moribund conventions. He was convinced he had witnessed the birth of a new type of acting:

They are happy, indeed, who hear Hamlet first from Mr. Irving. They may see other actors essay the part (a very improbable circumstance whilst Mr. Irving holds his claim to it), but the memory of the noble embodiment of the character will never leave them. We will not say that Mr. Irving is the Betterton, Garrick, or Kemble of his age. In consideration of this performance we claim for him a position altogether distinct and unborrowed. Mr. Irving will [...] be the leader of a school of actors now eagerly enlisting themselves under his name. The object will be the triumph of *mental* over *physical* histrionic art.²⁰

In the autumn of 1876, the Lyceum company returned to the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Liverpool, which was crowded on the night of 2 October with playgoers eager to see Irving's Hamlet for the first time in that city. Irving and Caine met again, this time at Irving's request. Irving had recognized a kindred spirit, one both congenial and potentially useful. 'Caine seemed to intuitively understand not only Irving's work but his aim and method', Stoker wrote. 'Irving felt this and had a high opinion of Caine's powers. I do not know any one whose opinions interested him more'.²¹ During this visit, the actor enlisted Caine's journalistic expertise in responding to an attack launched against him by the Hackney-based Congregational minister Thomas William Baxter Aveling. Aveling's son, Edward, a science lecturer

²⁰ [Hall Caine], 'Critique on Mr. Henry Irving's "Hamlet", Lyceum Theatre, London, 1874 [Reprinted from the "Town Crier", Liverpool] (Liverpool: Albert Wainwright, 1874).

²¹ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 116.

at King's College London, had for some years been telling friends he was related to Irving. Then Aveling took the deception one step too far: he applied to join the Savage Club and listed Irving as his brother on the application, a statement the actor denied when the club contacted him for confirmation. Aveling apologised, telling Irving it had been a joke that got out of hand, and Irving thought the matter closed.²² Aveling's father, however, felt it necessary to deny any family connection in his presidential remarks at a meeting of the Congregational Union in Bradford on 10 October 1876. He told his audience he had met Irving and esteemed him as 'an accomplished gentleman'. But he also noted the popularity of 'histrionic recitations' among members of Young Men's Christian Associations and warned their leaders to beware the 'danger of creating a taste for the theatre, which, notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of some earnest reformers, seems almost incurably evil'. Those in charge of such associations, he added, should 'firmly resist any degenerating tendencies'.²³ This public reopening of a matter that had already been privately resolved and the gratuitous slap at his profession irked Irving and he fired off a reproving telegram to the senior Aveling, who responded by asserting that, rightly or

²² Edward Bibbens Aveling (1849–98) was forced to abandon his academic career when he announced he was an atheist. He became a campaigner for secular causes and lived with Eleanor Marx, daughter of Karl Marx, from 1884 until her suicide in 1898. He wrote theatrical reviews and plays under the pseudonym Alec Nelson. Frequently in debt, he continued to importune Irving well into the 1890s, asking him to produce his play *Judith Shakespeare*, for example, and demanding money. In January 1898, three months before Eleanor's death and less than a year before his own, he asked Ellen Terry for a loan. See Rachel Holmes, *Eleanor Marx: A Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 425. Aveling's behaviour distressed Eleanor, who as a member of an avid theatre-going family had attended many performances at the Lyceum and of whom Irving and Terry were fond. She had seen both Irving's 1874 *Hamlet* and his 1875 *Macbeth*; in 1876 she became a member of F. J. Furnivall's New Shakspeare Society. In 1890, Irving sent her a copy of his edition of Shakespeare's plays; see Eleanor Marx to Henry Irving, 26 October 1890, Laurence Irving Collection, and Gail Marshall, 'Eleanor Marx and Shakespeare', in *Eleanor Marx: Life, Work, Contacts*, ed. by John Stokes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 69–81.

²³ Thomas W. Aveling, *Outside the Fold: The External Relationships of Congregational Churches, The Address Delivered at the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union, Bradford, October 10th, 1876* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876), pp. 32–33. The printed version of the address omits Aveling's remarks about Irving; these were reported in *The Times*, 11 October 1876. Aveling was one of the most prominent Nonconformist ministers of the Victorian period, his sermons regularly drawing more than two thousand people to his Kingsland Road chapel each week. He was widely respected for his support of philanthropic causes and keenly interested in scientific issues: unlike many of his colleagues, he was receptive to new explanations of the origin of man and the age of the Earth. When it came to 'frivolous' recreational pursuits such as the theatre, however, he maintained a traditional hard line — at least in public.

wrongly, ‘the great majority of our people look unfavourably on theatrical exhibitions; and to not a few it appeared that, if the report of the alleged relationship were true, it identified me with such exhibitions’.²⁴ Irving then granted Caine an interview intended for the Liverpool *Argus* designed to set the record straight. Caine’s article, ‘The Facts of the Irving-Aveling Mystery’, appeared on 21 October. In it, he asked Aveling whether he imagined that Irving’s professional reputation would be enhanced by a family relationship with the president of the Congregational Union, or whether Aveling’s ‘personal credit would be tarnished and his cloth sullied by supposed connection with the most renowned actor of modern times’. He pointed out that Aveling had met Irving at the Lyceum Theatre following a performance of *Hamlet* and wondered why Aveling had omitted this fact from his address. ‘When Dr. Aveling made reference to the private interview he had enjoyed with the eminent actor [...] he provoked the inference that he was a stranger to Mr. Irving in his public capacity’, Caine wrote. ‘It should be known, however, that he who warns the members of Young Men’s Christian Associations in Bradford against a “tendency to drift towards the questionable” has himself cultivated that taste for the theatre into which, according to him, “these societies are in danger of degenerating”’.²⁵ The tone of the article is harsh, and that Irving not only bothered to respond to Aveling but that he did so with such vehemence is evidence of the seriousness with which he took his mission of promoting the theatre as a force for moral good at this early stage of his career.²⁶

Just weeks after Irving secured Caine’s assistance with dismissing the Aveling affair, an event occurred in Dublin that would have profound consequences for the careers of both men: Irving met Bram Stoker, who would become his business manager for nearly thirty years. (It is sometimes assumed that Stoker introduced Caine to Irving; in fact, Caine’s relationship with Irving predated

²⁴ Thomas Aveling to Henry Irving, 14 October 1876, Laurence Irving Collection.

²⁵ *Liverpool Argus*, 21 October 1876.

²⁶ Irving’s efforts to effect a rapprochement between church and stage are described in Foulkes, *Church and Stage in Victorian England*, pp. 211–36.

Stoker's by at least two years and Caine would not meet Stoker until 1878.) Stoker had first seen Irving in 1867, when he played Captain Absolute in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals* at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. Forty years later this performance remained so vivid in Stoker's memory that he could recall Irving's 'movements, his expressions, his tone of voice'.²⁷ When Irving returned to Dublin in 1871, Stoker attended three performances of James Albery's *Two Roses*, in which Irving starred as Digby Grant. It was not until November 1876, however, that Irving and Stoker were introduced. Stoker was employed as a civil service clerk and had been the drama critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail* for five years. The Lyceum Theatre company was on tour with *Hamlet*, *The Bells*, and W. G. Wills's *Charles I*. Stoker wrote two reviews of *Hamlet* that impressed Irving; in the second he noted that 'the great, deep, underlying idea of Hamlet is that of a mystic', which Irving had seemed to realise 'by a kind of instinct'.²⁸ This insight earned Stoker an invitation to a small gathering in Irving's rooms at the Shelbourne Hotel on St Stephen's Green on 3 December, during which the actor recited Thomas Hood's poem 'The Dream of Eugene Aram'. In his memoirs of the actor, Stoker called this a performance of 'incarnate power [and] incarnate passion' that was 'different, both in kind and degree, from anything I had ever heard'. As the recitation ended, Stoker famously fell into what he described as 'something like a violent fit of hysterics' that affected Irving deeply. Thus began a 'loving and understanding friendship' that was 'as profound, as close, as lasting as can be between two men'.²⁹

Irving was back at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Liverpool in 1877 for a two-week engagement beginning on 3 September, this time with *Richard III*. He had discarded Colley Cibber's version of the play, published in 1700 and the standard

²⁷ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, I, p. 5.

²⁸ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 2 December 1876; Stoker's first review of *Hamlet* had appeared in the same paper on 28 November 1876.

²⁹ Stoker describes this period of his relationship with Irving in a chapter called 'Friendship'. See *Personal Reminiscences*, I, pp. 25–34. From 1871, Irving sought out like-minded individuals who might be of use to him when he became a manager; his cultivation of Caine and then Stoker illustrates this process.

text for generations of actors. Cibber had interpolated passages from *Richard II*; *Henry IV, Part 2*; *Henry V*; and *Henry VI, Part 3*, as well as hundreds of lines of his own verse, into the original text. Irving had scraped these excrescences away, and the novelty of his approach attracted a large audience for the play's first night on 10 September. The critic of the *Liverpool Mercury* admired Irving's courage in reverting to the play as written as well as his refusal to rely on the traditional delivery of well-known passages.³⁰ Caine attended several performances before the company's engagement ended on 14 September. By the end of the year he had given a public lecture on Irving's *Richard III* and *Macbeth* that was published as a 46-page pamphlet.³¹ Two months later in Dublin, Irving told Stoker he was quietly making plans to become the manager of a London theatre in his own right and that there might be a role for the Irishman in the new enterprise. From that point, Stoker recalled, 'the hope grew in me that a time might yet come when he and I might work together to one end that we both believed in'. In his diary for 22 November 1877, Stoker scribbled 'London in view'.³²

The following July, Sidney Bateman, who had been managing the Lyceum Theatre by herself since the death of her husband in 1875, proposed to Irving that he assume the theatre's lease.³³ He quickly accepted and on 1 September 1878 he became the theatre's sole lessee. Stoker was engaged the same month, as was Ellen Terry, a favourite with London audiences who, since returning to the stage in 1874

³⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 September 1877. For a description of Irving's staging of *Richard III*, see Hughes, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean*, pp. 151–60.

³¹ Hall Caine, *Richard III and Macbeth: The Spirit of Romantic Play in Relationship to the Principles of Greek and of Gothic Art, and to the Picturesque Interpretations of Mr. Henry Irving: A Dramatic Study* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., and Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1877). Caine must have seen Irving's *Macbeth* in London sometime after its premiere there on 25 September 1875; it was not part of the Lyceum's touring repertoire at this time. The September 1877 engagement in Liverpool included *Hamlet*, *The Bells*, and *The Lyons Mail* in addition to *Richard III*. In his lecture, Caine praised Irving's 'liberal education, critical discernment, and delicate taste' and credited him with reviving public interest in the works of Shakespeare. He claimed the actor's success in Shakespearean roles could be explained by his natural affinity with the playwright ('his mind is [like Shakespeare's] essentially and eminently the Gothic mind'), adding, 'to alight upon the romantic delineation of the romantic character is natural to Mr Irving, by whom the germ of characterization is grasped at the onset, and the vitality throughout is radiated from that inner centre' (p. 7, p. 15).

³² Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, I, pp. 53–54.

³³ Sidney Bateman to Henry Irving, [July 1878], Laurence Irving Collection.

following a six-year absence, had acted with Squire and Marie Bancroft at the Prince of Wales's Theatre and with John Hare at the Court Theatre.³⁴ With his business manager and leading lady in place, Irving set off on a four-month provincial tour. During another two-week engagement at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Irving was the guest of honour at a meeting of the Liverpool Notes and Queries Society. This organisation, a forum 'for the discussion of Arts questions of current interest, new pictures, new music, new plays, new books and good work of every kind', had been founded by Caine with his friends William Tirebuck and George Rose in 1876.³⁵ Some members of the large audience challenged Irving's approach to *Macbeth*, which drew a spirited defence from the actor. 'The whole thing was very funny and very interesting, in fact quite a unique thing in its way', Caine told Edward Dowden.³⁶ He later recalled that 'much to [Irving's] amusement, a rugged Unitarian minister [...] dressed him down as if he had been a naughty boy who required the cane of a schoolmaster'.³⁷

Caine attended the first night of the first season of Irving's management of the Lyceum, 30 December, for which Irving had revived *Hamlet*. It was during the run of this play that Caine met Stoker. Later, Stoker would act as Caine's literary agent, introducing him to publishers, drafting his contracts, and handling various legal matters. Stoker helped Caine with the structure of *The Manxman*, and Caine was an early reader of Stoker's fiction. Stoker dedicated *Dracula* to Caine in 1897; in 1905 he wrote concise introductions for ten of Caine's novels published as a

³⁴ From 1868 to 1874 Terry lived with the architect Edward William Godwin in Hertfordshire. See *The Story of My Life* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1908), pp. 76–89.

³⁵ Prospectus, Liverpool Notes and Queries Society, quoted in Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 31.

³⁶ Quoted in Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 59. A report of the event appeared in *The Theatre*, 1 November 1878. Dowden, professor of English literature at Trinity College Dublin, would contribute a biography of Shakespeare, an introduction, and commentary on individual plays to *The Henry Irving Shakespeare* (London: Blackie and Son, 1892), an eight-volume set of the complete works edited by Irving and Frank Marshall. Caine kept in touch with Dowden until the latter's death in 1913 and continued to publish critical essays on Shakespeare even after achieving fame as a novelist; these include 'Two Aspects of Shakespeare's Art', *The Contemporary Review*, 43 (June 1883), 883–900, and 'The Novelist in Shakespeare', *The New Review*, 11 (August 1894), 120–134.

³⁷ Caine, *My Story*, p. 50.

collected edition by Heinemann. In 1908 Stoker edited Caine's autobiography.³⁸

Caine described Stoker as a 'big, breathless, impetuous hurricane of a man' with a 'massive and muscular and almost volcanic personality' and a genius for friendship: 'never in any other man have I seen such capacity for devotion to a friend'.³⁹ For his part, Stoker predicted of Caine that 'some day, if it is not so now, it will be recognised that this earnest, imaginative, strenuous man [...] who carved every step upward to his present place among the foremost men of his country and of the world [...] is a teacher of many good things, and that the world is richer and wiser and better because he has lived in it'.⁴⁰

In 1881, Caine moved to London to serve as amanuensis to the Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, with whom he had been corresponding since 1879.⁴¹ At the time he was, by his own admission, 'a young man of five-and-twenty, brought up in the country, untutored and unknown, with nothing to recommend him but some knowledge and an immense love of books'. Fate had brought him within Rossetti's orbit, making him 'the intimate friend and for a while the companion and housemate of a great and illustrious poet-painter, who had been born in a very hot-bed of literature and art, and was then living out in the closest seclusion the last days of a life that was saddened by many unhappy experiences'.⁴² Soon after moving into Rossetti's Cheyne Walk home, Caine found himself in the role of 'secretary, companion, housekeeper, general factotum, and eventually nurse' to Rossetti, who was by this time addicted to chloral, which he combined with whiskey to manage his insomnia and depression.⁴³ Caine helped Rossetti with

³⁸ Stoker dedicated *Dracula* 'To My Dear Friend Hommy-Beg', a Manx term of endearment meaning 'Little Tommy' that had been given to Caine by his paternal grandmother. For more on Stoker's relationship with Caine, see Paul Murray, *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), pp. 126–130.

³⁹ Hall Caine, 'Bram Stoker: The Story of a Great Friendship', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 April 1912.

⁴⁰ Bram Stoker, 'The Ethics of Hall Caine', *The Homiletic Review*, 58 (August 1909), 102.

⁴¹ Both sides of the correspondence were published by Vivien Allen in *Dear Mr. Rossetti: The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Hall Caine, 1878–1881* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). It began after Caine sent Rossetti copies of three lectures on poetry he had delivered in Liverpool in March 1879.

⁴² Caine, *My Story*, pp. ix–x.

⁴³ Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 123.

various business matters and played a major role in brokering the sale of *Dante's Dream at the Time of the Death of Beatrice* — Rossetti's largest picture — to the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool. They discussed literature and entertained Rossetti's distinguished friends, including Theodore Watts-Dunton, William Bell Scott, and Ford Madox Brown.⁴⁴ Caine began to think about how he would make his own mark in the literary world. 'Why not try your hand at a Manx story?' Rossetti asked him. 'The Bard of Manxland — it's worthwhile to be that'.⁴⁵ Taking this shrewd suggestion to heart, Caine began writing the occasional article for prominent literary magazines, including the *Athenaeum* and *The Academy*. He was well aware, as Mary Hammond has noted, that 'being known as a critic and reviewer was extremely important to the way in which one's first novel was received' during a time of increasing competition and turmoil in the publishing world.⁴⁶ *The Shadow of a Crime*, a tale of seventeenth-century Cumbria, was published in 1885 after he felt sufficient groundwork had been laid. This was followed in the same year by *She's All the World to Me* and the next year by *A Son of Hagar*. But it would be with *The Deemster*, published in 1887, that he would come to the attention of a wide reading audience.

By this time Caine had many friends in London's elite artistic circles and was a regular at Irving's Beefsteak Room gatherings at the Lyceum. He had become a contributing writer for the *Liverpool Mercury* in 1882, and, with a completely free hand as to the type and quantity of stories he filed, attended the theatre on scores of first nights. 'I suppose I telegraphed to Liverpool a hundred notices of new plays

⁴⁴ Caine devoted a significant portion of his autobiography to his life with Rossetti, which ended only with the latter's death in April 1882; see *My Story*, pp. 60–247. He included six poems by Rossetti in his *Sonnets of Three Centuries: A Selection* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882) and also wrote a separate biography of his friend, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Elliot Stock, 1882). The appearance of this book so soon after Rossetti's death distressed his family, as did its intimate revelations about life in Cheyne Walk.

⁴⁵ Caine, *My Story*, p. 177.

⁴⁶ Mary Hammond, *Reading, Publishing, and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 124. Hammond persuasively argues that Caine paid a high price for being unable to resist trumpeting his own merits during this early phase of his career: a lifetime of being despised for his ambition and rejected for his popularity by the traditional literary establishment.

produced in London', he later wrote.⁴⁷ One of these angered the actor-playwright Wilson Barrett, who had recently assumed the management of the Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street. Barrett demanded a meeting with Caine to discuss the matter. What provoked Barrett's ire is not known, but a study of Caine's theatrical journalism around this time suggests a number of possibilities. It might have been his disapproval of the amount of money spent on Barrett's production of George R. Sims's *The Romany Rye* in June 1882 (noting the outlay for this 'sensational drama of the most sensational school' approached £2,500, Caine carped, 'it is no wonder that theatres are often in the market').⁴⁸ Perhaps it was Caine's suggestion that Barrett should respond to a church rector's criticism of his production of Henry Herman and W. G. Wills's *Claudian* in December 1883 'by criticising the dramatic propriety of the sermons delivered in the pulpit' or the scorn Caine heaped on Barrett for conflating the mocking of a stage curate in Charles Hawtrey's farce *The Private Secretary* with the mocking of religion itself.⁴⁹ Caine also joined the general chorus of critics who slated Barrett's production of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Junius, or The Household Gods* in February 1885 and Barrett and Sydney Grundy's *Clito* in May 1886.⁵⁰ However, it is more likely that what had infuriated the actor was Caine's scathing review of Barrett's unconventional production of *Hamlet*, which opened at the Princess's Theatre on 16 October 1884.

Barrett's *Hamlet* was not the introspective, melancholy prince of Irving's romantic imagination; he was an energetic, vigorous young man intent on avenging the murder of a beloved father. Instead of Irving's 'wan sadness', there was a 'quick, passionate, and impetuous hero, earnest and determined, full of tender and lovable qualities, quick to forgive and forget, and, most important, ruthless toward the

⁴⁷ Caine, *My Story*, p. 255.

⁴⁸ *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 June 1882.

⁴⁹ *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 February 1884, 28 December 1885.

⁵⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, 25 March 1885, 27 May 1886.

murderer of his father'.⁵¹ Barrett was generally praised for this rebalancing of dramatic interest and emphasis. Critics were divided, however, over his application of a modern melodramatic style to the play. Barrett's Hamlet was prosaic; his manner easy, informal, sometimes breezy. Barrett abandoned the traditional reverential rendering of the blank verse in favour of an unpretentious naturalism. The approach was a revelation for many in his audiences. The playwright Bronson Howard told Barrett that for the first time he had understood Hamlet as 'a real, breathing and feeling human being — and not a poetic-philosophical myth'.⁵²

Caine's review appeared in the *Liverpool Mercury* on 18 October. While conceding the production would be popular, Caine baldly asserted that it was 'on a lower plane than that to which we are accustomed'. That plane had been set at a very high level by Irving's interpretation, and with this shot across Barrett's bow Caine had unequivocally chosen his side. Barrett's approach, he argued, had made the play 'more intelligible, but less intelligent'. It lacked refinement: 'nothing is left to hint — it has no fine suggestiveness about it'. When assessed against Irving's erudition and sophistication of conception, Barrett failed to measure up. He was 'careless' with the text; 'Hamlet's subtlety did not half so much appear; his philosophising did not half so much impress'. In what was meant to be a critical coup de grace, Caine noted disdainfully that 'the public which go to the theatre to be amused will like this *Hamlet* and praise it'. In other words, it was an interpretation suitable for theatregoers who were not too fussy about their Shakespeare — that is, those less discerning than the cognoscenti who frequented the Lyceum. Without having named Irving once, Caine had effectively dismissed his friend's chief rival, and it was probably the derisive tone of this review that had provoked Barrett into demanding a meeting with him.

⁵¹ James Thomas, 'Wilson Barrett's *Hamlet*', *Theatre Journal*, 31 (December 1979): 479–500 (p. 493), paraphrasing Charlotte Porter, 'The Drama: Wilson Barrett's *Hamlet*', *Shakespeariana*, 4 (1887): 29–40.

⁵² Bronson Howard to Wilson Barrett, 25 October 1884, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, quoted in James Thomas, *The Art of the Actor-Manager: Wilson Barrett and the Victorian Theatre* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), p. 77.

Barrett and Irving could not have been more different in the physical attributes they brought to their profession. Barrett had every advantage: a well-proportioned figure; handsome good looks heightened by an aquiline nose, square jaw, steel-grey eyes, and abundant wavy brown hair; a graceful and assured stage presence; and a fine tenor voice. Irving, by contrast, was tall and whipcord thin. He wore his coarse iron-grey hair longer than was the fashion and had a high sloping forehead, prominent bushy eyebrows, hollow cheeks, and a thin-lipped mouth. His gait was awkward, his voice marked by peculiar intonations. The contrast in appearance between the two men reinforced the impression that Barrett was an actor for the people, a matinee idol trading on masculine sex appeal, while Irving was a more sophisticated — perhaps a more *acquired* — taste that distinguished his followers as acolytes of a higher art. Ellen Terry recalled Irving telling her that ‘physique’ made a popular actor while ‘imagination and sensibility’ made a great one. ‘After the lapse of years’, she wrote in 1908, ‘I begin to wonder if Henry was ever really *popular*. It was natural to most people to dislike his acting [...] but he forced them, almost against their will and nature, out of dislike into admiration. They had to come up to him, for never would he go down to them. This is not popularity’.⁵³ This was to be a contrast that also characterised Caine’s dramatic aspirations throughout his life. His plays were popular melodramas in the traditional vein, perfectly suited to Barrett’s talents. Yet he worked relentlessly to find a subject and style appropriate for the ‘art theatre’ represented by Irving’s Lyceum. In his complaint to Caine, Barrett had added a conciliatory postscript: ‘And now that I’ve told you what I think of your article, I wish to tell you what I think of yourself. I think you could write a play, and if some day you should hit on a subject suitable to me, I shall be glad if you will let me hear of it’.⁵⁴ The prickly nature of this early interaction between the two men was to set the tone for their future dealings, which would swing between wild success and abject failure until Barrett’s death in 1904.

⁵³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, p. 226.

⁵⁴ Caine, *My Story*, p. 255.

Chapter 2: Plays before *Mahomet*, 1872–89

Caine's first play was written during the summer of 1872, when he was between jobs as an architectural draughtsman. He was nineteen and already thinking about becoming a writer. *The Charter* was based on an episode in Charles Kingsley's novel *Alton Locke*. Caine identified with the title character, a young tailor and aspiring poet who becomes a leader of the Chartist movement out of a desire to improve working conditions for sweated labour. Caine later recalled that as a youth he had been a 'very strong socialist, almost a Bolshevik, partly out of admiration of Carlyle and Ruskin'.¹ He admitted his reading in drama had been limited, although he very much admired the plays of Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Considering the play nearly fifty years after he had written it, Caine thought it owed something to that author's manner. Primarily, though, he found it interesting for the way it showed an early concern for social problems and a certain flair for rhetoric and style. 'My view would be that it was not bad work', he wrote of the efforts of his younger self.² After receiving an enthusiastic response to the play from his friend William Tirebuck, as well as some encouragement from the actor William Wybert Rousby, Caine sent it off to the Drury Lane actor and stage manager J. C. Cowper.³ Caine evidently expected Cowper to recognise his budding theatrical genius and snap up the play for

¹ Memorandum dated 1920 in Caine's handwriting, added to the manuscript of *The Charter* (1872), MS 09542, Box 32, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage. Caine was inspired by Ruskin's commitment to giving practical life, through the Guild of St George, to the ideas he had developed in *Fors Clavigera* (1871–1884). For the first time, Caine understood how it might be possible for a man of letters to change the world for the better. 'It was at this fire I lighted my torch', he wrote in *My Story*, which devotes an entire chapter to Ruskin, 'and for many months I went on writing denunciations of the social system and of the accepted interpretation of the Christian faith. Thus I was a Christian Socialist a good many years before the name was known, and perhaps something of a New Theologian also' (p. 39). Also see Katherine Newey and Jeffrey Richards, *John Ruskin and the Victorian Theatre* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 129.

² Memorandum dated 1920, MS 09542, Box 32, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

³ Not 'T. C. Cowper' as stated by Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 29. Caine had certainly seen, and perhaps met, John Curtis Cowper (1827–1885) at the Theatre Royal, Liverpool, where he played leading roles throughout the 1860s before moving to London. See Broadbent, *Annals of the Liverpool Stage*, pp. 234–235, and W. Davenport Adams, *A Dictionary of the Drama: A Guide to the Plays, Playwrights, Players, and Playhouses of the United Kingdom and America, from the Earliest Times to the Present* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904), 1(A–G), p. 348. Rousby (1835–1907) had just had a major London success as Etienne de Vignolles in Tom Taylor's *Joan of Arc*.

himself; instead, Cowper replied with a detailed description of how plays were selected and developed for production. He offered to help Caine revise his play and place it with an appropriate manager for a fee of ten guineas. Taken aback, Caine expressed his astonishment that any playwright would be asked to pay to have his play considered, declaring that managers should be grateful to have a constant flow of new plays for their novelty-hungry audiences. Exasperated, Cowper replied that no London manager would invest hundreds of pounds in an untried piece by an unknown writer. ‘You may be an embryo Shakespeare’, Cowper wrote drily, but in that playwright’s time, it was far less expensive to stage a play. Now, he told Caine, managers could easily spend £1,000 to produce a five-act drama in London. He suggested that Caine test the waters by putting on the play himself — a trial Cowper was certain would be enlightening to the would-be dramatist.⁴ Caine did not attempt the experiment.

The following year Caine sent a draft of a different play to W. W. Jackson, a Liverpool friend working as a journalist in London. This was apparently a bad imitation of an old melodrama and Jackson urged him to find an original subject. When Caine told Jackson his feelings had been hurt by this response, Jackson bluntly told him to get a thicker skin. After his friend established a touring theatrical company, Caine sent him dramatic sketches, all of which were rejected.⁵ Despite this unpromising start, Caine persisted. In his autobiography, he states that he made no real attempt to write plays until many years later, when ‘dramatic pirates’ began to appropriate his novels.⁶ Although the complex issues presented by international copyright law during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would, in fact, preoccupy Caine throughout his life, a more compelling reason for his turn to the

⁴ J. C. Cowper to Thomas Henry Hall Caine, 12 July 1873, MS 09542, Box 45, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

⁵ On Caine’s early plays, see Allen, *Hall Caine*, pp. 29–30, p. 33. Few have survived; even their total number is unknown due to gaps in the archival record. See Appendix I for a list of known plays.

⁶ Caine, *My Story*, p. 344. On the widespread problem of dramatic piracy during the nineteenth century, see John Russell Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 84–115.

theatre once he started having a modicum of success with fiction was his desire to consolidate and extend his growing popularity.⁷ The staging of his novels gave them a central and highly visible position within Victorian culture and generated critical and public interest. The speed with which he attempted to have a dramatic version of his first ‘Manx’ novel produced reveals his desire to be taken seriously as a versatile man of letters and set him on the path to becoming a dominant (and ubiquitous) literary force, as well as a very rich man.

The Deemster: A Romance was published in three volumes by Chatto & Windus in November 1887. Set on the Isle of Man in the eighteenth century, the novel turns on a quirk of ancient Manx jurisprudence that permitted the island’s bishop to preside over felony trials — in this case, Bishop Gilchrist Mylrea tries his own son, Dan, for the murder of his cousin Ewan, killed accidentally during a fight. Dan pleads guilty and is banished to a remote part of the island. When a mysterious sweating sickness sets in among the populace, Dan uses the knowledge given him by an Irish priest to stop its spread. His sentence of banishment is lifted and he becomes the deemster, or chief judge, of the island. He has contracted the sickness himself, however, and dies as Mona, the woman he loves and the sister of the cousin he killed, prays at his side. The novel was an immediate success, garnering excellent reviews and even better sales: it ran through more than fifty English editions and was translated into every major European language.⁸ Caine’s friends thought the powerful and passionate story lent itself naturally to the stage. Emboldened by this encouragement, Caine sent a copy of the novel to Barrett, confident that its unusual setting and sympathetic main character would suit the actor. Caine, who at the time knew next to nothing about the requirements of adapting a novel for the stage, later

⁷ Caine was not alone in this impulse. As Allardyce Nicoll observed, a number of novelists began writing for the stage during this period, with many choosing to dramatise their own work rather than turn it over to a manager or jobbing playwright. There was ‘nothing particularly new in the presence of authors who thus divided their literary activities between narrative fiction and dramatic dialogue; from Fielding onwards to Lytton and Reade dozens of such writers readily come to mind’, he noted. This trend continued into the first two decades of the twentieth century; Nicoll gives as examples Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy. See *English Drama, 1900–1930*, p. 381 and pp. 128–29.

⁸ Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 188.

admitted he had taken the step ‘hardly knowing yet where the drama lay in my narrative story, and seeing many perplexing difficulties’.⁹ Bram Stoker would surely have warned his friend off the experiment. ‘There is’, he observed in his account of his time at the Lyceum with Irving, ‘no form of literary work which seems so easy and is so difficult — which while seeming to only require the common knowledge of life, needs in reality great technical knowledge and skill’.¹⁰ But Barrett was intrigued enough to invite Caine to London to meet with him, and in January 1888 Caine set off from Liverpool in a state of great optimism. Just outside the city, a dense fog set in that prevented his train from travelling further south than Derby. Caine was compelled to break his journey and for more than a week he sought refuge at an inn in the Dovedale valley, using the time to develop a dramatic scenario of his novel. Barrett liked its potential and offered to pay Caine a royalty of two guineas per performance up to eight hundred pounds, an arrangement giving him ‘the sense of possessing more wealth than I had ever yet known to be in the world’.¹¹ Weeks of difficult work followed as Caine attempted to turn his scenario into a producible play. He felt sharply his status as a rank beginner. ‘Not all the supernatural wisdom I had won in earlier days as a dramatic critic had taught me the hundred and one technical tricks that are necessary to success on the stage’, he noted.¹² When he learned the full extent of the modifications that would have to be made to his carefully crafted novel, Caine panicked, telling Barrett in February that he needed time to ‘cerebrate’ and think through how best to present the story given the practical limitations of late-Victorian stagecraft.¹³ While Barrett researched Manx landscapes, religious and legal customs, fishing traditions, dialects, and folklore,

⁹ Caine, *My Story*, p. 344.

¹⁰ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, pp. 131–32.

¹¹ Caine, *My Story*, p. 345. Robert Harborough Sherard states that Caine received £1,000 for his work on *Ben-my-Chree*; this figure is also given by Norris, *Two Men of Manxland*, p. 8, and Sutherland, ‘Hall Caine’, p. 96. See ‘Hall Caine: Story of His Life and Work, Derived from Conversations’, *McClure’s Magazine*, (December 1895), 80–95 (p. 92), published simultaneously in Britain in *The Windsor Magazine* as ‘Hall Caine: A Biographical Study’ (December 1895), 562–77.

¹² Caine, *My Story*, p. 346.

¹³ Hall Caine to Wilson Barrett, 7 February 1888, quoted in James Thomas, *The Art of the Actor-Manager*, p. 98.

Caine began arranging plot and dialogue. Barrett read multiple drafts and tested each scene as it was written to ensure its suitability for a listening, rather than a reading, public. He made substantive contributions that were so appreciated by Caine that Caine insisted Barrett's name be added as co-author. 'You have written fully as much of the text as I have, and planned the incidents from first to last, whatever my share in concocting them', he told the actor in April.¹⁴ In fact, the five-act play that resulted from their collaboration, *Ben-my-Chree* (Manx for 'girl of my heart') departed significantly from the novel, not least in its ending: when the curtain falls, Mona is dead and Dan Mylrea awaits execution for having come to her defence in church when her chastity is wrongly questioned.¹⁵ Caine took no part in the rehearsals that began in early May but recalled the first time he heard an actor speak lines he had written. 'It was almost as if something of myself had in a dream, by a hypnotic transfer, passed into the mouth of somebody else', he marvelled.¹⁶

The play opened at the Princess's Theatre on 17 May 1888. It was an immediate success, and Caine was hailed as a brilliant new playwriting talent. 'Fine, bold, and brilliant [...] a romantic drama of singular charm', said Clement Scott in a *Daily Telegraph* review that was republished in the *Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser*. 'No one could have believed who ever casually read Mr Hall Caine's *Deemster* that it could possibly have made so admirable a play'.¹⁷ *The Times* recognised that the novel had 'served to suggest rather than to furnish the materials of the drama', which it called 'a story of passion, suffering, devotion, and self-

¹⁴ Hall Caine to Wilson Barrett, 8 April 1888, quoted in Thomas, *The Art of the Actor-Manager*, p. 99. Allardyce Nicoll noted that 'novelist and player were spiritually well suited to each other: both loved the bold passions, the thrilling episodes, and the strong strain of moralism which had been characteristic of the popular playhouse throughout the whole long course of its career' (Nicoll, *English Drama, 1900–1930*, p. 190.)

¹⁵ Hall Caine and Wilson Barrett, *Ben-my-Chree*, Add MS 53404 A, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library. The play was originally called *Dan* but given the more memorable and exotic Manx name after Dan's fishing boat, which plays a key role in the plot.

¹⁶ Caine, *My Story*, p. 347.

¹⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1888; *Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser*, 2 June 1888. The Manx newspaper added that in the audience were Sir James Gell, the island's attorney general, and A. W. Moore, a prominent Manx politician and historian, both of whom had helped Caine with details of legal procedure and local customs in *The Deemster*. See Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 187.

sacrifice’ of which the annals of the stage could supply but few examples.¹⁸ The *Era* thought the play ‘strong with the strength of the deep elemental human passions, love and jealousy and remorse; racy of the soil, the strange, rough Manx soil to which the author transports us; bringing an altogether fresh atmosphere into the playhouse’.¹⁹ Several reviews distinguished it from the usual melodramatic rubbish presented to London audiences. In contrast to the ‘showy trumpery that so often passes muster as melodrama, and appeals to the town by means of flashy posters and sensation pictures’, Clement Scott declared, *Ben-my-Chree* ‘soars far away from these merely ephemeral productions, these brilliant efforts of commonplace, these much-discussed attempts at reproducing most that is uninteresting and all that is vulgar in everyday life, in that it unlocks the casket of human nature and shows us the deeper man, the truer woman, the nobler life’.²⁰ The newspaper Caine had written for only a few years previously, the *Liverpool Mercury*, noted the prevailing opinion that the play ‘is one of the greatest successes of the modern stage’ and predicted that it would lead British drama ‘in the direction of real romantic drama — not the thing that has so often been known by that name’.²¹

Critics appreciated the strong characters Caine had drawn for Barrett and his acting partner Mary Eastlake. In a statement sure to get the attention of London’s other leading actor-managers, including Henry Irving, Scott observed, ‘Such parts as these are seldom written for modern artists’.²² There were a few dissenting reviews, almost all of which used the word ‘gloomy’ to characterise the play’s lasting impression. ‘Gloomy and painful’, said the *Daily Graphic*; ‘a gloomy one throughout’, said *Dramatic Notes*; ‘heavily charged with gloom’, said the *Daily News*.²³ But if the play was, as the critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette* observed,

¹⁸ *The Times*, 18 May 1888.

¹⁹ *The Era*, 19 May 1888.

²⁰ *Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1888.

²¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, 18 May 1888.

²² *Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1888.

²³ *Daily Graphic*, 26 May 1888; *Dramatic Notes*, May 1888; *Daily News* (London), 18 May 1888.

‘powerful, tragic, and gloomy’, it was also ‘in all respects a great success [...] When the curtain fell, a little before midnight, a chorus of approval rose on every hand’.²⁴

During his curtain speech, Barrett ‘congratulated himself, not without good cause, on having laid his hand on a new dramatist’.²⁵ Caine himself was overwhelmed by the occasion: ‘I remember, as something seen in a sort of delirious trance, through a mist of blinding tears, that at the fall of the curtain the whole audience was on its feet, and that when Barrett led me in front of the curtain there was a roar that dazed and stunned me’. He was astonished by ‘the emotion created by the tears, the laughter, the applause, and above all, the silence of the audience’.²⁶ Here was a reward not vouchsafed to the novelist: the instant gratification of knowing that the words one has written are having the desired emotional effect. To the large army of invisible readers who devoured his novels, Caine now added very visible playgoers who packed theatres to see his characters in the flesh. The speed with which this had occurred was astonishing. A mere six months had passed from the publication of *The Deemster* to the opening night of *Ben-my-Chree*.

Caine had, however, another hard lesson to learn about the practical realities of staging a new play in London. In response to criticism that the play was too sombre, its skittish financial backers demanded that its ‘gloom’ be lightened. One of these nervous producers was the Irish-American impresario William Wallace ‘Hustler’ Kelly, who had invested in Barrett’s season at the Princess’s through the American actress Grace Hawthorne, who was then the theatre’s lessee and manager. After initially resisting this pressure, Barrett acquiesced, and Caine devised a new version that ended with the lifting of Dan’s sentence of banishment and his marriage to Mona. ‘The authorities of the Princess’s Theatre have bowed to the will of their patrons, and now make the ending of *Ben-my-Chree* a happy instead of a fatal one’,

²⁴ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 May 1888.

²⁵ *The Era*, 19 May 1888.

²⁶ Caine, *My Story*, p. 347.

the *Bristol Mercury* reported.²⁷ But if the change satisfied some patrons, others complained. One Hiram Tattersall, writing to the editor of the *Liverpool Mercury*, bemoaned the fact that ‘owing to the weak sentimentalism of a certain spoiled section of the public, the play itself has had to be murdered at the close in order to save the life of its hero’. Would it be possible, he asked, for Barrett to restore the original ending when his company performed it in Liverpool later that week? ‘We are proud of Mr. Caine as one of ourselves, and have a right to ask that, in Liverpool at least, he should be seen at his best’, he wrote.²⁸ Barrett was delighted to oblige, and the play was given with the ‘gloomy’ ending when he appeared at the Court Theatre at the end of October.²⁹ During the same visit, at a dinner given by the Liverpool Art Club, Caine addressed the public’s desire for what he called ‘light food’ or an ‘agreeable soporific’ with a manifesto that would guide the rest of his playwriting career: ‘The dream of my life is a time when we who write for the public will be permitted to touch them at their highest and deepest. We want liberty, we want freedom of hand, we want the public to go to the theatre not only for amusement but for lofty emotions, high thoughts, the impulse to noble acts and to a pure and beautiful life’.³⁰

Ben-my-Chree ran for a lucrative nine weeks at the Princess’s Theatre, closing on 14 July and netting Barrett a profit of £2,150.³¹ It was a popular staple on his provincial and international tours for several years, successfully produced by others to whom Barrett licensed the rights, and was revived regularly in London, notably by John M. East at the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, in 1896, with East’s brother Charles as Dan Mylrea.

²⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 9 June 1888. Caine himself did not begrudge the change, noting two years later that the English public’s ‘craving for what is called poetic justice [...] is right and natural, though it may be puerile to expect that the threads of all stories should be gathered up to a happy ending’. See Hall Caine, ‘The New Watchwords of Fiction’, *Contemporary Review*, 57 (1890), 479–88 (p. 485).

²⁸ *Liverpool Mercury*, 25 October 1888.

²⁹ *Liverpool Mercury*, 26 October 1888.

³⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 October 1888.

³¹ Thomas, *The Art of the Actor-Manager*, p. 100.

Caine's first experience of adapting one of his novels for the stage had been successful beyond his dreams. If he had taken a little longer to consider his options, however, that first experience might have been with Irving: in his impatience to conclude an agreement with Barrett, Caine missed a golden opportunity to work with his idol. Stoker reports that Irving read *The Deemster* while on his third tour of the United States, had been 'one of its most appreciative admirers', and 'thought it would make a fine play'.³² When he returned to England in April 1888, Irving contacted his old friend, only to discover that a stage version of the novel was already in production at the Princess's. Stoker notes that Irving would have taken a different approach to the story than the one taken by Caine and Barrett: 'To him the dramatic centre and pivotal point of the play that would be most effective was the Bishop [Dan Mylrea's father, who tries to destroy evidence of his son's involvement in the death of his cousin and then, when Dan admits his guilt, orders him into permanent exile]. Had the novel been available, he would — Caine being willing to dramatise it or to allow it to be dramatised by someone else — have played it on those lines'.³³

Caine would, in fact, write a new theatrical adaptation of *The Deemster*, although he would ignore this friendly hint from Stoker. On 15 August 1910, *The Bishop's Son* was performed for the first time at the Grand Theatre in Douglas with Caine's son Derwent playing the role of Dan. Caine noted in a preface to the published edition of the play that this version of the story 'follows the line of the novel much more faithfully [...] I trust it may be seen that the better knowledge of stagecraft which the intervening years have brought to the author of the earlier play has justified him in making such a very different drama out of the same story'.³⁴ Religious aspects of the novel that had been muted in *Ben-my-Chree* are brought to

³² Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, pp. 117–18.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 118. Had this collaboration taken place, yet another Christian cleric would have been added to Irving's repertoire.

³⁴ Hall Caine, *The Bishop's Son: A New Drama in Four Acts* (London: [n. pub.], 1910). The Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library, also holds a copy of this play (LCP 1910/20).

the fore in this play; the chief interest of the narrative is shifted from Dan's punishment to his redemption, the guilty man becoming the deliverer of his people who dies while saving them from a deadly epidemic. This time there is no happy ending, only death for a penitent hero who expires in the sure faith of God's forgiveness as bells peal and the scene is flooded with a celestial light. The critic of the *Isle of Man Times* noted similarities to the Biblical stories of Eli and his sons, of David and Jonathan, and to the parable of the Prodigal Son: 'it is a story of sin and atonement', with one of its scenes making 'a rather daring approach to the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion, the doctrine of redemption', and one of its characters, the Irish priest, 'taking up a position in relation to the sin-stained man [...] which is almost akin to that of the Founder of our Faith to sinners in general'.³⁵ Allardyce Nicoll thought the final act of the play equal to the ending of any nineteenth-century drama, even comparing it — in feeling if not felicity of expression — to the ending of *Hamlet*.³⁶

On 28 September 1910, *The Bishop's Son* opened in London at the Garrick Theatre with Bransby Williams as Dan. Williams was best known for his music hall impersonations of other actors, including Irving.³⁷ A month before the premiere, the *Peel City Guardian* reported that he had travelled to the Isle of Man to pick up 'local colour'.³⁸ *The Times* praised his 'vigorous' portrayal of Dan, 'a performance in which all the old stage tricks, gestures, and tones were vivified, and pleasing reminiscences of Sir Henry Irving and other players frequently cropped up'. However, the 'best performance and the most natural' was judged to be that of the 'perfectly delightful' dog who played Dan's faithful terrier. 'Very dismal' was the

³⁵ *Isle of Man Times*, 20 August 1910.

³⁶ Nicoll, *English Drama, 1900–1930*, pp. 194–95.

³⁷ See Bransby Williams, *An Actor's Story* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1909) and *Bransby Williams, By Himself* (London: Hutchinson, 1954). In 1896, Williams was billed as 'The Irving of the Halls' at the London Music Hall, Shoreditch, where his impression of the actor as Mathias in *The Bells* was an audience favourite.

³⁸ *Peel City Guardian*, 20 August 1910. Caine and Williams met during one of Williams's many engagements on the Isle of Man, where for several years he performed at the Palace on the Queen's Promenade in Douglas.

verdict, even when, like *Ben-my-Chree* before it, the producers forced Caine to give it a more uplifting conclusion.³⁹ The play disappeared without a trace after only seven performances, an example of just how much the tastes of metropolitan audiences had changed since 1888.

That autumn, Caine began work on another play with Barrett, this one based not on one of his novels, but on an original idea provided by the actor. *The Good Old Times* is set in Cumberland and Tasmania, two places where the sublime beauty of the natural world is edged with danger and menace. It featured a ‘long and painfully complex story’⁴⁰ that was ‘of the good old-fashioned order, in which love, murder, and miscellaneous villainy are all equally rampant’.⁴¹ John Langley, the sheriff of a small Lake District village, is wrongly accused of shooting Crosby Grainger, the ne’er-do-well former lover of his wife, Mary, who has kept her own criminal past a secret from her husband. Both men are transported to the penal station at Macquarie Harbour in Tasmania, where they spend their days breaking rock. Grainger and some other convicts escape and then brawl, raid, and kidnap their way to the coast, planning to stow away on a ship to Melbourne. They are pursued down the River Derwent and across the nearly impenetrable bush but are eventually captured. Husband and wife are reunited, past misdeeds are forgiven, and evil is punished: an ‘old-fashioned’ melodrama, indeed. ‘In naming their new play *The Good Old Times* Mr. Hall Caine and Mr. Wilson Barrett mean a satirical allusion to the old and now exploded system of penal settlements in Australia, with which their story is intimately concerned’, wrote *The Times*. ‘But the title is susceptible of another application not wholly free from satire, either, seeing that the piece takes us back, at a bound, to a style of melodrama much in vogue some twenty or thirty years ago’.⁴²

³⁹ *The Times*, 29 September 1910.

⁴⁰ *Daily News*, 13 February 1889.

⁴¹ *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 14 February 1888.

⁴² *The Times*, 13 February 1889. The play’s ‘considerable affinity’ with Charles Reade’s melodrama *It’s Never Too Late to Mend* (1865) was noted.

Yet the audience present at the play's premiere at the Princess's Theatre on 12 February 1889 witnessed something rather remarkable: in the acts set in Tasmania, an aboriginal named Spot rescues two white English women from Grainger's gang of depraved white English men; his tracking skills, and not the expertise of the police, are responsible for bringing about the happy ending. In the process, the audience is introduced to a female character called Lallah Rookh, based on the historical figure of Truganini, thought to be the last full-blooded aboriginal Tasmanian.⁴³ Spot tells John and his friends that the 'Black-a-feller almost all dead', referring to the decimation of the native population through war and disease following the arrival of the British at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The name of the outlaw Ned Kelly is invoked to describe the rampage of Grainger's bushrangers. Marty Gould has observed that many Victorian plays 'invoke empire only incidentally, reducing Britain's imperial domains to a rhetorical or geographical gesture'.⁴⁴ That is not the case here; inscribed into the conventional structure of *The Good Old Times* are vibrant representations of indigenous culture that provide a rich context relevant to its thematic concerns. The play links Tasmania's bleak landscape to punishment and gruelling physical labour — perfectly in keeping with Caine's interest in representing the suffering and redemption of the leading characters. When that redemption is achieved, the island becomes a paradise for them. In a reversal of the theatrical Robinsonade, or the mid-century Australian gold rush play, both of which nearly always ended with the triumphal return of the newly enriched hero to England, *The Good Old Times* ends

⁴³ Truganini (1812–76) was renamed 'Lallah Rookh' (after the eponymous heroine of Thomas Moore's 1817 Oriental romance) by George Augustus Robinson, an English missionary who served as the Parliament-appointed Protector of Aborigines in Port Philip District, Australia, from 1839–49. See *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of G. A. Robinson, 1829–1834*, ed. by N. J. B. Plomley (Hobart: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, 1966).

⁴⁴ Marty Gould, *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and the Imperial Encounter* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 7. Even these plays, Gould rightly argues, should be taken seriously because they demonstrate the 'empire's dramatic resonance' with Victorian audiences.

with John and Mary deciding to stay in Tasmania, 'this younger England, this fairer Cumberland'.⁴⁵

'Sensationalism is an indispensable feature of Princess's melodrama', *The Times* noted, and the audience was not disappointed on this count.⁴⁶ 'Tangled is the Antipodean bush, and tangled the plot of the Hall Cainean drama', the *Pall Mall Gazette* sniffed. 'But if the plot is tangled, the way out of it is most picturesque, and the lover of excitement will find sensations enough to fill his maw'. Among the striking scenes was a gorgeously painted panorama creating the impression of a river journey by canoe: 'One minute a terrific storm is raging, the most vivid forked lightning illuming the darksome depths of the forest. The next an erratic moon rises in the heavens, and the dancing waters are converted into a stream of quicksilver [...] Over lakes, through swamps, past huge monarchs of the forest, at last we come out in a beautiful sunlit arm of the sea'.⁴⁷

The 'vigorous' and 'picturesque' acting compensated for the play's glaring improbabilities.⁴⁸ Lewis Waller gave a memorable performance of the scoundrel Crosby Grainger with 'much force and concentration' and Mary Eastlake was suitably pathetic as the penitent wife, contriving 'once more to draw tears from the eyes of tender-hearted playgoers'.⁴⁹ Public interest flagged, however, and the play ran for only two of the three weeks that Barrett had planned. In July, the production moved to the Pavilion Theatre, Whitechapel, where it played for another week; it was revived there in October 1890 by John M. East as the *Mahomet* controversy raged in the national newspapers.

Given the success of *Ben-my-Chree*, one has to wonder how much Caine was hampered by having the story of *The Good Old Times* dictated to him by Barrett. Its

⁴⁵ Hall Caine and Wilson Barrett, *The Good Old Times*, Add MS 53422 H, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library.

⁴⁶ *The Times*, 13 February 1889.

⁴⁷ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 February 1889. The panorama was painted by the scenic artist Walter Hann, who also worked for Irving and many other leading London managers.

⁴⁸ *The Times*, 13 February 1889.

⁴⁹ *Daily News*, 13 February 1889.

plotting is less skilled than the first play and critics condemned the gaping holes in its convoluted narrative. Even Caine's supporters began to ask questions. William Sharp, writing to Theodore Watts a few days after the play's opening, asked his opinion of it: 'From what I hear privately [...] I gather that it is a very third-rate affair though with some strong melodramatic situations. I am sorry he [Caine] should have Barrett for a collaborateur as I am convinced the man has little in him'.⁵⁰ In March Sharp told Caine he 'should be working at more enduring stuff than ordinary melodrama. We need a true dramatic writer, and you have it in you to be the man'. He shared a friend's hope that his next play would be 'a big thing'.⁵¹

⁵⁰ William Sharp to Theodore Watts [-Dunton], 16 February 1889, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds. William Sharp (1855–1905) was the author of the Scottish romances *Pharais* (1894) and *The Mountain Lovers* (1895), both of which were published under the pseudonym Fiona Macleod. The poet, novelist, and critic Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832–1914) is remembered today for the Gothic-inflected sensational romance *Aylwin* (1898) and for taking the ailing Algernon Swinburne into his Putney home, where he cared for the poet from 1879 until his death in 1909. Both were esteemed members of Rossetti's circle at the time Caine lived with the artist.

⁵¹ William Sharp to Hall Caine, 4 March 1889, MS 09542, Box 51, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

Chapter 3 – Hall Caine and Henry Irving, 1890

From the time of Caine's earliest success as a playwright, and well aware of the glowing reviews that attended Barrett's production of *Ben-my-Chree*, Henry Irving had 'a strong desire that Caine should write some play that he could act'.¹ The actor suggested subjects, themes, and characters; Caine spent considerable time and energy 'in an effort to fit Irving with a part' and noted in 1908, three years after the actor's death, that 'the pigeon-holes of my study are still heavy with sketches and drafts and scenarios of dramas which either he or I or our constant friend and colleague Bram Stoker (to whose loyal comradeship we both owed so much), thought possible for the Lyceum Theatre'.² Irving 'was always anxious for good plays, and spared neither trouble nor expense to get them', Stoker wrote of the actor's ceaseless search for material to suit his particular talents. 'Only those who are or have been concerned in theatrical management can have the least idea of the difficulty of obtaining plays suitable for acting'. This despite the enormous number of people who submitted pieces for Irving's consideration: they came 'not only from writers whose work lay in other lines of effort — historians, lyric poets, divines from the curate to the bishop — but from professional men, merchants, manufacturers, traders, clerks. He has had them sent by domestic servants and from as far down the social scale as a workhouse boy. But from all these multitudinous and varied sources we had very few plays indeed which offered even a hope or a promise'.³ As Jeffrey Richards has noted, Stoker had an unparalleled vantage point from which to observe Irving's acquisition of suitable plays. As the Lyceum's business manager, he was privy to many of the arrangements made with playwrights; as a writer himself, he was sometimes pressed into revising scripts.⁴ Every dramatist in London wanted to have a play produced at the Lyceum, even George Bernard Shaw, whose disdain of

¹ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, 118.

² Caine, *My Story*, 349.

³ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, pp. 131–32.

⁴ See Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, p. 180.

Irving is recorded in his journalism and private correspondence with, among others and most famously, Ellen Terry.⁵ Caine was likewise well aware that the production of one of his plays by Irving would be the making of him and in 1889 he came close to realising this ambition when Irving asked him to rewrite Henri de Bornier's *Mahomet*, which had been accepted the year before by the Comédie-Française, for production at the Lyceum.

In her consideration of Caine's place in the literary marketplace of the 1890s, Mary Hammond argues that Irving's interest in producing a play by Caine 'has to be seen as complicating somewhat' Caine's position as a 'popular' author.⁶ She wonders why an actor of Irving's stature and reputation as an elite artist would have been tempted to seek a creative collaboration with a writer whose novels were aimed at the masses. This question seems to rest in part on the erroneous assumption that Irving did not work with 'popular' authors. In fact, they were critical to his success; his repertoire included a significant number of melodramas (some old, some new) by men whose standing as litterateurs was similar to, or even lower than, Caine's. Of the thirty-seven plays produced by Irving during his tenure at the Lyceum, only twelve were by Shakespeare; the rest were melodramas and verse dramas by writers at all echelons of the literary establishment. Irving managed, more often than not, to elevate these plays to a higher level by (in the words of Edward Gordon Craig) 'lending something Shakespearean [to them]' through an emphasis on psychological realism and an obsessive attention to *mise-en-scène*.⁷ He found success with romantic melodramas by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (*The Lady of Lyons*, *Richelieu*), Dion Boucicault (*The Corsican Brothers*, *Louis XI*), William Gorman Wills (*Charles I*, *Eugene Aram*, *Faust*, *Olivia*), Charles Reade (*The Lyons Mail*), Leopold Lewis

⁵ In 1896, Shaw sent his one-act play *The Man of Destiny* to Terry while she was on tour with Irving in the United States. Irving offered to pay Shaw £50 to reserve the acting rights for a year; sceptical of Irving's intentions, Shaw demanded a guarantee that it would be produced. Irving refused to provide this and instead appeared in another 'Napoleon' play, *Madame Sans-Gêne* by Sardou and Emile Moreau. See Laurence Irving, *Henry Irving*, pp. 590–92, p. 594.

⁶ Hammond, *Reading, Publishing, and the Formation of Literary Taste in England*, p. 144.

⁷ Edward Gordon Craig, *Henry Irving* (London: J. M. Dent, 1930), p. 17.

(*The Bells*), Walter Herries Pollock (*The Dead Heart*), Joseph Comyns Carr (*King Arthur*), and Victorien Sardou (*Madame Sans-Gêne*, *Robespierre*). He had occasional misses. ‘Like Don Quixote [...] he has now and then mistaken spavined hacks for Rosinantes and flocks of sheep for armies’, wrote A. B. Walkley, drama critic of *The Times*, in what remains one of the most incisive assessments of Irving’s achievements.⁸ Among the ‘spavined hacks’ were plays by Wills (*Iolanthe*, *Vanderdecken*), Sardou (*Dante*), George Colman the Younger (*The Iron Chest*), Herman Merivale (*Ravenswood*), H. D. Traill and Robert Hichens (*The Medicine Man*), and Laurence Irving, the actor’s son (*Peter the Great*). The impeccably credentialed authors who supplied plays included Alfred, Lord Tennyson (*Becket*, *The Cup*) and Arthur Conan Doyle (*A Story of Waterloo*); those who tried but failed to do so included Shaw, Arthur Wing Pinero, J. M. Barrie, Anthony Hope, and Oscar Wilde.⁹

Of more importance to Irving than a literary pedigree was a sympathetic temperament. Irving was ‘a romantic in the grand style, drums beating and colours flying’, to use Walkley’s phrase, an example of the class of men the French Romantic poet and critic Théophile Gautier had called ‘flamboyant’ (literally, ‘ablaze’ with vital force) in contrast to those who were ‘drab’ (prosaic, plain, and commonplace). Irving’s ‘most permanent triumph’ was in melodrama, the ‘stage-flamboyant expressed in prose’.¹⁰ From the 1870s, the decade that saw Irving’s rise to fame, the Manichean battles between clear-cut forces of good and evil that had been central to this genre — represented by the separate characters of a wicked villain, an irreproachable hero, and a virtuous heroine — gave way to more complex

⁸ A. B. Walkley, ‘Henry Irving’, in *Playhouse Impressions* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), pp. 256–61 (p. 261).

⁹ Irving was eager to work with Pinero, who had acted in supporting roles at the Lyceum from 1876 to 1881. Although the actor produced two of Pinero’s one-act plays, *Daisy’s Escape* (1879) and *Bygones* (1880), they were unable to settle on a mutually agreeable subject for a full-length play. Irving rejected Barrie’s comedy *The Professor’s Love Story*, which became one of E. S. Willard’s great successes; Hope’s *English Nell*, based on the life of Nell Gwyn and intended for Ellen Terry but played by Marie Tempest; and Wilde’s blank verse tragedy *The Duchess of Padua*.

¹⁰ Walkley, ‘Henry Irving’, p. 257, p. 260. Edward Gordon Craig also recognised this trait in Irving, calling it ‘le diable au corps’ after Voltaire. See Craig, *Henry Irving*, pp. 19–20.

depictions of a single protagonist wrestling on his own with questions of conscience. The chief struggle of this 'divided hero-villain', to use David Mayer's useful phrase, is 'within his divided or double-self to master his evil nature and to recover in himself some evidence of decency and good'.¹¹ Irving excelled in this type of character, most notably as Mathias in *The Bells*, 'an exceedingly hard and exhausting part' that Stoker estimated Irving played more than eight hundred times over the course of his career.¹² Similar roles followed. These included the schoolmaster Eugene Aram, haunted by his murder of the man who had seduced the woman he loved (1873); the Spanish nobleman Philip de Miraflore in Charles Hamilton Aidé's *Philip*, who mistakenly believes he has killed his half-brother (1874); the remorse-stricken Philip Vanderdecken, confronted with the prospect of an eternity spent wandering the world alone and unloved after blaspheming against God (1878); and the respected judge Sir Edward Mortimer in *The Iron Chest*, wracked with the knowledge that he is guilty of a murder for which he had been tried and acquitted (1879). As George Taylor and others have noted, Irving also skilfully brought out the dual natures of some of Shakespeare's most malevolent men: 'his Macbeth had a conscience, his Othello was cultivated, his Lear was loving, and his Shylock tragic'.¹³ Each of these characters is ensnared in a world of moral ambiguity in which clarity is elusive. In this way many of Irving's productions reflected the fears and preoccupations of the wider Victorian society in which he lived and worked. It was a society under threat from all sides: long-entrenched structures of power, including the monarchy, were threatened by new ideas of political organisation, including socialism, anarchism, and republicanism; the Church of England, and faith and belief more generally, were challenged by the advent of Darwinism and by other developments in archaeology and geology;

¹¹ Mayer, 'Encountering Melodrama', p. 159.

¹² Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, I, p. 144.

¹³ George Taylor, *Players and Performances in the Victorian Theatre* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 158.

traditional ways of life were disrupted by urbanisation, industrialisation, economic depression, and periodic agricultural crises; the racist hierarchy privileging 'white' Anglo-Saxons that underpinned British imperial ideology was weakened by new discoveries in biology and by social movements urging equality and emancipation for all peoples; and conventional gender roles were questioned, sometimes violently, by women seeking changes to laws relating to marriage, divorce, property, suffrage, and education.¹⁴ The melodramatic form, however, provided some relief to Victorians battered by the prospect of constant change: as Mayer contends, it 'enables the immediate concern, the cause of stress, to appear before us in partial disguise [...] It offers a brief, palatable, non-threatening metaphor which enables an audience to approach and contemplate at close range matters which are otherwise disturbing to discuss'.¹⁵ Ambiguity could be contained

¹⁴ Useful overviews of the period include G. M. Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936); Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); W. L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964); Asa Briggs's *Victorian People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), *Victorian Cities* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), and *Victorian Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); and Eric Hobsbawm's *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), and *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987). J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay discuss the rural economy and the impact of industrialisation on the English countryside in *The Agricultural Revolution, 1750–1880* (London: Batsford, 1966). Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Victorian Minds* (New York: Knopf, 1968) and *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Knopf, 1991) are indispensable studies in the history of ideas during the period. Christopher Lane examines scientific and intellectual challenges to religious orthodoxy in *The Age of Doubt* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011). The essays collected by Shearer West in *The Victorians and Race* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996) represent the range of approaches being brought to bear on nineteenth-century racial construction and self-fashioning. The best recent survey is David Newsome, *The Victorian World Picture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

¹⁵ Mayer, 'Encountering Melodrama', p. 147. The last fifty years have seen increasing critical interest in melodrama, due to the development of cultural studies as a disciplinary field and the acceptance of popular culture as a valid field of scholarly enquiry. Wide-ranging surveys by Maurice Willson Disher (*Blood and Thunder: Mid-Victorian Melodrama and Its Origins*, London: Muller, 1949) and George Rowell (*The Victorian Theatre*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956) were followed by the more detailed mappings of melodrama and its varieties by Allardyce Nicoll (*A History of English Drama, 1660–1900: Vol. 4, Early Nineteenth-Century Drama, 1800–1850; Vol. 5, Late Nineteenth-Century Drama, 1850–1900*; and *English Drama, 1900–1930*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955, 1959, and 1973, respectively); Michael Booth (*English Melodrama*, London: H. Jenkins, 1965), and Frank Rahill (*The World of Melodrama*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1967). Important recent work includes the essays gathered in *Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre*, ed. by Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulou (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996). Of these, Thomas Postlewait's 'From Melodrama to Realism: The Suspect History of American Drama' (pp. 39–60) explains how advocates of 'avant-garde' stage naturalism in Europe

and managed within the make-believe world of the play, which was always ‘a world of certainties [...] where good triumphs over and punishes evil and virtue receives tangible rewards’.¹⁶ When the critic Augustin Filon asked Irving whether people went to the theatre ‘to see a representation of life, or to forget life and seek relief from it’, Irving reportedly told him that ‘melodrama solves this question, and shows that both theories are right, by giving satisfaction to both desires, in that it offers the extreme of realism in scenery and language together with the most uncommon sentiments and events’.¹⁷

As Peter Brooks has argued, melodrama is a ‘fictional system for making sense of experience’ — one that ‘serves to assure us, again and again, that the universe is in fact morally legible, that it possesses an ethical identity and significance’.¹⁸ That is, its central function is to assign guilt and innocence in a chaotic, post-Enlightenment world in which religious belief has been effaced or erased altogether. In ‘uncovering, demonstrating, and making operative the essential moral universe in a post-sacred era’,¹⁹ melodrama as an explanatory narrative seeks

and the United States succeeded in casting melodrama as a backward and inferior form, a bias that colours perceptions of the genre to this day. Bruce McConachie’s *Melodramatic Formations: American Theatre and Society, 1820–1870* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992) illustrates how finely tuned these plays could be to their performers and audiences and how sensitive they were to extra-theatrical conditions. Other significant essay collections include *Melodrama: Stage, Picture, Screen*, ed. by J. S. Bratton, Jim Cook, and Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1994) and *When They Weren’t Doing Shakespeare: Essays on Nineteenth Century British and American Theatre*, ed. by Judith L. Fisher and Stephen Watt (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989). In *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800–1885* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), Elaine Hadley argues that melodrama was a rhetorical mode that extended well beyond literature and drama to social, economic, and political transactions during the Victorian period. The most comprehensive annotated bibliography is Juliet John, ‘Melodrama’, in Oxford Bibliographies Online: Victorian Literature <<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com>> [accessed 6 February 2014].

¹⁶ Michael Booth, *English Melodrama*, p. 14.

¹⁷ Augustin Filon, *The English Stage: Being an Account of the Victorian Drama*, trans. by Frederic Whyte (London: John Milne, 1897), p. 195.

¹⁸ Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. xvii, p. 43. Brooks’s study, first published in 1976, was the first serious exploration of literary melodrama from its origins in post-Revolutionary France. Although it has little to say about theatrical melodrama and although some of its conclusions have been challenged, especially by feminist analyses of authors and texts, its formulation of the function and operation of the genre is widely accepted.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the re-inscription of ethical principles onto the personal struggles of men and women in conflict with themselves and with others. In Irving's productions, as in Hall Caine's novels and plays, protagonists who have violated a moral or religious precept set out (or are taken) on literal or metaphorical journeys, always arduous, in search of self-knowledge. They will be haunted by their bad acts or evil deeds until they complete the journey and make restitution to those they have harmed. As they suffer, they are assisted by, or come to know, the benevolent hand of a higher or supernatural power. They achieve redemption when they submit to that higher power and complete a grand act of atonement. In the end, the moral order is restored and a divine or poetic justice achieved. Filon summarized Irving's philosophy in words that also capture Caine's view of the role of the stage: 'What one should see at the theatre is indeed life, but an intenser life, with emotions that are keener, a pulse that beats more quickly — a life in which the potentialities of men and women are at their full, and in which there is a standard of good and evil to give a moral conclusion, a lesson in the art of living'.²⁰

In an article for *The Contemporary Review* published in April 1890 while he was drafting *Mahomet*, Caine stated his case against the advocates of naturalism, who had proclaimed the death of such idealism in literature and drama. An author's responsibility, he said, was 'proposing for solution by means of incident and story a problem of human life'. To that end, the writer seeks out 'the great mysteries of life, and then he tries to find light through them. These mysteries are many, and do not belong to an age, but to all time'.²¹ The only acceptable ending for a work of imaginative art was justice; indeed, it was essential for the writer to be 'a believer in the divine justice whereon the world is founded'. Romance, he claimed, was 'the cry of the time', representing 'not the bare actualities of life as it is but the glories of life as it might be [...] The world now feels exactly the same want as it has always felt.

²⁰ Filon, *The English Stage*, p. 171.

²¹ Caine, 'The New Watchwords of Fiction', p. 482.

It wants to be lifted up, to be inspired, to be thrilled, to be shown what brave things human nature is capable of at its best'.²²

From such pronouncements it is clear that Caine, like Irving, was a 'flamboyant'. In him, the actor recognised a fellow Romantic, ablaze, like himself, with passion: someone equally interested in presenting stories of the past; of the supernatural and the gothic; of singular and solitary genius; of ruminative anti-heroes; of — as the *Daily Graphic* noted — 'great crimes, great catastrophes, great sufferings, great expiations'.²³ Romance expressed in the melodramatic mode was the common bond between them. When the *Westminster Review* declared that Caine possessed the 'power of transmuting the ordinary into the marvellous by means of an imaginative manipulation which, though daring and vivid, yet keeps itself within the bounds of the truly artistic', it might also have been speaking of Irving. Both men combined 'moral sanity with imaginative fervour, truth of emotion with strength of passion' to achieve 'that combination of the familiar with the unfamiliar, that blending of the commonplace with the unusual, which must ever remain the essence of the highest romantic achievement'.²⁴

If Irving and Caine shared the idea that romantic melodrama should be 'something beyond fact, something a little larger than life',²⁵ they also agreed on the importance of verisimilitude in the form of intensely researched and fully realised

²² Ibid., p. 487. A second 'Battle of the Books' (so-called by the critic Andrew Lang, referencing the Jonathan Swift satire of 1703–05) had been joined in the pages of the quality journals, pitting advocates of a 'morbid realism' against those of a 'healthy, action-orientated romance in the tradition of Scott and Dumas'. Authors, including Caine, experienced a 'proliferation of labels and overall self-consciousness about generic belonging, as well as the dogmatic intolerance of the different "schools" towards each other'. See Anna Vaninskaya, *William Morris and the Idea of Community: Romance, History, and Propaganda, 1880–1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 23.

²³ *Daily Graphic*, 6 February 1890.

²⁴ 'A New Novelist', *Westminster Review*, 128 (October 1887), 840–49 (p. 843). The anonymous writer was responding to an essay published a month earlier in the *Fortnightly Review*, in which the critic George Saintsbury hailed Robert Louis Stevenson and H. Rider Haggard as the exemplars of a new, superior form of romanticism. Unlike those two authors, the *Westminster Review* writer argued, Caine 'gives us no impossible intangibilities for heroes, transfers us to no African solitudes for scenes [...] he is able to invest his characters with a dignity of action, a strength of feeling, and a nobility of moral purpose which have the effect of seating them firmly alike in the readers' imagination and affections. He makes straight for the heart' (p. 842).

²⁵ George Sampson, 'Henry Irving', in *Seven Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1947), pp. 158–98 (p. 192).

characters and settings. In this specific formal sense, romance could be highly realistic: both Caine and Irving presented extraordinary stories with a high degree of *vraisemblance* that lent plausibility and encouraged a suspension of disbelief in readers and audiences. The critic William Archer observed that Irving's approach relied on 'patient, intelligent elaboration': 'he works over every inch of his canvas, leaves no corner without its little illustrative or merely decorative touch [...] The smallest hint in the text is made the germ of some picturesque conceit'.²⁶ Reviews of Irving's performances throughout his career emphasise the enormous effects he created through the tiniest of gestures: a sudden pause in the buckling of a shoe when he is reminded of the snowy night on which the Polish Jew was murdered (as Mathias in Lewis's *The Bells*),²⁷ the crook of arthritic fingers holding a treasured clay pipe, each knuckle made up to mimic those of an octogenarian war veteran (as Corporal Gregory Brewster in Conan Doyle's *A Story of Waterloo*),²⁸ the slow, deliberate moving of his bishop around the board as he plays chess with King Henry II (as Thomas Becket in Tennyson's *Becket*).²⁹ This pointillist attention to detail extended to the care Irving took in preparing the *mise-en-scène*. According to Joseph Harker, who served as a scenic artist at the Lyceum between 1888 and 1899, 'absolute accuracy was an ideal from which [Irving] never knowingly swerved', although in fact he rarely privileged archaeological correctness over theatrical effect.³⁰ 'What seemed fitting, that was best with him', Edward Gordon Craig observed. 'All the correctness in the world was not worth a fig to Irving, unless it *seemed right*'.³¹ During a lecture at Harvard University in 1885 the actor declared that absolute realism on the stage was not always desirable. 'You want, above all things, to have a truthful picture which shall appeal to the eye without distracting the

²⁶ William Archer, *Henry Irving, Actor and Manager: A Critical Study* (London: Field and Tuer, 1883), p. 98.

²⁷ Craig, *Henry Irving*, p. 59.

²⁸ William Devereux, quoted in *We Saw Him Act: A Symposium on the Art of Sir Henry Irving*, ed. by H. A. Saintsbury and Cecil Palmer (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1939), p. 134.

²⁹ *Morning Post*, 7 February 1893.

³⁰ Joseph Harker, *Studio and Stage* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1924), p. 127.

³¹ Craig, *Henry Irving*, p. 115.

imagination from the purpose of the drama [...] Nothing is more objectionable than certain kinds of realism, which are simply vulgar [...] Nor do I think that servility to archaeology on the stage is an unmixed good'.³² In short, as Martin Meisel has argued, Irving made the lush 'illustrative pictorialism' he had inherited from an earlier generation of actor-managers such as William Charles Macready and Charles Kean 'the servant of a personal conception and the agent of an individual style'.³³

Caine shared Irving's willingness to jettison the strictly accurate for the good of the artistic whole. In his *Contemporary Review* article, he asserted that passion, not fact, was the true essence of the writer's art: he 'should know his facts, he should know the life he depicts; yet this knowledge should not be the end of his art, but only its beginning'.³⁴ Mere fact 'has no sanctity for him, and he would a thousand times rather outrage all the incidents of history than belie one impulse of the human heart'. In support of his view he quotes one of the sources he was using to write *Mahomet*, Sir Richard Burton's recent translation of *The Book of The Thousand Nights and a Night*: 'History paints, or attempts to paint, life as it is, a mighty maze, with or without a plan; Fiction shows or would show us life as it should be, wisely ordered and laid down on fixed lines'.³⁵ Caine's invention of character and incident in *Mahomet* was intended to provoke audiences into recognizing larger spiritual truths. It was an approach that reflected Irving's belief that the stage was a powerful means of conveying moral lessons, a 'wonderful art, priceless to civilization in the solace it yields, the thought it generates, the refinement it inspires'.³⁶ Finely observed characters enacting romantic plots within pictorially realistic but artistically

³² Henry Irving, 'The Art of Acting' (address given at Harvard University, 30 March 1885), reprinted in *The Drama* (London: Heinemann, 1893), pp. 35–82 (p. 66, p. 68).

³³ Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 405. Also see Jeffrey Richards, 'Irving and His Scenic Artists', in *Henry Irving*, ed. by Richard Foulkes, pp. 99–116.

³⁴ Caine, 'The New Watchwords of Fiction', p. 484.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 482, p. 484.

³⁶ Henry Irving, 'The Stage as It Is' (address given at the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, 8 November 1881), reprinted in *The Drama* (London: Heinemann, 1893), pp. 1–34 (p. 28).

conceived settings: this is what Caine provided readers of his fiction and Irving provided patrons of his theatre.

Unfortunately, for the reasons described in the following pages, the planned production of *Mahomet* never materialised. 'I have produced many plays since then', Caine remembered in his autobiography, 'but I have never again attempted to fit my subject to the personality of any actor [...] and I have never tried again to write independent drama, being content with such chances as the material in my novels affords for treatment in the art of the stage'.³⁷ Irving was the exception to this, and Caine spent much of the next fifteen years, until the actor's death in 1905, trying to find just the right subject for his friend.

³⁷ Caine, *My Story*, p. 352.

Chapter 4 – Plays after *Mahomet*, 1891–1918

After the disappointment with *Mahomet*, Caine kept his word about ‘independent drama’, deviating only to write two plays intended to bolster domestic morale during World War I¹ and a comedy for the music hall star Vesta Tilley.² In 1891 he wrote a stage adaptation of his second novel, *The Bondman*; this was first produced in Bolton in 1892 and then revised by Wilson Barrett for his American tour of 1893–94. According to Vivien Allen, Barrett wanted to mount the play in London but was unable to raise the necessary funding.³ The play would not be seen there until Arthur Collins presented a new version at Drury Lane in 1906.

In 1894 Caine collaborated with Barrett again to produce a drama based on his bestselling novel *The Manxman*.⁴ From the beginning, however, the project was beset with arguments about the direction the adaptation should take and (on Caine’s

¹ *The Iron Hand*, a one-act sketch produced at the London Coliseum by Dion Boucicault, Jr., in February 1916, was based on a speech given by Kaiser Wilhelm II at the swearing-in of recruits at Potsdam in November 1891. The Kaiser told the troops their oath of loyalty meant they must be prepared to shoot their own relatives if called upon to do so. ‘Think of the drama that lay there — the struggle in the souls of civilised men between the merciful impulses of humanity and the command of the State, which, built on violence, must reach its military ends without ruth or remorse’, Caine told a meeting of the American Luncheon Club (reported in the *Era*, 8 March 1916). Caine’s second war play, *Margaret Schiller*, was produced in January 1916 in New York City; in this four-act drama, a young woman plotting the murder of the British prime minister gains a position in his household but then falls in love with him, later sacrificing herself to save him. It was revived as *The Prime Minister* in March 1918 at the Royalty Theatre, London, eight months before the Armistice.

² *The Isle of Boy*, a farce of mistaken identities set on the Isle of Man, was co-written in 1903 with Brandon Thomas, the author of *Charlie’s Aunt*, one year after the visit to the island of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. Caine had been among those who entertained the royal couple. The plot centres on a beautiful music hall artiste who pretends to be a royal prince and wins the son of the island’s governor; it is, in fact, an attack on government corruption in Douglas. George C. Tyler, managing director of the American theatrical management firm Liebler & Company, had commissioned it for Tilley, the period’s most famous male impersonator. She had regular summer engagements on the island and was a frequent guest at Greeba Castle. Although Caine’s name appears on the published version of the play, it is sometimes attributed to his eldest son, Ralph. Brandon Thomas, a character actor as well as a playwright, had portrayed Pope Pius X in Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s production of Caine’s *The Eternal City* at the Haymarket Theatre in 1902. See Lady de Frece [Vesta Tilley], *Recollections of Vesta Tilley* (London: Hutchinson, 1934), pp. 121–46.

³ Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 199.

⁴ This novel marked a new era in British book publishing when it was announced by Heinemann that it would be issued not in the traditional three-volume (‘triple decker’) format but in a single-volume, six-shilling edition. See ‘Mr. Wm. Heinemann’s New List’ (advertisement), *Bookseller*, 5 July 1894, and Troy J. Bassett, ‘The Production of Three-Volume Novels in Britain, 1863–97’, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 102 (2008), 61–75.

side) bad faith. The first version of the play, taking the approach favoured by Barrett, focuses on the poorly educated but good-hearted Pete Quilliam, who loves inn-keeper's daughter Kate Cregeen. When Pete goes to South Africa to seek his fortune, he leaves her in the care of his cousin and best friend Philip Christian, a lawyer expected to become the next deemster of the Isle of Man. News reaches Kate that Pete has died overseas. Philip and Kate become lovers and plan to marry, but when Pete returns very much alive, Philip breaks it off with Kate. Pete, unaware of this relationship, marries Kate. She gives birth to a daughter she knows is Philip's. She arranges to go live secretly with Philip, who is now deemster, leaving the baby with Pete. Heartbroken, Pete explains Kate's absence to others by weaving a tangled web of lies. Unable to bear living a concealed life and missing her child, Kate returns home. Pete learns the truth about Philip's betrayal, tells Kate he will divorce her, and leaves the island. Kate and Philip separate.⁵

Caine would have preferred the play to reflect the novel more closely by focusing on Philip and his guilt-stricken conscience. The book ends with a desperate Kate throwing herself into the harbour. She is rescued, charged with the crime of attempted suicide, and brought before a judge who turns out to be Philip. After committing her to prison, he collapses, consumed by shame and remorse. He makes a public confession, resigns his position as deemster, claims Kate from prison, and goes with her into exile. Fearing this ending implied sympathy with the pair's behaviour, Barrett replaced it with one in which they are parted forever. The actor knew his version foregrounding the trials and tribulations of the sympathetic Pete would be more popular than the darker one Caine envisaged, and when it opened at his Grand Theatre in Leeds barely three weeks after the novel was published, he was proven right. 'An undeniable success!' the *Era* proclaimed in a widely shared critical judgement. 'Pete Quilliam is one of [Barrett's] noblest achievements'.⁶

⁵ Hall Caine and Wilson Barrett, *The Manxman*, Add MS 53555 F, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library.

⁶ *The Era*, 25 August 1894. This version of the play was produced in the United States by Barrett and, in 1902–03, by James O'Neill. The producer George C. Tyler had been O'Neill's publicist before founding Liebler & Company in 1898.

Several months earlier, as part of a compromise with Caine, Barrett had agreed to co-write the ‘Philip’ version that Caine favoured — and it was at this point the relationship between the two men descended into ugly accusation and legal action. Barrett had intended to produce the ‘Pete’ version of the play in London after its premiere in Leeds, but on his return home from an American tour he found Caine was suing him to prevent this. It had been Caine’s understanding that the ‘Pete’ version would be produced only in the provinces and the United States, and that the ‘Philip’ version would have sole performance rights in London. Barrett countersued and was further incensed when he discovered Caine had booked the ‘Philip’ version into some provincial theatres, pre-empting his own appearances with the ‘Pete’ version. The matter was decided in Barrett’s favour. Nevertheless, Caine proceeded with a London production of the ‘Philip’ version featuring the gloomier ending of the novel and this premiered at the Shaftesbury Theatre in November 1895.⁷ Starring Lewis Waller as Philip, it was an unmitigated disaster, as Barrett knew it would be, and closed after only 13 performances.⁸ ‘The play, originally designed for an actor-manager who played Quilliam, has evidently been a good deal botched in altering it to fit another actor-manager who plays Christian’, George Bernard Shaw wrote in a scathing critique for the *Saturday Review*. ‘Whether the speeches in “The Manxman” are interpolated Wilson Barrett or aboriginal Hall Caine I cannot say, as I have not read the celebrated novel, and am prepared to go to the stake rather than face the least chapter of it’.⁹ When Caine protested, Shaw fired back in a two-page letter lambasting him for his dereliction of playwriting duty:

⁷ Hall Caine and Wilson Barrett, *The Manxman*, Add MS 53587, Lord Chamberlain’s Collection, British Library.

⁸ In his review of this production, the critic Clement Scott noted that ‘all who have seen [Irving] as Mathias and Eugene Aram knew what a Philip he might have been’. See *The Illustrated London News*, 23 November 1895.

⁹ George Bernard Shaw, ‘Manxsome and Traditional’, *The Saturday Review*, 23 November 1895. On the writing of the competing versions of *The Manxman*, see Thomas, *The Art of the Actor-Manager*, pp. 123–26, pp. 137–38, and p. 158. Allen’s account (*Hall Caine*, pp. 235–37) is inaccurate.

You ask me whether it occurs to me that if anybody has been hurt it is you. It certainly has not occurred to me. It does occur to me that the public have been hurt, that Waller and [Henry Harvey] Morell [the co-lessee, with Waller, of the Shaftesbury Theatre] have been hurt (possibly ruined), that the actors who have been thrown out of engagement and the staff behind the scenes who have lost their job have been hurt, and that our profession has been hurt. I am not aware that anything has happened to you except the shame which, if you had the artistic conscience to feel, you would not have incurred.¹⁰

Shaw was right and Caine knew it. He still had much to learn — not only about how to craft effective plays, but also about how to manage his relationships with those who could make his plays successful. The following year, he asked Barrett to revive the ‘Pete’ version of *The Manxman* in London and Barrett did so to acclaim that included praise from Shaw. In 1908, Caine tried again. With Louis Napoleon Parker, he wrote a new adaptation of *The Manxman* called *Pete* for the actor Matheson Lang; this was produced at the Lyceum by Ernest Carpenter and Henry R. Smith, who had become joint lessees and managers of the theatre in 1907, two years after Irving’s death.¹¹ Bram Stoker attended the final dress rehearsal and reported back to Caine, who was recovering at home on the Isle of Man from an automobile accident that had left him unhurt but shaken. ‘Lang was really fine’, he told Caine. ‘The part is a noble one and he stands up to it thoroughly and sincerely [...] It is a noble play and on big broad human elemental lines. It made me cry like a baby’.¹² *Pete* had 120 performances and was revived regularly until 1916; it served as the basis of Alfred Hitchcock’s final silent film in 1929.¹³

¹⁰ George Bernard Shaw to Hall Caine, 17 December 1895, MS 09542, Box 51, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

¹¹ Hall Caine and Louis N. Parker, *Pete*, LCP 1908/18, Lord Chamberlain’s Collection, British Library.

¹² Bram Stoker to Hall Caine, 29 August 1908, MS 09542, Box 51, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

¹³ ‘*Pete’s* 100th Night’, *The Era*, 28 November 1908. On Hitchcock’s adaptation, see Mary Hammond, ‘Hitchcock and *The Manxman*: A Victorian Bestseller on the Silent Screen’, in *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adapter*, ed. by R. Barton Palmer and David Boyd (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2011), pp. 47–66.

Caine had continued to work on ideas for Irving, many of which had weird or supernaturally tinged religious themes.¹⁴ On 14 February 1895, after supper with Irving and Stoker in the Lyceum's Beefsteak Room, Caine presented his scenario for a play called *The Demon Lover*. The main character, Lars, is an Icelandic whaler of mysterious origin who sets out to discover the Northwest Passage two years after Sir John Franklin's disastrous expedition. After Lars dies during the voyage, he returns as an evil spirit to lure to her own death the woman he had hypnotised, Svengali-like, into agreeing to wait for him, on the same day she marries another man.¹⁵ Although Irving was 'much impressed by it', he told Caine he was too old for the part.¹⁶ In June of the following year, Caine visited Irving and Stoker in Manchester as the Lyceum company toured the provinces with *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Bells*, *Nance Oldfield*, and *King Arthur*. He had in hand two new scenarios for Irving's consideration: one on the Flying Dutchman theme and another that became *Jan, the Iclander; or Home, Sweet Home*.¹⁷ Like *The Demon Lover*, both featured alienated sailors: one forced to roam the face of the earth until Judgement Day for challenging God, the other a murderer escaping justice in the icy expanse of the northern seas. Irving had already essayed the part of the Flying Dutchman in *Vanderdecken*, a blank verse drama by Percy Fitzgerald and W. G. Wills that had been produced at the Lyceum by Sidney Bateman in 1878. Knowing how well the spectral character suited him, Irving was searching for a new version of the story that

¹⁴ Influenced by stories told to him as a child by his Manx grandmother (stories he found 'impossible to shake off' as an adult), Caine had a lifelong fascination with the occult. In 1880, he gave a lecture on 'The Supernatural Element in Poetry' at a meeting of the Liverpool Notes & Queries Society based on an essay he published in *Colbourne's Magazine* in August 1879. See Caine, *My Story*, pp. 8–11.

¹⁵ An undated typescript of this three-act play survives in the Hall Caine Papers at Manx National Heritage (MS 09542, Box 32). Its plot and uncanny atmosphere bring to mind the stories of sailors lost at sea told to Mina Murray by the old Greenland whaler 'Mr Swales' as they sit surrounded by tombstones in the cliff-side graveyard of Whitby parish church in Stoker's *Dracula*. Furthermore, the return of Lars's malevolent ghost to Reykjavik is heralded by a sudden and terrible sea storm in a scene highly reminiscent of *Dracula's* arrival at Whitby. In 1895 Stoker had been working on *Dracula* for several years, sharing his drafts with Caine. Which came first: Stoker's story or Caine's play? It is fascinating to speculate.

¹⁶ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, pp. 123–24.

¹⁷ Hall Caine, *Jan, the Iclander; or, Home, Sweet Home*, LCP 1900/24, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library.

would make full use of the extensive resources he could now bring to bear on its staging. Caine's first attempt, however, was unsatisfactory, and Irving asked if the part of Vanderdecken could be made 'less brutal'.¹⁸ *Jan, the Iclander* was a more traditional domestic melodrama. After murdering a man who had attempted to seduce his wife, Lawrence Clough flees his small Kent village and becomes a whaler, adopting the name 'Jan, the Iclander' to disguise his real identity. Twenty-five years later he returns home an old man to find that everything in the village has changed and that his crime, if not forgotten, has been forgiven by his daughter and her husband, the son of the murdered man. Jan dies shortly after being welcomed back into the safe embrace of his family. Irving told Caine this play was not right for him: in the first act Jan was too young, in the second, too rough, and in the third, too tall. By way of explanation, he observed 'there is no general sympathy on the stage for tall old men!'¹⁹ And with that pronouncement, another opportunity for Caine to have one of his plays performed at the Lyceum slipped away.

In 1896, Caine completed the stage version of his new novel, *The Christian*. In this story, which Caine called 'a picture of what I take to be the great intellectual movement of our time in England and in America — the movement towards Christian socialism',²⁰ Glory Quayle, the granddaughter of a Manx parson, moves to London to become a nurse but with the help of influential acquaintances becomes a musical theatre star instead.²¹ A childhood friend, the clergyman John Storm, has

¹⁸ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 124.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hall Caine, 'A Message from Hall Caine to the Reader of *The Christian*', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (December 1896), 15. This letter preceded the first instalment of the novel, which was serialised between December 1896 and November 1897.

²¹ In the novel, the event that precipitates this change is a visit to the Lyceum, where Glory watches a performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*. From her seat in a private box, she marvels at 'the light, the colour, the dresses, the gay young faces' and declares the theatre to be 'even more beautiful than a church'. She identifies with Ellen Terry's Beatrice and declares Irving's Benedick her 'boy for all'. Failing at first to distinguish between reality and the make-believe world of the play, she concludes that 'to make people forget it's not true is the most wonderful thing in the world!' Glory was entranced: 'a great, bright, beautiful world had that night swum into her view, and all her heart was yearning for it with vague and blind aspirations'. This scene is omitted from the play. Irving's reaction to the tribute is unrecorded and Stoker makes no mention of it in his *Personal Reminiscences*. See Hall Caine, *The Christian* (London: Heinemann, 1897), pp. 67–73.

also moved to London, where he runs a home of refuge for the poor in the West End. His aim, he says, is to 'apply Christianity to the practical life of our time'. He becomes obsessed with the idea that Glory's career in the theatre is destroying her soul; in a moment of madness, he nearly kills her. When Glory tells him she has always loved him, he embraces her and the audience is left to assume they will marry.²² This happy ending replaces the sombre conclusion of the novel, in which Storm is fatally injured during a riot of his followers, who have been led to believe that the apocalypse is near. He marries Glory just before succumbing to his wounds.

A copyright performance at the Grand Theatre in Douglas in August 1897 revealed some weaknesses in the play and Caine asked for Barrett's advice on how it could be improved. Caine also sought the help of the American theatrical agent Elisabeth Marbury. She suggested adding a prologue showing Glory and John in their youth. 'I felt sure that the audience would want their first impression of them to be one of sunshine and of romance', Marbury recalled in her autobiography, boasting that this 'bit of reconstruction' had 'altered [the play's] fate' and ensured its success.²³ Caine then signed a contract with Liebler & Company to present the play in New York with Viola Allen as Glory Quayle and Edward J. Morgan as John Storm.²⁴ Acquiring Allen was a major coup; she had been the star of Charles Frohman's Empire Theatre Company for five years and was a powerful box office draw. As Caine's confidence as a dramatist grew, so too did his interest in having greater artistic control over how his plays were produced. *The Christian* was the first play he directed himself, initially by long distance correspondence with Allen and then in person with her both on the Isle of Man and in New York.²⁵ Following

²² Hall Caine, *The Christian*, Add MS 53691 B. I., Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library.

²³ Marbury, *My Crystal Ball*, pp. 134–35. Caine's theatrical agent, Reginald Golding Bright, managed Marbury's London office.

²⁴ See George C. Tyler with J. C. Furnas, *Whatever Goes Up: The Hazardous Fortunes of a Natural Born Gambler* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1934), pp. 141–45, for an engaging account of the first American production of *The Christian*. Tyler estimated the play made a profit of more than \$500,000 in its first season. Caine must have been introduced to Tyler by Bright, who represented Tyler in London.

²⁵ The correspondence can be found in the Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage (MS 09542, Box 43).

previews in Albany and Washington, D. C., in September 1898, it opened at the Knickerbocker Theatre on 1 October and ran for 160 performances. ‘It deals with coarse and repulsive subjects in a perfectly decent way’, said *The New York Times*, and the crowds that flocked to see it agreed.²⁶ It was then taken on tour, where it made \$2 million during its first four seasons.²⁷ Buoyed by this success, Caine began negotiations for a production at Frohman’s London theatre, the Duke of York’s. Barrett, meanwhile, had prepared his own version of the play, trying it out during his tour of Australia. He was under the impression, based on their previous working arrangements, that he and Caine would jointly write all future theatrical adaptations of Caine’s novels. This was not an impression shared by Caine. When Barrett discovered Caine was talking with Frohman, he sued. Caine countersued. Barrett, unable to show any written agreement between himself and Caine, was forced to back down. This legal tangle delayed the London production until October 1899. By that time other commitments prevented Allen and Morgan from reprising their roles and they were replaced by Evelyn Millard and Herbert Waring. Caine’s sister, Lily Hall Caine, had a featured supporting role.²⁸ It failed after only two months. Caine blamed this in part on world events, namely the Second Boer War: ‘The piece was produced within a few days of the declaration of the South African War, when the public mind was entirely occupied with problems of the gravest national importance and when no other subject had power to produce so much as a ripple on the surface

²⁶ *The New York Times*, 11 October 1898.

²⁷ Hall Caine to Mr [Benjamin William] Findon, 10 December 1907, reprinted in *The Play Pictorial*, 11 (1907), p. 27. This letter, which recounted the stage history of *The Christian*, prefaced an issue of the magazine devoted entirely to production photographs of the second version of the play. Findon was editor of *The Play Pictorial* from 1906 until its demise in 1939.

²⁸ According to Allen, Lily Hall Caine (1869–1914) made her acting debut in 1888 (*Hall Caine*, p. 207). Additional information about her career can be gleaned from notices in the *Era* and other newspapers. In 1889 she appeared in Frank Harvey’s *The Mother* at the Rotunda Theatre in Liverpool; the following year she played Nancy in a touring production of Henry Arthur Jones’s *The Middleman*. After settling in London, she was Regina Engstrand in J. T. Grein’s 1893 Independent Theatre Society revival of Henrik Ibsen’s *Ghosts*. She also appeared as Mistress Belleville in *Change Alley* by Louis Napoleon Parker and Murray Carson at the Garrick Theatre in April 1899, six months before joining the cast of *The Christian* as Polly Love. In 1905 she played Thora to George Alexander’s Oscar in Caine’s *The Prodigal Son* at Drury Lane. She died of pneumonia at the age of 45 on 1 June 1914; a brief obituary appeared in *The Times* the following day.

of public affairs', he noted. To recoup the loss of royalties this represented, Caine authorised a touring production managed by Lily's husband, George D. Day, and the impresario Wentworth Croke, starring Lily as Glory Quayle and Henry Renouf as John Storm. 'Since then', he continued, 'the play has been continuously performed in the provinces by one, two, and sometimes three companies, and I do not think it has ever failed to draw a profitable audience'.²⁹

In 1907, Croke, who owned the play's English acting rights, proposed a revival at the Lyceum Theatre. Caine consented, he said, 'on condition that I should be at liberty to rewrite the play in order to introduce without any kind of restraint a new social propaganda on which I had long felt deeply'.³⁰ This was a combination of the 'Woman Question', broadly construed, a critique of rapacious capitalism, and a desire to 'strip the mask from some forms of fashionable religion and some aspects of conventional morality'.³¹ Caine was interested in the most pressing social justice issues of his day, including urban poverty and the underclass of abused and exploited women it created — as well as the hypocrisy of a Victorian religious establishment that alternately pitied and judged these women but did nothing practical to assist them. In Caine's revised play, his depiction of the dangers faced by the spirited Glory Quayle as a young, talented, and capable woman struggling to establish an independent life in the city is balanced by the addition of a character called Black Meg, a prostitute who frequents the promenade behind the dress circle of a prominent London music hall. Caine also added a scene set inside the 'home of refuge' established by Storm.³² Matheson Lang (who would portray Pete Quilliam in

²⁹ Hall Caine to Mr Findon, *The Play Pictorial*, 11 (1907), p. 27. In addition to managing provincial tours, Croke was the lessee-manager of the Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool; the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith; and the Royal Opera House, Rugby.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Caine, 'A Message from Hall Caine to the Reader of *The Christian*', p. 15. For an overview of the Victorian debate on woman's nature and place, see *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837–1883*, ed. by Elizabeth K. Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder, 3 vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983) and Christina Crosby, *The Ends of History: Victorians and "The Woman Question"* (London: Routledge, 1991).

³² Hall Caine, *The Christian*, LCP 1907/20, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library.

Caine and Parker's *Pete* the following year, also at the Lyceum) was cast as John Storm and the Australian actress Alice Crawford as Glory Quayle.

In his preface to the published version of the revised play, Caine says 'the problem of the fallen woman' had long occupied him and that he had made a careful study of it in London, New York, Paris, and Rome: 'I think I know it in most of its many aspects. I know where the fallen woman comes from, what makes her what she is, what keeps her in her present condition, and what hope there is of her redemption'. Into the new play he had put 'the results of the reflection and observation of twenty-five years, and in writing it I have tried to state a case, to make a suggestion, and to present a picture'.³³ Typical of the critical reaction was a review that appeared in the *English Illustrated Magazine*: 'As a tract the play is a failure [...] it teaches nothing; it merely excites. It appeals to a love for sensation. It attracts because it is supposed to offer glimpses of a world unknown to most of those who see the play — of a world attractive because it is unknown'.³⁴

In their pursuit of an explanation for the play's fascination, several critics remarked on the composition of the Lyceum audience, which, like Caine's reading public, was predominantly female. The *English Illustrated Magazine's* reviewer wanted to know 'what is it that attracts the crowds of women who form the almost endless queues awaiting the opening of the door at every performance of "The Christian"? Is it because the zeal of the reformer has entered their pure breasts and made them eager to minister in homes of refuge?' Or, he suggested with a sneer, 'is it because they anticipate realistic pictures of temptations that assail their unprotected sister, of the wickedness of men and of the scenes that pass in a refuge for lost innocence?'³⁵ Conceding that 'the majority of [Caine's] followers at the theatres all over the kingdom are of the feminine gender', Croke cited Caine's ability

³³ Hall Caine, *The Christian: A Drama* (London: Collier, 1907), pp. vii–viii. This was an interest he had shared with Rossetti while living in Cheyne Walk; see *My Story*, pp. 219–222.

³⁴ *The English Illustrated Magazine*, November 1907, p. 162.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

to touch ‘the mainsprings of feeling’ and his ‘earnest appeal to the finer instincts’ as reasons for the popularity of his stories with women.³⁶

To lend credibility to that ‘earnest appeal’, Caine’s research had included visits to the West London Mission, a Wesleyan Methodist refuge for the destitute established in Soho in 1887 by the dynamic Reverend Hugh Price Hughes. The mission represented, according to Ellen Ross, ‘an aggressive, socially engaged, and politically liberal nonconformity’; Hughes himself considered it a ‘garrison in the centre of the foe’.³⁷ Caine supported the mission financially and endorsed the efforts of the affiliated Sisters of the People directed by Hughes’s wife, Katherine Price Hughes. This organisation consisted of ‘ladies of leisure, culture, refinement, and devotion’ trained to provide social welfare services to the poor.³⁸ That Caine intended the revised *Christian* to be an expression of his own beliefs is beyond doubt. At each performance, pamphlets were distributed. ‘Has “The Christian” Impressed You?’ audience members were asked on the cover in bold red type. Inside, they were informed that Caine had drawn much of his inspiration for the play from Mrs Hughes’s work, down to the dresses worn by John Storm’s fictional Sisters, which were exact copies of the uniforms worn by the Sisters of the West London Mission. Then came a plea for support. ‘It will be indeed a worthy tribute to Mr. Hall Caine’s genius, an outcome of the compassion born of this great effort, if our admiration takes the practical form of helping the work which he desires to serve’. Audience members who had been ‘stirred to the heart and touched with deep

³⁶ *The Era*, 7 September 1907. For an overview of women’s reading practices during the Victorian period, see Catherine J. Golden, *Images of the Woman Reader in Victorian British and American Fiction* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2003.) Golden argues that female readers of novels ‘read mimetically’, that is, they ‘perceived literature as a reflection of life and fictional characters as role models’ (p. 9). It seems reasonable to conclude that a desire to see a favourite novel’s characters, perhaps especially the heroine Glory Quayle, brought to life onstage prompted women to flock to *The Christian*, although, as Kerry Powell has noted, ‘it was still customary for women to attend the theatre in the company of men, rather than alone or with other women’ at this time. See *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 116.

³⁷ Ellen Ross, ‘St. Francis in Soho: Emmeline Pethick, Mary Neal, the West London Wesleyan Mission, and the Allure of “Simple Living” in the 1890s’, *Church History*, 83 (2014), 843–883 (p. 851, p. 852).

³⁸ Philip S. Bagwell, *Outcast London, A Christian Response: The West London Mission of the Methodist Church, 1887–1987* (London: Epworth Press, 1987), p. 26.

compassion for the poor victims of the streets' were invited to contact Mrs Hughes at her address in Greek Street.³⁹

Many critics accused Caine of preaching a lay sermon and indeed, the direct call to action represented by the pamphlet transforms the nature of the theatrical event experienced by the Lyceum's patrons. No one in the audience could have missed the point of John Storm's cry: 'Oh, you good women in your pure and happy houses, how can you sleep in your white beds at night while the streets of the city are full of the victims of shame?'⁴⁰ Caine, however, was not simply interested in illustrating the plight of the fallen woman. That, he said, was 'only the necessary background' to his larger purpose, which was depicting 'a problem of far wider and more general interest — that of the physical relation of woman to man'.⁴¹ For him, this meant more than a demand for fair treatment: it was a claim that women should be equal in their 'sexual and spiritual' relations. *The Christian* was intended to show 'the pity and the cruelty of the order of things wherein it is always the woman who has to pay, as well as the pagan injustice of the accepted idea that her suffering and degradation are inevitable to the social system and even necessary to the scheme of creation'.⁴² He urged his readers to acknowledge the self-sufficiency of women. 'Better than any legislation intended to establish the civil status of woman, and better than any institutions designed to rescue and redeem her when she has become a victim to her own weakness or a prey to the sin of man', he wrote, 'would be the successful promulgation of the obvious truth that she is a separate being, with sexual

³⁹ A copy of the pamphlet survives in the Manx National Heritage collections, Acc. No. 9267, Scrapbook 4 (1906–1911). Caine offered to donate his royalties from the play 'to any responsible and earnest person' whose work involved 'redeeming the fallen' (*The Era*, 7 September 1907). In 1909 Caine purchased a flat near Leicester Square for the Sisters' use as a rescue shelter. See Bagwell, *Outcast London*, p. 32, quoting the mission's annual report for that year, and related correspondence in the Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage (MS 09542, Box 55). From 1908 to 1912, the Lyceum Theatre was used for the mission's Sunday services while its new permanent home, Kingsway Hall on Great Queen Street, was built. Caine attended at least one of the services at the Lyceum (see Bagwell, *Outcast London*, p. 66); he may well have had a hand in arranging the theatre's use by the mission.

⁴⁰ Caine, *The Christian*, p. 116.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. viii–ix.

rights (as well as responsibilities) upon which no man ought to be allowed to trespass without utter dishonour and everlasting disgrace'.⁴³

This version of *The Christian* had much in common with the suffrage plays of the same period, reflecting that movement's interest in ameliorating the underlying social conditions that perpetuated women's subjugation — those in Glory's position as much as those in Black Meg's — and calling for the Lyceum audience's involvement in the effort through its proto-agitprop pamphlet. Performed just six months after Elizabeth Robins's *Votes for Women!* was staged at the Royal Court Theatre, *The Christian* was a plea for female equality on all levels — an equality that went beyond enfranchisement and what Caine called mere legal emancipation to an entirely new view of women as autonomous beings. That, Caine thought, would be 'a revolutionary movement indeed'.⁴⁴ In this way the thematic concerns of the play (if not its generic attributes, which were unquestionably those of melodrama) can be linked with other plays of the period that addressed the 'Woman Question' in its various guises. It was also part of a turn-of-the-century moment when British dramatists made tentative forays into the territory of the naturalistic 'problem play'. Like Henry Arthur Jones's *Michael and His Lost Angel* (1896), Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps* (1897), Parker and Barrett's *Man and His Makers* (1899), Arthur Shirley and Sutton Vane's *The Better Life* (1900), Jerome K. Jerome's *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (1908), and Charles Rann Kennedy's *The Servant in the House* (1909), *The Christian* was an exercise in applied religion, asking its audiences, like church congregations, to consider on what moral or ethical basis a man should live his life in a modern world that confronts him with a bewildering array of temptation. In doing so it flirted dangerously with being denied a license for performance by the Lord Chamberlain, as indeed some of these plays were, well into the twentieth century.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. ix–x.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. viii.

The Christian ran for 181 nights. The *Penny Illustrated Paper* estimated that by its 175th performance, more than half a million people had seen it.⁴⁵ Capitalising on its ‘phenomenal and instantaneous success’, Croke sent it on the road with three different companies, where it met with similar acclaim.⁴⁶

The Eternal City, Caine’s most successful novel, was published in August 1901 and by the following spring a play based on it had been contracted to the actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree for production at His Majesty’s Theatre. Like *The Manxman* and *Pete*, *The Eternal City* features a love triangle. Like *The Christian*, it has a charismatic main character whose socialist mission to improve the world is rooted in profound religious belief. (Both had been prominent features of the failed *Mahomet* more than a decade earlier.) Caine may have been inspired by stories told to him by Dante Gabriel Rossetti about his father, an Italian political refugee, or by the Anglo-Catholic interests of Christina Rossetti and the wider Pre-Raphaelite circle. The play’s melodramatic nature is clear from its plot. During a celebration of (the fictional) Pope Pius X’s jubilee in Rome, David Rossi insults the beautiful sculptor Donna Roma Volonna, mistress of Baron Bonelli, the corrupt prime minister. Rossi is ‘a socialist, a republican [...] a new prophet who proposes to govern the world by the precepts of the Lord’s Prayer’. As a child he had been abandoned by his parents, renamed David Leone, and sold to white slavers in London. There he was saved by a man called Joseph Roselli, Roma’s father, who had left Italy for England after being implicated in a plan to overthrow the government. Rossi and Roma realise their close childhood connection. Rossi tells her he has been accused of conspiring to assassinate the Italian king: if his true identity is discovered, he could be tried for treason. Bonelli soon learns Rossi’s

⁴⁵ *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 25 January 1908.

⁴⁶ *The Era*, 7 September 1907. Roy Redgrave, patriarch of the Redgrave family acting dynasty, played John Storm in Croke’s No. 1 company for nine months in 1908–09, just before his permanent move to Australia. There he reprised the role in the first film version of *The Christian* (West’s Pictures, 1911), which was also his first film. Daisy Scudamore, his second wife (mother of Sir Michael Redgrave and grandmother of Vanessa, Corin, and Lynn Redgrave), had played Glory Quayle in Croke’s No. 1 company.

secret. The only likeness of Rossi is a bust that Roma is sculpting of him; when Bonelli says he will photograph it to help the police, Roma destroys it. Bonelli tells the pope he must persuade Roma to identify Rossi as Leone. As she reluctantly does so in order to save Rossi's life, the pope realises that the young man is his long-lost son. Bonelli tells Rossi that he and Roma are lovers. They fight. Rossi kills Bonelli in self-defence and flees. Believing that Roma has betrayed him, Rossi rejects her and she takes onto herself the blame for Bonelli's death. Rossi discovers that the pope is his father. Roma is sentenced to death but then learns that the parliament has nominated Rossi to succeed Bonelli as prime minister; as the curtain falls, she and Rossi are reunited. Once more, a happy ending replaces what had originally been a much gloomier conclusion: in the novel, Roma dies.⁴⁷

The play opened on 2 October 1902. 'Artificial without ingenuity, dull without dignity, and strained without any compensating grip upon sympathy and imagination', said the *Observer* in a judgement shared by the majority of critics. 'Whether as a specimen of technical dramatic work, as an example of literary style, or even as a medium for the display of individual histrionic powers, *The Eternal City* is poor stuff'. Tree, an accomplished character actor, was wasted as the villain Bonelli, who 'can never hope even by the aid of Mr. Tree's subtle art to convince us with his sentiment, his strategy, and his iniquity'; Constance Collier did all that could be expected with the 'unreal passion' of Roma; Robert Tabor imparted 'all possible earnestness to the outbursts of oratorical Rossi'.⁴⁸ In his review for the *Daily Telegraph*, Clement Scott observed that 'it is a question whether any of the characters are alive or real. It is certain that one, at least, the figure of the Pope, is treated with a freedom which makes the judicious grieve'. He boiled down the melodrama's main lures: 'moving episodes of revolutionary strife, passing through violent alternations of love and hatred, of passionate wooing and equally passionate

⁴⁷ Hall Caine, *The Eternal City*, LCP 1901/26, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library.

⁴⁸ *The Observer*, 5 October 1902. It was during the run of this play that Constance Collier was nearly murdered by a homicidal super who planned to stab her to death on stage. The story is told by Madeleine Bingham in *The Great Lover: The Life and Art of Herbert Beerbohm Tree* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), pp. 122–23.

cursing; while the themes of battle, murder, and sudden death are relieved and tempered by the discovery of long-lost relationships and the reunion of ancient friends'⁴⁹ — elements that appear in one form or another in nearly all of Caine's plays and the novels on which they were based.

Maud Tree recalled that the play was 'an ambitious one, involving tremendous outlay, strenuous rehearsals, [and] lavish display'.⁵⁰ It was a triumph for its scene painters, William Telbin (the younger) and Joseph Harker, both of whom had worked for Irving at the Lyceum. They provided gorgeous backdrops for a 'bustling, polychromatic spectacle'⁵¹ with processions 'full of light and colour' that illustrated 'all the outside show and glory, both of regal and of ecclesiastical Rome'.⁵² 'Crowds of brilliant uniforms' manoeuvred in front of the splendid scenery of Rome, including the Coliseum, St Peter's Basilica, the Vatican gardens, and the Castel Sant'Angelo.⁵³ Caine had commissioned the Italian composer Pietro Mascagni to provide the play's music. 'For many of the effects which vivify the atmosphere of the drama and bring back the breath of old Rome, I am indebted to the beautiful art of the master', Caine wrote in a preface to the sheet music.⁵⁴

The representation of the pope and the use of Catholic liturgical language, ceremony (including papal blessings, prayers for the dying, and characters making the sign of the cross), and music (the *Miserere* and *De Profundis*) seem not to have raised any concerns in the Lord Chamberlain's Office. The play was licensed without comment, although the copy submitted is missing its fifth and final act (the

⁴⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 3 October 1902.

⁵⁰ Maud Tree, 'Herbert and I', in *Herbert Beerbohm Tree: Some Memories of Him and of His Art*, ed. by Max Beerbohm (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1920), pp. 1–170 (p. 127).

⁵¹ *The Times*, 3 October 1902.

⁵² *Daily Telegraph*, 3 October 1902.

⁵³ *The Times*, 3 October 1902.

⁵⁴ See Pietro Mascagni, *The Eternal City* [Incidental music to the play by Hall Caine] (London: Metzler & Co., 1902). Mascagni (1863–1945) is best known for his operas, including *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890). He was one of the founders of *verismo*, a style featuring 'strong local colour and situations centring on the violent clash of fierce, even brutal passions, particularly hatred, lust, betrayal, and murder'. See *The Grove Book of Operas*, ed. by Stanley Sadie and Laura Macy, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 678. Caine could not have selected a more like-minded composer.

act in which the pope appears) suggesting that perhaps George Redford, then the Examiner of Plays, sent it either to his superior, the comptroller Arthur Ellis, or to the Lord Chamberlain himself (Edward Villiers, Lord Clarendon) for further scrutiny. Since the character was not meant to be an impersonation or caricature of the current pope, the play did not, technically, run foul of the prohibition against the representation of living persons. However, if Redford had wished to ban the play, he would have found adequate grounds in its overtly religious language, its depiction of Catholic rites, or the possibility that its production would lead to breaches of the peace. It is very likely that Tree's status as a leading actor-manager had a role in reassuring Redford the play was fit for representation. As John Russell Stephens noted, the manager's reputation could sometimes be 'the vital, deciding factor in doubtful cases'.⁵⁵ Caine later remarked he was stunned that he had been allowed to put a pope onstage: 'How it came to pass that the play was licensed baffles my comprehension, but Mr. Redford was so much better than his job that he allowed the play to go', he told the Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays in 1909.⁵⁶

Caine himself had done all he could to pre-empt controversy. On 26 February 1899, shortly after beginning work on the novel, he met with Cardinal Herbert Vaughan, the Archbishop of Westminster. Desiring to forestall any objection that might be made to his story after its publication, Caine asked his advice. The clearest sign he had received Vaughan's approval to proceed was an invitation to a private audience with Pope Leo XIII during his next trip to Rome, an experience he described in the Christmas 1901 number of *Household Words*.⁵⁷ Caine loved Rome and went there many times to recover his strength after bouts of illness or nervous

⁵⁵ Stephens, *The Censorship of English Drama, 1824–1901*, p. 148.

⁵⁶ *Report from the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the Stage Plays (Censorship); together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices* (London: HMSO, 1909), p. 310. Caine added that Redford had previously turned a blind eye to the portrayal of Black Meg, the prostitute in *The Christian*, after he 'saw that the motive of the play was good' (p. 315).

⁵⁷ Caine called Leo XIII 'the simplest and gentlest, the sweetest and tenderest of old men'. Caine had revived Dickens's magazine earlier in the year and made his 17-year-old son Ralph its editor. It failed in 1903. See Allen, *Hall Caine*, pp. 285–86 and pp. 291–93.

exhaustion. He and his wife, Mary, often spent the winter months in a hotel near the Spanish Steps and it was there that he finished *The Eternal City* between January and April 1901.

Tree's production was, according to *The Tablet*, the weekly Catholic newspaper owned by Vaughan, the first time 'a real live modern Pope' had been seen on the English stage since Dion Boucicault's *Sixtus the Fifth*, produced at the Olympic Theatre in 1851.⁵⁸ Readers of *The Tablet* were assured that 'as now played there is nothing in it to shock the just susceptibilities of the most fervent Catholic [...] the Pope stands out strongly and decisively as a most pathetic and dignified figure'.⁵⁹ Brandon Thomas portrayed Caine's fictional pontiff 'with such dignity and true artistic feeling that the influence of the character is recognised and acknowledged [...] by the discriminating audience'.⁶⁰ It seems likely these positive notices of the play were an outcome of Caine's having smoothed the way beforehand with the archbishop. The views expressed, however, were not shared by the Vatican. On 16 October, the *Evening Telegraph* reported that *L'Osservatore Romano*, the semi-official Vatican news organ, had 'violently' condemned the play, calling it 'a mere tissue of improbabilities and indecencies'.⁶¹ Caine countered that the pope himself had read the novel on which the play was based: 'He was interested in my work when I was in Rome, and as soon as the book was published he sent for a copy and had it read to him', he told *The New York Times*, adding that the rumour the book had been placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was false.⁶² News of the production was also received badly elsewhere in Italy, where, according to *The Review of Reviews*, it had been attacked by journals such as *La Nuova Parola*.⁶³ 'It is

⁵⁸ *The Tablet*, 18 October 1902. Co-written with John V. Bridgeman, *Sixtus the Fifth; or, The Broken Vow* (alternately called *The Pope of Rome* and *A Romance in the Life of Sixtus the Fifth*, entitled, *The Broken Vow*) was an adaptation of *L'Abbaye de Castro* (1840) by Prosper Dinaux [Prosper-Parfait Goubaux] and Gustave Lemoine.

⁵⁹ *The Tablet*, 11 October 1902.

⁶⁰ *The Tablet*, 18 October 1902.

⁶¹ *The Evening Telegraph*, 16 October 1902.

⁶² *The New York Times*, 19 October 1902.

⁶³ *The Review of Reviews*, September 1902.

strange that the dramatist did not himself perceive how offensive to Roman Catholics' his play would be, said the *Observer*.⁶⁴ The *Athenaeum* was less bothered by the presence of a pope onstage than by the provocative way Caine had depicted the government of a foreign power. 'To show [...] in the Italian Government [...] a knot of unscrupulous politicians, headed by the Prime Minister [...] is a measure about as justifiable as that of presenting the Cabinet of this country plotting massacre in South Africa', it asserted. The reviewer also objected to Caine's obvious partiality to Rossi's socialist principles. 'So strong is the author's political bias that the play is less a drama than a *plaidoyer*', he complained.⁶⁵

The week after the play opened in London, Heinemann issued a 'theatre edition' of the novel costing just two shillings. In a move that would have gratified the *Athenaeum* critic, Caine had cut a third of the book, eliminating much of the political and religious detail and focusing on the love story between Roma and Rossi. It was the second of Caine's major contributions to publishing history: not only had he led the industry's transition from triple-decker to single-volume novel, he also pioneered today's inexpensive, quick-turnaround 'book-based-on-the-play/film' phenomenon.⁶⁶

The Eternal City had done little to improve Caine's reputation among the critics. Clement Scott summed up the opinions of many when he asserted that 'the main doubt as to the future popularity of the piece is how far a strongly melodramatic story with a beautiful stage setting can redeem the absence of a literary style and verisimilitude of portraiture. Mr. Hall Caine's fervent imagination does not seem to possess the vivifying power of the true dramatic artist, nor does the language which he puts into the mouth of his characters prove his kinship with literary art'.⁶⁷ The public blithely ignored such judgements and instead sided with

⁶⁴ *The Observer*, 5 October 1902.

⁶⁵ *The Athenaeum*, 11 October 1902.

⁶⁶ See 'Mr. Wm. Heinemann's New Books', *The Saturday Review*, 11 October 1902.

⁶⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, 3 October 1902.

Caine and Tree, keeping the theatre's house full for 117 performances. Tree later called the play 'obstinately successful'.⁶⁸

The American production of *The Eternal City* premiered six weeks later, on 17 November, at the Victoria Theatre, New York City, with Viola Allen as Roma, Frederic de Belleville as Bonelli, and Edward J. Morgan as Rossi. For Allen and Morgan, this was their second collaboration with Caine, four years after both had appeared in the American production of *The Christian*. It was, like *The Christian*, produced by Liebler & Company. Caine travelled to the United States a few weeks before the opening to supervise rehearsals. He discovered that George C. Tyler, the managing director of the Liebler organisation, had cut lines and made other alterations he thought necessary to ensure the play's success with American audiences. Caine argued but Tyler's changes stood.⁶⁹ Critics were unimpressed. 'The play is frankly and simply a melodrama of the most conventional sort, without a strain of the higher or subtle insight into motive and character', the *New York Times* opined.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, like its London counterpart, the play was a hit despite the reviews: its 92 performances held the stage through February, after which it toured the country for more than a decade.

As he had for *The Manxman* and *The Christian*, Caine wrote a new stage version of *The Eternal City* some years later. *The Eternal Question* was produced at the Garrick Theatre, London, on 27 August 1910 by Wentworth Croke, Milton Bode, and Edward Compton. The parts of Bonelli, Roma, and Rossi were played by Guy Standing, Minnie Tittell Brune, and Vernon Steel.⁷¹ Caine wanted to address

⁶⁸ Bingham, *The Great Lover*, p. 122.

⁶⁹ See *New York Times*, 9 November 1902. The antagonism between Caine and Tyler erupted into legal wrangling over who owned the rights to the play. Viola Allen wanted to leave the Liebler management, taking with her the rights to produce both *The Christian* and *The Eternal City* on her own, and this was agreed to. As part of the settlement, Caine gave Tyler the American rights to the unsuccessful 'Philip' version of *The Manxman*; when this failed to attract audiences, Tyler sued for restitution. Also see Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 291.

⁷⁰ *New York Times*, 18 November 1902.

⁷¹ Brune, an American actress who achieved stardom during a tour of Australia from 1904 to 1909, was a devout Roman Catholic who joined a Franciscan order on her retirement from the stage. In January 1910 she had appeared as Lady Carew in H. B. Irving's production of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* at the Queen's Theatre, London. She apparently had no objection to the Catholic themes of Caine's play.

two ‘problems of life’ that had become prominent in the years since he wrote the novel and its first stage adaptation. One of these was socialism: he intended the new play ‘to indicate the recent trend of the socialistic movement, the forces it has had to meet, and the risks it has still to run’ in the wake of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical on the condition of the working classes.⁷² But his primary interest was the one he had addressed in *The Christian: the Woman Question*. ‘The play is intended to deal with the relative rights and responsibilities of the sexes in the eye of God and man. I think this is the problem that lies at the back of the whole woman movement, of which the “vote” is only a part, and I have attempted to deal with it in its most intimate aspect — the aspect which concerns the sexual relations of man and woman’. He explained that he had made his two principal male characters stand for different sides of the debate: Bonelli represented those who believe women are the chattel of men, Rossi those who believe in the equality of the sexes.⁷³ But Caine’s attempt at writing a problem play fell flat and the critics were ruthless. ‘It has no value whatsoever’, said *The Academy*. ‘It is not literature, it is not drama, it is not an entertainment, it is not sound argument — it is nothing but a re-hash of utterly commonplace, utterly provincial rubbish’.⁷⁴ Caine’s depiction of a fictional pope was again criticised. ‘We thought Mr Hall Caine was [...] too well aware of the respect Catholics entertain for the Holy Father to wound their feelings’, said *The Catholic Times and Catholic Opinion*.⁷⁵ The production held the stage just under a month and was replaced by *The Bishop’s Son* (the revised *Ben-my-Chree* starring Bransby Williams), which was even shorter lived. *The Eternal City* and its later incarnation met with more success

⁷² Hall Caine, *The Eternal Question* (London: Ballantyne & Co., 1910), p. vii. The encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, was issued on 15 May 1891. In its discussion of the various duties of labour and capital, it affirmed private property rights but urged governments to remedy ‘the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class’ (Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* [Encyclical Letter on Capital and Labour], sec. 3 <http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html> [accessed 14 May 2014]. The copy of the play submitted for licensing is in the Lord Chamberlain’s Collection, British Library (LCP 1910/19).

⁷³ Caine, *The Eternal Question*, p. vii.

⁷⁴ *The Academy*, 3 September 1910.

⁷⁵ *The Catholic Times and Catholic Opinion*, 2 September 1910.

in the cinema; it was filmed in 1915 and again in 1923 with Lionel Barrymore as Bonelli.

Caine's career as a playwright of audience-pleasing and critic-vexing melodrama reached its apotheosis when *The Prodigal Son* and a new version of *The Bondman* were produced as autumn dramas by Arthur Collins at Drury Lane in 1905 and 1906, respectively. The autumn drama — which, in an effort to attract the widest possible audience, was never publicised as 'melodrama' — had been an annual tradition at that theatre since 1880. First Augustus Harris and then Collins spent lavishly to create large-scale spectacles featuring highly mechanised sets, astonishing lighting effects, and enormous casts. Opening each September and running to the start of the holiday pantomime (another venerable Drury Lane tradition) in mid-December, the autumn dramas privileged sensation above all: characters faced peril to life and limb in thrilling and ever-more ingenious and violent climactic scenes that made a powerful emotional impression on the audience. This was a theatre for the eye, and that eye was often astonished by the vivid theatrical display set before it.⁷⁶

The Prodigal Son opened at Drury Lane on 7 September 1905 with George Alexander as Oscar Stephenson, Frank Cooper as Magnus Stephenson, and Lily Hall Caine as Thora Neilsen. Nancy Price, who had played a minor part in the London production of *The Eternal City* three years earlier, now took a much larger turn as Helga Neilsen. Based on the novel of the same name published in 1904 and set primarily in Iceland, its story is quintessential Caine, complete with a love triangle and a son thought lost and then found. Magnus, who manages a farm near Reykjavik, learns on his wedding day that his bride, Thora, is in love with his brother, Oscar, a composer. Magnus releases her from the engagement and she marries Oscar. When they return from their honeymoon, Thora is pregnant and

⁷⁶ For further examples and context, see Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850–1910* (London: Routledge, 1981) and Ben Singer, 'Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism', in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, ed. by Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 72–99.

Oscar has fallen in love with Helga, Thora's younger sister. A bank agent arrives at Magnus's farm seeking payment of a note for a large sum of money that purports to be signed by his father. Magnus discovers that Oscar forged the signature on the note negotiated by Helga, and tells Oscar to choose between Thora and Helga. After arguing with Helga, Thora faints and then dies while giving birth to a daughter, Elin. Five years later, Oscar and Helga are working at a casino on the Riviera, where he conducts the orchestra and she is an opera singer. Oscar tells Helga the reason he has not written music in five years is a vow he made on the night Thora died: 'I asked myself what punishment I could impose, and I heard but one answer — I could bury my delirious dream of greatness in the grave of the sweet girl it had destroyed'. He and Helga argue and separate. Another ten years pass. His family believe that Oscar is dead. Magnus, ruined by the expense of paying off the forged note, is about to lose the farm at auction. A visitor arrives, calling himself Christian Christiansson — it is Oscar, disguised, who has become famous for his operas based on the Icelandic sagas. His mother, Anna, fails to recognise him. When she tells him about the auction, he sees an opportunity to atone for his past behaviour. He gives a pocketbook to Elin and leaves. When the sheriff arrives for the sale, Elin gives him the pocketbook, which contains more than enough money to buy the farm. Christian's true identity is revealed and everyone toasts 'Anna's long-lost son, our long-lost son, Iceland's long-lost son, Oscar Stephenson!' In a series of three tableaux, Oscar is seen at the top of a mountain pass followed by Magnus, then returning with Magnus to the family home, and finally at the breakfast table surrounded by his mother, brother, and daughter.⁷⁷ A happy ending is substituted for the direr climax of the novel, in which Oscar finds redemption only in death.

The *Manchester Guardian* thought the play superior to the 'topical tableaux' and 'sporting slang' of previous Drury Lane autumn dramas.⁷⁸ The acting was lauded as 'appropriately robust and emphatic'.⁷⁹ The scenery, which included an

⁷⁷ Hall Caine, *The Prodigal Son*, LCP 1904/25, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library.

⁷⁸ *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 September 1905.

⁷⁹ *The Times*, 8 September 1905.

opening tableau of wide Icelandic fields surmounted by snow-capped mountains, glaciers, mineral springs, and basaltic rocks across which a flock of real sheep was driven — the theatrical equivalent of the cinematic establishing shot — was praised for creating a sense of large-scale grandeur, as was Collins's handling of the fashionable crowds in the casino scenes.⁸⁰ Caine, in his usual fashion, had travelled to the locations depicted to gather local colour; in 1903 he made his second trip to Iceland (the first, in 1889, had been inspired by William Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung*) and the following year he visited Monte Carlo with Collins.⁸¹ Caine received lukewarm praise for 'the appearance [...] of dignity and poetic feeling; an artistic intention, if not precisely an artistic result'.⁸² The popular appeal of his plays was undeniable, however. 'The "teeming millions" will have him', A. B. Walkley conceded in his review for *The Times*. 'He is a man after their own hearts and their own heads. They are deadly serious in the theatre, and so is he. They are interested in the big banalities of life, and so is he. They like expositions of the obvious, a good thumping emphasis, primary colours laid on thick, and so does he'.⁸³

Interestingly, Caine chose not to dramatise the most scandalous element of the novel. Oscar, mad with grief and guilt over Thora's death, places the only copies of his manuscript musical compositions in her coffin. 'They were written in hours when your faithful heart was suffering through my fault — when I neglected you and deserted you for the sake of my foolish visions of art and greatness', he says, standing over her body. 'That was the real cause of your death, Thora, and in

⁸⁰ The opening tableau, seen through a gauze, created a stir. In a letter dated 12 January 1906, Arthur Collins told Bland Holt, the Australian impresario who planned to produce the play at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne: 'I can assure you that this scene, properly lighted and worked, will be received nightly with the greatest enthusiasm. The Press spoke so much of it here that the bulk of our audience were in their seats before the curtain rose so as not to miss it'. Collins advised Bland to be sure to get 'a good sheep dog that will bark' (Bland Holt Box 2, Folder 16, National Library of Australia). I am indebted to Jim Davis, Professor of Theatre Studies, Department of Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Warwick, for this reference.

⁸¹ See Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 193, p. 302. Morris's *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs* (1876) is a four-volume, 10,000-line epic poem based on the thirteenth-century Icelandic Volsunga Saga. Caine was a great admirer of Morris's aesthetic philosophy and especially his socialist politics.

⁸² *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 September 1905.

⁸³ *The Times*, 8 September 1905.

punishment of myself for sacrificing your sweet life to my selfish dreams I wish to bury the fruits of them in your grave. Take them, then, and let them lie with you and fade with you and be forgotten'.⁸⁴ Later, however, desperate for money to cover his gambling debts, he has her grave opened and the compositions retrieved. The critics immediately recognised this for what it was: a thinly veiled fictional account, in highly questionable taste, of a dreadful event in the life of Caine's late friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In 1862, distraught over the death of his wife, the artist and model Elizabeth Siddal, from a self-administered overdose of laudanum, Rossetti had placed a notebook containing drafts of his poems in her coffin, wrapping it in the tresses of her famous long red hair. 'I have often been writing at these poems when Lizzie was ill and suffering, and I might have been attending her, and now they shall go', he told Ford Madox Brown.⁸⁵ Seven years later he received permission from the Home Secretary to exhume Siddal's body and recover the poems; they were revised and published in 1870. The parallels between novel and real life were obvious, and the book caused a permanent rift between Caine and the Rossetti family. Caine admitted the connection but told a journalist he felt sure he had not dishonoured his friend's memory. On the contrary, Caine argued, he had tried 'to explain Rossetti's impulse, interpret his feeling, and bring his otherwise mysterious and wayward conduct within the range of human sympathy'.⁸⁶ In the play, Oscar buries only his 'delirious dream of greatness' with Thora — not his manuscripts. Perhaps Caine wanted to avoid negative publicity; perhaps it was an olive branch to the Rossettis. In the end, he found discretion the better part of valour and the sensational plot point was dropped in the Drury Lane adaptation.

The omission must have been a relief to George Alexander, who since 1890 had managed his own theatre, the St. James's in King Street, and was persuaded to

⁸⁴ Hall Caine, *The Prodigal Son* (London: Heinemann, 1904), pp. 219–20.

⁸⁵ William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters with a Memoir*, 2 vols (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895), I, p. 225. This event predates Caine's association with the Rossettis by more than ten years. It is described in his *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* on pp. 44–45 and pp. 58–60.

⁸⁶ *The New York Times*, 11 November 1904.

join the cast as Oscar after Collins agreed to pay him the astronomical salary of £250 a week. 'It must have needed more than a little courage for a man so firmly established in his own theatre to risk an adventure in the strange and vast environment of Drury Lane', wrote the novelist A. E. W. Mason, one of Alexander's early biographers.⁸⁷ In the event, the play ran for thirteen weeks for a total of 105 performances. It was during this production that Irving died and Alexander delivered his eulogy from the Drury Lane stage. On 20 October he was a pallbearer at Irving's funeral in Westminster Abbey, an occasion largely planned by him and Norman Forbes-Robertson. Alexander 'owed much to Irving', including his London debut and a steady stream of good roles, Mason wrote. 'A great kindness existed between the two men, and Alexander paid what he could of his debt in the perfect ordering of those rites'.⁸⁸

At the 1906 annual meeting of Drury Lane's directors, Collins reported that although the 'experiment of producing *The Prodigal Son* had caused [them] a great deal of anxiety [...] the result was not only a financial, but an artistic, success, which did a great deal to enhance the reputation of the theatre'. He told the directors he had been blocked from producing the play in America when George C. Tyler secured the rights for Liebler and Company directly from Caine.⁸⁹ That production had opened on 4 September, three days before the London premiere, at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York City, following a preview in Washington, D. C. The cast included Edward J. Morgan as Magnus, Aubrey Boucicault as Oscar, Charlotte Walker as Thora, and Drina de Wolfe as Helga.⁹⁰ When word reached Caine in mid-

⁸⁷ A. E. W. Mason, *Sir George Alexander and the St. James' Theatre* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1935), p. 169.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁸⁹ *The Times*, 29 September 1906.

⁹⁰ This was the third time the English actor Edward J. Morgan took a lead role in one of Caine's plays: he had been John Storm to Viola Allen's Glory Quayle in the American production of *The Christian* in 1898 and David Rossi to her Donna Roma Volonna in the American production of *The Eternal City* in 1902. Just a year after starring in *The Prodigal Son* he died at the age of 32 following a fall blamed on his addiction to morphine. According to an obituary in the *New York Times* on 11 March 1906, Morgan had first used drugs to 'bring on the emotional frenzies which he desired' on stage; it is chilling to think his acclaimed performances in Caine's plays owed something to the physical effects of the habit that would end his life. Several other actors made careers of portraying

September that the production was in trouble, he went to New York to see if he could rescue it. Although some changes were made to the cast and Caine personally supervised further rehearsals, the play's fortunes did not improve and it was taken off after only 42 performances. It was while he was in New York on this visit that Caine received the cable from Stoker telling him that Irving was dead, and in his suite at the Hotel Gregorian on West 35th Street that he penned his eulogy for the *New York Herald*.

Far more sensational than *The Prodigal Son* was Caine's next Drury Lane autumn drama offering, *The Bondman*. The novel on which it was based had been an instant bestseller when it was published in January 1890 after being serialised in *The Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser* and a handful of provincial newspapers between June and November 1889, just as Caine was beginning work on *Mahomet*. It eventually sold nearly half a million copies, ensuring the success of the new publishing firm Heinemann.⁹¹ A copyright performance of the play took place at the Theatre Royal, Bolton, in November 1892, but it was not produced in London until September 1906, when Caine revised it for Collins's use at Drury Lane. It was a last-minute replacement for what would have been a season featuring Irving, whose death the previous October had prevented the theatre from opening in the spring as planned.⁹²

The Bondman is the story of two half brothers. One of them, Jason, has come to the Isle of Man from Sicily to look for his father, who had abandoned him and his mother twenty years before. The other, Michael Sunlocks, captain of the Laxey lead mine, is preparing to leave the Isle of Man to take up a two-year assignment in Sicily

Caine's protagonists. Typical of these was Mark Denman Draper, who started out as Oscar Stephenson in one of Wentworth Croke's touring companies of *The Prodigal Son* and then starred in his own productions of *The Christian* and *The Eternal City*. See *Flight* (Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom), 22 February 1917.

⁹¹ William Heinemann was so pleased by the book's sales that the new firm used 'Sunlocks', the name of one of its main characters, as its telegraph address for more than a hundred years. See St John, *William Heinemann*, p. 3.

⁹² *The Times*, 29 September 1906. Barrett produced the first version of the play in the United States in 1895.

as an engineer at a sulphur mine. He will also be fulfilling a promise made to his late father, who asked him to find the woman and child he deserted there. Michael is in love with a farmer's daughter called Greeba and before he leaves he makes her promise that she will wait faithfully for his return. Three years later, Jason has become the farm's manager. Michael, who was expected back the year before, has not been heard from since he left the island and there are rumours that he has died abroad. On the last day of the harvest, during a traditional Manx celebration called the *mheillea*, Jason asks Greeba to marry him and she consents. Greeba then learns that Michael is alive and has become the president of Sicily. She breaks her engagement with Jason and runs away to Michael. Jason follows her, planning to kill Michael, but Greeba denounces him as a spy. He is sent to a prison camp at the local sulphur mine. There is a coup and Michael is sent as a prisoner to the same camp, where he is chained together with Jason. The two men are ordered to open a dangerous solfatara and it explodes. The chains binding them are broken and each recognises the other as his half brother. A volcano erupts and Michael is blinded. He escapes with Jason but is later recaptured and sent to live on a remote island to await execution. Greeba has gone there, too, to work as Michael's servant. Jason arranges to trade places with Michael (that is, to serve as his 'bondman'), allowing Michael and Greeba to escape to England. The governor's execution order arrives but cannot be carried out: the governor is the father of Jason's wronged mother and he is unable to kill his own grandson.⁹³

In the first version of the play, as in the novel, the sulphur mine is located in Iceland; for the Drury Lane version, Caine moves this part of the story to Sicily. No doubt this reflected a desire to avoid repeating the setting of *The Prodigal Son* from the year before. And unlike either the novel or the first version of the play, in which Jason *is* executed in place of Michael, the Drury Lane version has a happy ending.

⁹³ Hall Caine, *The Bondman*, LCP 1906/27 M, Lord Chamberlain's Collection, British Library. A copy of the first version of the play is also held in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection, Add MS 53511 D.

The cast featured Frank Cooper as Jason, Henry Ainley as Michael, and Mrs Patrick Campbell as Greeba. A. B. Walkley observed in his review that the casting of Mrs Campbell had been in accordance with the Drury Lane practice begun the year before of ‘specially engaging’ a ‘distinguished outsider’. However, he wrote, ‘to see ‘this exquisite actress — so delicate, so subtle, so “modern” in style, so apt in the suggestion of the fugitive and recondite in feminine temperament — playing a heroine of Mr. Hall Caine’s is to see something very like a freak of artistic condescension’.⁹⁴ Mrs Campbell later called the experience a ‘nightmare’, admitting she did not understand her character or the plot. ‘I remember one or two things about this play — the blowing up of a sulphur mine to Rachmaninoff’s Prelude, Miss Henrietta Watson [another member of the cast] and I squashed up against the wall in the dark, like flies, quite certain that the next moment we would be killed by the most awful “business”, “properties”, sulphur fumes, rushing and screaming “supers”, “property” walls, earth, and stones hurled about [...] I remember saying that I could not act, I could not live, I could not breathe in the din and the misery’.⁹⁵ She was, however, well remunerated for her trouble, making nearly as much per week (£230) as George Alexander had for *The Prodigal Son*.⁹⁶

The degree of hyperrealism achieved by Collins’s designers was remarkable. ‘The scenic effects are great achievements, even for Drury Lane’, Walkley noted.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *The Times*, 21 September 1906. Frank Kemble Cooper had been a member of Irving’s company at the Lyceum for many years. Ainley was a London favourite who earlier in the year had played Orlando to Lilian Braithwaite’s Rosalind in a revival of *As You Like It* at Alexander’s St James’s Theatre. His most famous role was Hassan in James Elroy Flecker’s Orientalist verse drama *Hassan: The Story of Hassan of Baghdad and How He Came to Make the Golden Journey to Samarkand* (His Majesty’s Theatre, 1923). He became a highly regarded film actor; in 1917, he portrayed Philip Christian in the first film adaptation of Caine’s *The Manxman*.

⁹⁵ Mrs. Patrick Campbell, *My Life and Some Letters* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1922), pp. 271–72. Rachmaninoff’s Prelude in C-sharp minor (1892) was one of the composer’s most successful piano works and for that reason encountered ‘highbrow prejudice’ — a dynamic Caine knew well from the gap between the critical and popular reception of his own novels and plays. It was in many ways the ideal piece of music for *The Bondman*’s sensational mine explosion, with its ‘sinister *ff* opening through the surprising *ppp* continuation, the agitated central section, the mournful tolling of its final bars, when the music evaporates’ and an ‘indefinable sense of Fate hovering’ above all. See Max Harrison, *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* (London: Continuum, 2005), pp. 47–48.

⁹⁶ Margot Peters, *Mrs Pat: The Life of Mrs Patrick Campbell* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p. 263.

⁹⁷ *The Times*, 21 September 1906.

The Manx farmyard included a working well, real pigeons, and four live cows that were milked on stage. The highlight, however, was the spectacular explosion of the mine and the eruption of the volcano. To heighten the reality of this scene, jets of blue flame and dense smoke rose through crevices in the rock and a sulphurous odour concocted by the stage crew was wafted out over the audience. As he had for *The Prodigal Son*, Collins spent time in Europe with Caine to absorb local colour. The previous April they had been together in Sicily, where they spent a day with Leone Testa, the inspector-general of the island's sulphur mines, exploring both an underground extraction operation and the surface working of a solfatara. And then, during a visit to Naples, as if on cue, Mt Vesuvius erupted. Thrilled, Caine and Collins took notes on what they saw and ventured close enough to collect cooled lava and rocks, which Collins later displayed in a case in one of Drury Lane's saloons next to blocks of sulphur sent to him by Testa. Thus, most fortuitously, the production benefitted from the public's considerable interest in the eruption of Vesuvius. Testa travelled to London in October to attend a performance. He praised the explosion scene: 'The opening effects [...] with the line of *carusi*, or sulphur bearers, carrying the sulphur blocks, seem to me very effective. The blue, pulsating lights from the *calcarone* in which the sulphur is being burned are most realistic and wonderful'.⁹⁸

The play was a sensation. Collins had repeated his experiment from the year before of inviting critics to a rehearsal two days before opening night, a practice soon to be standard procedure in nearly all London theatres. 'The whole is pervaded by a fine and potent spirit', said the *Athenaeum* in a typical review, noting that the production would 'rank among the most exemplary of Drury Lane successes'.⁹⁹ It

⁹⁸ *Daily Express*, 19 October 1906. The eruption of Mt Vesuvius took place from 4–21 April. Its ash plume reached two miles into the sky and violent explosions rocked Naples for days. From there, Caine and Collins travelled to Florence, Lucerne, and Paris before returning to London in early May. See Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 312. The playwright Luigi Pirandello, whose father was a wealthy sulphur merchant in Sicily during this period, wrote of the notoriously dangerous working conditions in the mines, notably in the short stories *Il fumo* [*The Smoke*, 1904] and *Ciàula scopre la luna* [*Ciàula Discovers the Moon*, 1907] and in the novel *I vecchi e i giovani* [*The Old and the Young*, 1909].

⁹⁹ *The Athenaeum*, 22 September 1906.

ran for eleven weeks before transferring in January 1907 to the Adelphi Theatre, where it ran for another eight weeks. It was followed immediately at the same theatre by a revival of *The Prodigal Son*. Touring companies were sent throughout the provinces and to America.

The trend that the critic Desmond MacCarthy observed in 1914 ('the development of recent melodrama has been away from high moral sentiments towards the catastrophes and ingenious thrills Drury Lane sets itself to invent every year: mechanism has almost ousted morality') had been gathering speed since the turn of the century.¹⁰⁰ In 1906 Caine was already fighting a rear-guard action, insisting that of the two, mechanism and morality, it was the latter that must take priority. However, his practice of explaining the 'message' of his plays to the public in the weeks leading up to their openings had the effect of raising expectations beyond his ability to deliver dramatic writing of literary or intellectual merit. In the case of *The Bondman*, he proclaimed his intention had been to 'illustrate the conflict of the Pagan ideal of vengeance with the Christian ideal of love', the triumph of the latter depicted in a final tableau showing that 'the man who came to slay has stayed to save'.¹⁰¹ The critics measured him against his own yardstick and found him wanting. 'If Mr. Hall Caine said nothing about his works, or admitted frankly that he lived, for dramatic purposes, in the world of Pettitt and Mr. Sims and Mr. Raleigh, and Mr. Walter Melville, one could deal with *The Bondman* tolerantly and gently on that basis', said the *Speaker*. 'But Mr. Hall Caine will not have it so. His play is a work of art, carrying a great and holy message'. It was, the critic added, 'the tragedy of the melodramatist who takes himself too seriously'.¹⁰² Walkley, the *Times* critic, had once cut to the quick of Irving's method, now he did the same for Caine:

¹⁰⁰ Desmond MacCarthy, 'Melodrama', *The New Statesman*, 27 June 1914 ('Special Supplement on the Modern Theatre').

¹⁰¹ Hall Caine, *The Bondman Play* (London: The Daily Mail, 1906), p. x, p. xvi.

¹⁰² *The Speaker*, 29 September 1906. Henry Pettitt, George R. Sims, Cecil Raleigh, and Walter Melville were all writers of melodrama in the broad, traditional style. Waller calls this play 'a typical Caine product, a melodrama with pretensions' (*Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p. 734).

[His plays] seem to us of poor intellectual texture, crude in method, garish, and noisy as a brass band. They present a set of people, uncouth people, violent barbarians, whom we do not know and do not want to know and cannot persuade ourselves to believe in. The histories of these people are of the sort known as kaleidoscopic. They are suddenly plunged from giddy heights of power or prosperity into the depths of wretchedness. Panting geography toils after them in vain as they whirl round the globe from the snows of Iceland to the gaming tables of Monte Carlo, or from the homesteads of Man to the sulphur mines of Sicily. But wherever they go they are always essentially the same [...] They have hearts, abnormally developed hearts, thumping, palpitating, bursting, or broken hearts. They have voices which can always be heard above the perpetual din of hymns and choruses behind the scenes. They have all the outward semblances of human beings. Further, they have consciences, terribly obtrusive and tiresome consciences, and what is called a profound conviction of sin. But they have no real psychology, no real *vie intérieure*, no power of individual reflection. We shall be told, of course, that they represent the great natural forces in conflict, that they are the symbols of Titanic passions. But the original Titans — we have it on the authority of a true poet — were sometimes weary; and these never are [...] in his storms there is never a lull.¹⁰³

Despite such appraisals, Caine believed absolutely in his material; for him, each play *was* ‘a work of art, carrying a great and holy message’. Although often hurt by the critical brickbats thrown in his direction, he persisted in delivering his own vision of what the theatre could, and should, be in a manner that resonated with the public. He did take himself seriously, as his American agent Elisabeth Marbury said every writer of melodrama must do, and it was this authenticity that drove his popularity with both readers and audiences. If the critics were unwilling to acknowledge this in their reviews, well, that could be attributed to their stubborn commitment to an irrelevant and out-of-touch aesthetic standard.

After 1895, the year that marked the end of his collaboration with Wilson Barrett, Caine’s plays became more deeply engaged with social issues, especially those having a religious component. Beginning with the first version of *The Christian* in 1899 and especially with *The Eternal City* (1902), *The Prodigal Son* (1905), the second version of *The Bondman* (1906), the second version of *The*

¹⁰³ *The Times*, 21 September 1906.

Christian (1907), *Pete* (the third version of *The Manxman*, 1908), *The Eternal Question* (the second version of *The Eternal City*, 1910), and *The Bishop's Son* (the second version of *Ben-my-Chree*, 1910), Caine's moralism and inclination to didacticism become more marked. His sentimental, incident-driven romances are increasingly tempered by a concern with the problems of contemporary life and a desire to portray them as realistically as possible. His solutions to these problems might be expressed in the idealised language of melodrama, with results determined by the limits of that genre's moral universe and the requirement that justice be served or the audience demand for a happy ending be met, but they were sincerely meant. In 1895 Caine told an interviewer that his interest in crafting a 'thrilling tale' had been supplanted by a desire to explore the workings of 'Divine Justice, the idea that righteousness always works itself out, that out of hatred and malice comes Love'. He claimed that 'a piece of imaginative writing must leave the impression that justice is inevitable' and reiterated his belief that the 'highest form of art is produced by the artist who is so far an idealist that he wants to say something and so far a realist that he copies nature as closely as he can in saying it'.¹⁰⁴ The 'realistic romance' he had proclaimed as the future of fiction in Edinburgh the year before had arrived. His dramatic works from this period are 'problem plays' not in the modernist mode we recognise from the traditional historiography, in which the realistic drama triumphs over the romantic during the four decades between 1880 and 1920 (a stark binary opposition of genres only recently rejected by theatre historians), but in the melodramatic mode we have usually denied could accommodate their concerns successfully. Thus Caine emerges as a central, and until now completely overlooked, figure during a period in which, as Thomas Postlewait has noted, 'we can find melodramatic elements in realistic drama and realistic elements in melodramatic plays' and when an 'interpenetration of dramatic traits, attitudes, [and] practices' characterised the two genres. When Postlewait asserts that 'given our working assumptions on how and why dramatic realism emerged, we

¹⁰⁴ Sherard, 'Hall Caine', p. 90, p. 95.

have privileged certain documents, events, and figures at the expense of other possible historical sources and contributing factors' he might have been talking about Caine, whose hybrid works suggest a more complex picture than the one permitted by our traditional slotting of the period's plays into one of two clear-cut genre categories.¹⁰⁵ Although their position outside the canon has doomed them to obscurity, these works are not inherently inferior or trivial because they are melodramas or because they were immensely popular. Critics then and scholars now may debate the merits of Caine's plays according to their own biases, but it is clear that Caine found a formula that made him the period's most commercially successful dramatist.

No one, according to the *Era* in 1916, could deny Caine's right to that title.¹⁰⁶ A lawsuit related to *Jan, the Iclander; or Home, Sweet Home*, the play developed for but rejected by Irving, provides evidence of just how commercial he was. Hopeful that he could interest another actor in the play, Caine had continued to work on it and a copyright performance took place at the Grand Theatre, West Hartlepool, on 24 November 1900. However, it was not fully staged until eleven years later, when a revised version called first *The Unwritten Law* and then *The Quality of Mercy* was presented by John Hart and Montague Leveaux at the Manchester Theatre Royal on 4 September 1911.¹⁰⁷

The production followed a three-day trial in May 1910 in which Leveaux sued Caine for breach of contract. On 23 July 1908, Caine had given Leveaux exclusive rights to produce the play in the United Kingdom with the exception of London for a period of five years from 1 January 1909. Caine was to have delivered

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Postlewait, 'From Melodrama to Realism: The Suspect History of American Drama', in *Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre*, ed. by Hays and Nikolopoulou, pp. 39–60 (p. 55, p. 40). Although Postlewait's book deals chiefly with American drama, his arguments are applicable to Anglophone drama generally. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* regarding Caine's first American production of *The Christian*, the journalist Benjamin de Casseres observed presciently, 'I believe the next generation of critics will suspend Mr. Caine, like Mohammed's coffin, in that thin ethereal region midway between the heaven of romanticism and the terra firma of realism — the cynosure of curious eyes' (15 April 1899).

¹⁰⁶ *The Era*, 8 March 1916.

¹⁰⁷ Hall Caine, *The Quality of Mercy* (also known as *The Unwritten Law*), MS 09542, Box 51, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

the play to Leveaux by 1 November 1908 but failed to do so. Leveaux estimated his losses at £5,000. Caine testified that at the time the contract was signed, he had not started the play: all he had was a short story waiting to be adapted. He did not recall until the second day of the trial that a play did in fact exist (the version read for copyright at West Hartlepool). This admission ended the trial. The two sides settled and Caine finished the play for Leveaux.¹⁰⁸

Caine's power at the box office is demonstrated by the fact that Leveaux believed he would be able to tour the production with three different companies simultaneously and take nearly £400 a week in the larger cities. He estimated his running expenses at £75 a week and author's fees at £30 a week. He himself would receive sixty per cent of the gross receipts. Assuming a 48-week tour, there would be a profit of nearly £16,000 in the first year, £8,000 in the second year, and £4,000 in the third year: a total of £28,000 over the three years the play could be expected to draw sizable audiences. Three other managers testifying on Leveaux's behalf supported these estimates, one saying he had no doubt that any play written by Caine would be successful — indeed, he had never heard of any play by him that had failed outside of London. Another noted that given the opportunity to make a similar contract with Caine, 'he would have taken it blindly'.¹⁰⁹ The third said he would regard a contract for a play by Caine as 'a very valuable document' and that such a play would be 'an assured success' in the country. Caine's lawyers, seeking to minimise any damages that might be imposed by the court, took issue with these assessments. Their own witness, Wentworth Croke, thought Leveaux's estimates too rosy given that 1909 had been a bad year for business in the theatrical world. He admitted, however, that Caine's plays had 'a phenomenal success' and that they would draw 'more money than any living dramatist'.¹¹⁰ Samuel Norris, one of

¹⁰⁸ The trial was reported in detail in *The Times* on 4, 5, and 6 May 1910. It concluded on the same day that King Edward VII died at Buckingham Palace.

¹⁰⁹ *The Times*, 4 May 1910.

¹¹⁰ *The Times*, 5 May 1910. Croke, who had six plays on tour at the time, also thought Leveaux had underestimated his running expenses, pointing out that his own productions of *The Bondman* and *The*

Caine's first biographers, noted that most of his income resulted from the sale of theatre and film rights to his novels, which 'yielded greater profits to the author than all his book royalties combined'.¹¹¹

That Caine's melodramas were popular in London and the provinces well into the twentieth century attests to the perfect match of his 'product' with audience 'demand'. As the *Era* explained, Caine always took care 'not to write above the level represented by the average taste of the huge crowd of playgoers requisite to make a run for a play'.¹¹² If that statement seems to have a whiff of condescension about it, Caine would happily have admitted its accuracy. He had faith in his public and regularly appealed to its taste over the judgement of critics. His melodramas were well pitched: their stories delighted, their settings astonished, their morality reassured — and they made Caine both very famous and very rich.

But in the autumn of 1889, this fame and fortune were yet to come. Caine had only two produced plays to his name, both highly romantic, when the country's most celebrated actor-manager knocked on the door of his London flat in Albert Mansions, Victoria Street, with a parcel wrapped in plain paper under his arm. Handing over a translation of Bornier's *Mahomet*, Henry Irving told him: 'It's not right, but it's the right subject. See if you can do it over again'.¹¹³

Prodigal Son cost £180 a week and £120 a week, respectively, and that his weekly receipts averaged below £385 for each.

¹¹¹ Norris, *Two Men of Manxland*, p. 58.

¹¹² *The Era*, 8 March 1916.

¹¹³ Caine, *My Story*, p. 351.

Part II

Mahomet: Religion, Empire, and Dramatic Censorship in Late-Victorian Britain

It is sometimes said that the public, especially the play-going public, is a stubborn patron, very narrow in its sympathies and limited in its tastes. I am not in the least of that opinion. So far as I can see, there is only one thing the public demands and will not do without, whether in drama or novel, and that is human nature. It says to the author: 'Amuse me! Comfort me! Thrill me! Sustain me!' But it leaves him to please himself how he does it. He can sing what song he pleases. All it asks is, that the song shall be good, and that he shall sing it well enough. Otherwise it may be a song of love, or a ditty of the forecastle. And if the song says something that has a real relationship to life, so much the better.

— *Hall Caine, 'My Story' (London: Heinemann, 1908), p. 354*

Chapter 1 – Composition

The English play that was to create controversy on three continents began as a French play based on an even older French play. Henri de Bornier's *Mahomet* had been inspired by Voltaire's *Le fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète* (1736), whose title provides an unambiguous indication of its author's approach to his subject. Muhammad the historical figure is barely discernible; instead, Voltaire attacks through caricature the fundamental irrationality of all divinely inspired or revealed religions.¹

Voltaire's play begins with Mahomet, having established the first Muslim community in Medina, laying siege to Mecca and demanding its surrender. Zopir, leader of the city's senate and defender of its traditional religion, rejects the overtures of Mahomet's envoy, Omar. Zopir tells Omar he will fight to preserve the freedom of the Meccans; he also refuses to return Palmire, the prophet's beautiful slave, who had been captured by the Meccans during a previous skirmish. Zopir's children had been abducted by Mahomet fifteen years earlier and for reasons he does not understand, he feels a special attachment to Palmire. Mahomet enters Mecca after its senate agrees to a truce. Séide, another of Mahomet's slaves who had been taken from Mecca as a young child, is reunited with Palmire, to whom he is devoted. To Omar, Mahomet admits his lustful feelings for Palmire and reveals a secret: Séide and Palmire are brother and sister, the long-lost children of Zopir, although neither knows it. Mahomet tells Zopir his new religion is destined to conquer the

This chapter includes some material by the author published in earlier versions as 'The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine's *Mahomet*' in *Henry Irving: A Re-evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager*, ed. by Richard Foulkes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 49–63, and "'A Grand Informal Durbar': Henry Irving and the Coronation of Edward VII", *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 8 (Autumn 2003), 257–291.

¹ Voltaire's *Mahomet* was first performed in Lille in April 1741. Its Paris premiere took place in August 1742 at the Comédie-Française; due to protests from religious leaders, Voltaire was forced to withdraw it after only three performances. See Christopher Todd's introduction to his critical edition of the play in *The Complete Works of Voltaire/Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. by Nicholas Cronk, vol. 20B (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2002), pp. 20–30. On the play's censorship, see Pierre Martino, 'L'interdiction du *Mahomet* de Voltaire et La Dédicace au Pape, 1742–1745', in *Mémorial Henri Basset: Nouvelles Etudes Nord-Africaines et Orientales, L'Institut des Hautes-Etudes Marocaines* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1928), pp. 89–103.

world and that he and the Meccans must submit. Zopir still resists. Mahomet then tells him that Séide and Palmire are his children. He will free Séide and marry Palmire if Zopir agrees to help him in his mission. Zopir refuses. Mahomet decides to have Zopir killed and persuades a reluctant Séide to be the assassin by promising him Palmire after he has carried out the assignment. Séide tells Palmire he has started to doubt Mahomet is divinely inspired but that he dares not defy him. Séide stabs Zopir as he prays to the idols at the Kaaba and immediately regrets it. As Zopir lays dying, Séide and Palmire learn he is their father. Séide vows to kill Mahomet but is arrested by Omar and thrown into prison. Omar tells Mahomet he has given Séide poison and that he will soon die from its effects. Mahomet proposes to Palmire, who curses him. The Meccans discover the plot and free Séide. They pursue Mahomet, led by the weakened Séide, who collapses and dies. Mahomet threatens the crowd, telling them that Séide's death is a sign of God's anger. The crowd disperses. Palmire stabs herself with her brother's dagger. Mahomet, filled with remorse, confesses to having deceived his followers by claiming divine authority for his actions.

Bornier was quick to take issue with the suggestion that his work was simply a new version of Voltaire's: 'My play is the exact opposite of his', he insisted. 'Voltaire made the prophet a monster of perfidy, cruelty, incest, and imposture. I have made him the contrary'.²

Bornier's 'Mahomet'

In Bornier's play, Mahomet experiences a crisis of faith, wanting to trust in the divine revelations given him on Mount Hira but unwilling to abandon the

² Henri de Bornier, 'Le drame *Mahomet* et l'opinion musulmane', *Journal des débats*, 29 October 1889. Bornier published *Mahomet* in *Le Correspondant*, the journal of the Catholic ultramontanist movement, on 10 April 1889 and then as a separate volume (Paris: E. Dentu, 1890). The first scholarly consideration of Bornier's play was C. E. Bosworth, 'A Dramatisation of the Prophet Muhammad's Life: Henri de Bornier's *Mahomet*', *Numen*, 17 (August 1970), 105–17.

Christian and Jewish beliefs with which he is familiar. Its first act is set in Mecca, a wealthy centre of trade situated at the intersection of the region's lucrative caravan routes. It is also an important place of pilgrimage for the worship of Arabia's extensive pantheon of pagan gods: the Kaaba, a granite temple in the heart of the city, contains more than 300 idols. Mahomet returns from a trading journey to the house of his gravely ill wife Khadija. He announces to those assembled there, including a Christian monk called Georgios, that he has been called by the one and only god, Allah, to abolish the false gods of the Kaaba and to reunite the tribes of Arabia. He tells Georgios that Christianity is for the people of the West; it does not suit the Arabs. As the people of Mecca pray at the Kaaba, a violent simoom arises, causing the idols to fall to the ground. Mahomet tells the crowd they must listen to him or perish: 'A single people, a single God! It is the law!' As they move to attack him, Khadija intercedes and saves his life. Georgios urges Mahomet to remember Christ. The remaining four acts are set fifteen years later, with Islam's influence spreading throughout Arabia. In Act II, the Jews are being driven out of the region and are fleeing across the desert. One, a prophetess called Sofia, hides in an abandoned convent and awaits an opportunity to avenge her people. Mahomet and his army reach the convent. Hafsa, one of Mahomet's wives, suggests that another of his wives, Ayesha, may be in love with Safwan, one of Mahomet's closest confidants. In anger, Mahomet divorces Hafsa on the spot. Ayesha had been engaged to Safwan before Mahomet married her and Safwan has vowed never to love another woman. In the convent, Mahomet sees a painting of the crucified Christ illuminated by a shaft of moonlight coming in at the window. This gives him pause; his sense of inferiority as a prophet is revealed. He vows to die not as Jesus died, surrendering to his persecutors, but only after his enemies have been crushed. Sofia is discovered. She tells Mahomet she is only a poor woman, a singer, who has become separated from her family. He demands a song and as Sofia sings he falls in love and then marries her. In Act III, set in Medina, Mahomet dreams that Safwan and Ayesha have betrayed him. The borders of the Muslim empire are attacked by an alliance of

Jews, Persians, and Byzantines. Mahomet asks Safwan to lead a military campaign against them. Sofia, in league with the repudiated Hafsa, begins to enact her revenge. She tells Safwan and Ayesha that Mahomet is jealous of Safwan and they should take care not to arouse his anger. Alone, Safwan and Ayesha remember happier days and embrace — a moment Sofia makes sure is seen by Hafsa and Hafsa's brother Hassan. In Act IV, Sofia assures the rejected Hafsa that she will have her revenge on Mahomet and then privately reveals her duplicity: 'At the price of your blood, victory will be mine. Arabs, Muslims, O abhorred masters, small or great, serve Israel and die! Smiling, I complete my task [...] Revenge at any cost! It must be!' Mahomet and his army triumph on the battlefield, the prophet at one point saving Safwan's life. As Mahomet and Safwan are about to enter the mosque to give thanks, Hafsa and Hassan, acting on Sofia's instructions, accuse Safwan of adultery with Ayesha and tell Mahomet they have seen the lovers together. Mahomet declares Ayesha innocent and sentences Hafsa and Hassan to death. Taking matters into his own hands, Hassan stabs Hafsa and then himself. Mahomet is wracked with doubt about Ayesha's innocence. Sofia shows Mahomet a small gold bottle containing poison that she wears around her neck. In Act V, Sofia lies and tells Mahomet the accusations against Safwan and Ayesha are true. He asks Sofia to pour the poison in her gold bottle into a goblet. He strips Safwan of his sword, turban aigrette, and mantle. He accuses Safwan of adultery and orders him to drink the poison. Ayesha intercedes, telling Mahomet that despite his exalted status, he does not know how to love: 'Your misfortune is this: you have never loved! You have never felt the pain, the intoxication, the heavenly shivers of intimacy — you have never wished to'. She says Islam has only contempt for women and that Christianity sets a far better example. Mahomet realises the truth of this. He receives the news that the Jews, Persians, and Byzantines have recognised the independence of the Islamic empire. Mahomet tells his followers that his lust for power has led him astray: he has become unworthy of being the people's prophet and has decided to commit suicide. He drinks the poison. He pardons Safwan and Ayesha. Sofia, triumphant, refuses his

conciliatory overtures, telling him that although his death will devastate his people, she, a proud Jewess, will remain standing. He gives his ring to Ayesha's father, Abou-Becker, whom he has appointed to succeed him as first caliph. Just before dying he raises his head, looks up to the sky, and exclaims 'Jesus Christ!'

Bornier asserted that 'the principal events and most of the details' of his play were 'rigorously historical'. He claimed that the fourth act was essentially a dramatic setting of the twenty-fourth sura of the Qur'an, which recounts allegations of adultery made against Ayesha (commonly spelled 'Aisha' in English).³ The figure of the poisoner Sophia is drawn from Muslim traditions concerning a Jewish woman named Zeynab bint Al-Harith, who attempted to poison Muhammad with tainted meat; in Bornier's play, he takes the poison intentionally. The deathbed conversion of Mahomet to Christianity is a breathtakingly arrogant misrepresentation and may be a concession to the religious sensibilities of Parisian audiences. Bornier vehemently maintained that his portrayal of the prophet was a sympathetic one. 'It is true I gave Mahomet an awareness of the superiority of the Christian God', he wrote in an article for *Le Correspondant*. 'But I also represented him as a man of genius, a person both strong and sweet-tempered, a teacher of his people, a shepherd of souls, and one of the best men in the world'.⁴

The play had been unanimously accepted by the reading committee of the Comédie-Française on 28 June 1888. The following day, *The Times* told its readers that 'the piece made a great impression on the committee when read, and is expected to secure great success next season'.⁵ Jean Mounet-Sully, who excelled in tragic and romantic parts, was to portray Mahomet. The play had not yet been put into rehearsal when Henry Irving visited Paris a few months later.

³ Bornier, *Mahomet*, note following Act V.

⁴ Henri de Bornier, 'L'héroïsme au théâtre', *Le Correspondant*, 10 February 1900. Bornier (1825–1901) enjoyed a considerable reputation in his own day. His heroic dramas in verse, which he wrote while holding a succession of administrative posts in state libraries (he ended his career as chief librarian of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal), struck the right patriotic note with audiences in the period following the Franco-Prussian War. For a detailed account of his life and work in the theatre, see Nancy Stewart, *La vie et l'oeuvre d'Henri de Bornier* (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1935).

⁵ *The Times*, 29 June 1888.

Irving enjoyed a warm personal friendship with Jules Claretie, *administrateur général* of the Comédie-Française, whom he first met when the company visited London in 1879 for a short season at the Gaiety Theatre.⁶ Irving attended a matinee; Claretie in turn saw a performance of the Lyceum *Richelieu*, calling the English actor's impersonation of Louis XIII's chief minister 'superb' in an article for *La Presse*.⁷ Irving hosted numerous receptions for the company and it was during one of these that he met Louis Arsène Delaunay, whom he called his 'first love as an actor'.⁸ Claretie became a frequent guest at suppers in the Lyceum's Beefsteak Room. It was natural that Irving would break his journey back to England following a holiday in Switzerland in the summer of 1888 with a stop in Paris. No doubt he and Claretie shared news about their upcoming seasons. Irving, who had been searching for an 'Eastern' play since his conversation two years earlier with Richard Burton, must have been greatly interested in the company's plans to produce Bornier's *Mahomet*. He asked Claretie if he might have the English rights to the play; these were readily granted and Irving returned to London with a copy of the manuscript.⁹ He then asked Stoker to arrange for its translation and Stoker, perhaps to preserve the secrecy of Irving's intentions, asked his wife, Florence, rather than a commercial firm, to undertake the work. Several months later, Irving had a fine, if sometimes awkwardly literal, English prose version of Bornier's play.¹⁰

It is not known whether Florence Stoker was paid for her services. A charge of £8 10s. in the Lyceum account book for the 1889–90 season is the only expense

⁶ This visit marked Sarah Bernhardt's first appearance in England; Irving was 'immensely struck by her genius' (Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, 161). Over six weeks in June and July, the Comédie-Française presented forty-two plays, inspiring Matthew Arnold's essay 'The French Play in London' (*The Nineteenth Century*, August 1879, pp. 228–43), in which he advocated the establishment of an English national theatre and training conservatory, a cause close to Irving's heart. Richard Foulkes provides an overview of the visit in 'The French Play in London: The Comédie-Française at the Gaiety Theatre, 1879', *Theatre Notebook*, 56 (2002), 125–31.

⁷ Quoted in Laurence Irving, *Henry Irving*, p. 237.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 326ff. On Irving's extensive connections with the French theatre, see Kristan Tetens, 'Commemorating the French Revolution on the Victorian Stage: Henry Irving's *The Dead Heart*', *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*, 32 (Winter 2005), 36–69, especially pp. 37–38.

⁹ *The Era*, 1 September 1888.

¹⁰ The translation survives in the Hall Caine Papers at Manx National Heritage (MS 09542).

clearly related to Irving's *Mahomet* recorded by Stoker. It seems unlikely this tiny figure represented the purchase of performance rights from Bornier.¹¹ Irving typically paid several hundred pounds to purchase a play outright; in the 1890s, he generally paid a fixed royalty per performance.¹² Since Bornier's play was completed and in circulation among French theatre managers in 1888, it is possible that payment for the English rights was included as part of a £755 line item for authors' fees recorded in the account book summarising Irving's income and expenses between December 1888 and February 1890.¹³

Caine's 'Mahomet'

The French play had helped convince Irving that an English play on the life of Muhammad was both possible and timely. But when he read Florence Stoker's translation, he realised it would not work for the Lyceum and decided to commission a revision of it from Caine, who by the autumn of 1889 enjoyed a growing reputation as a novelist and playwright. Caine's initial reaction to Bornier's play and his ultimate rejection of it can be traced in letters to Irving that have survived in the Laurence Irving Collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum. These provide a unique insight into *Mahomet's* composition and the collaboration between actor and author.

On 29 November 1889, Caine sent his initial thoughts to Irving. 'I have read *Mahomet*, and am profoundly impressed by the potentialities of the subject, but deeply disappointed with the play as a creation', he said. Caine found the first, second, and third acts 'quite valueless'. The fourth and fifth acts, however, were (or could be) 'as fine and stirring as anything in drama. The scene of Mahomet's return after saving the life of the lover of his wife is really thrilling. But it could be

¹¹ Tracy C. Davis implies this in her brief sketch of the planned production in *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 148–50.

¹² See Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, pp. 190–95.

¹³ The Lyceum account books are part of the Laurence Irving Collection.

enormously heightened [...] the catastrophe ought to be fine, and yet it is not. You want the thing worked up to from the opening lines'. Despite the inadequacies of the French play, Caine urged Irving not to reject it until they had an opportunity to discuss it further. 'The subject is too fine, the atmosphere too rich and new to be lightly set aside. But the changes (as you thought) would have to be very great. Indeed the whole fabric ought to be built up again'. Caine was already thinking of ways that might be done. 'I have one leading idea, which stirs my blood to think of. It centres in the Jewish mistress, who is completely thrown away in this play. I see a very stirring and picturesque first act, too'.¹⁴ Caine asked Irving if he thought Bornier would let him use the subject as well as all of the fourth act and half of the fifth act, but otherwise to rewrite the play.

Irving visited Caine again at his flat in Victoria Street on 2 December; a few weeks later, Caine sent Irving another letter. 'I have thought much on *Mahomet*, and the subject grows larger and yet more impressive. There is a great play in it'. Caine regretted that Bornier had been first in the field with a new treatment of the subject. While he and Irving waited to hear whether the French dramatist would allow extensive changes to be made to the play, Caine told the actor he had developed an alternate plan in case such permission were denied. Muhammad would be dropped as the play's central character: 'I would call it *The Prophet* and the scene only would be similar. In all other particulars the play would be different'. In a postscript, and perhaps in response to a request that he not discuss his work with others, Caine assured Irving he had not mentioned *Mahomet* to anyone except Stoker.¹⁵

By the beginning of 1890 Caine had discarded Bornier's play as a starting point and instead was preparing an original scenario for Irving's consideration. It is unclear whether this was because Bornier had refused to permit the extensive

¹⁴ Hall Caine to Henry Irving, 29 November 1889, Laurence Irving Collection.

¹⁵ Hall Caine to Henry Irving, 21 December 1889, Laurence Irving Collection. An undated, five-page scenario for a play called *The Prophet* is among the Hall Caine Papers at Manx National Heritage (MS 09542, Box 4.) It follows the plot of *Mahomet* almost exactly. Muhammad is recast as an unnamed 'prophet-prince' who has re-established Islam in an Arabia that has 'fallen into irreligion and many forms of immorality, chief among them being the tyranny exercised by men over women'.

changes contemplated by Caine or because in the end Caine decided it would be better to start afresh. (He thought Bornier's play 'a beautiful poem' but 'false to history, untrue to character, Western in thought, and Parisian in sentiment').¹⁶ In any event, in the late afternoon of 26 January, Caine presented his idea of the play to Stoker and his wife at their Chelsea home, where Caine was staying. 'Well do I remember the time he put it before me', Stoker recalled.

Sitting in front of a good fire of blazing billets of old ship timber, the oak so impregnated with salt and saltpetre that the flames leaped in rainbow colours, he told the story as he saw it. Hall Caine always knows his work so well and has such a fine memory that he never needs to look at a note. That evening he was all on fire. His image rises now before me. He sits on a low chair in front of the fire; his face is pale something waxen-looking in the changing blues of the flame. His red hair, fine and long, and pushed back from his high forehead, is so thin that through it as the flames leap we can see the white line of the head so like to Shakespeare's. He is himself all aflame. His hands have a natural eloquence — something like Irving's; they foretell and emphasise the coming thoughts. His large eyes shine like jewels as the firelight flashes. Only my wife and I are present, sitting like Darby and Joan at either side of the fireplace. As he goes on he gets more and more afire till at last he is like a living flame. We sit quite still; we fear to interrupt him. The end of his story leaves us fired and exalted too [...] He was quite done up.¹⁷

The next day the two men went to see Irving in his office at the Lyceum. Caine told him the story of the play. 'Irving was very pleased with it, and it was of course understood that Caine was to go on and carry out the idea', Stoker wrote.¹⁸ Preparations were begun. '[Irving and I] worked together for several months in collecting the material that was to give the atmosphere of truth to our story', Caine recalled. 'He had the utter absorption in a single pursuit which is one of the unfailing notes of genius and through the channel of his art his mind became enriched with various knowledge [...] He studied subjects and scenes, and, though an actor first and a scholar second, he was never so entirely absorbed in his quest for effect as to

¹⁶ Hall Caine, 'A Literary Causerie', *The Speaker*, 4 October 1890.

¹⁷ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, pp. 119–20.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

be indifferent to fact and reality'.¹⁹ Irving's single-mindedness was matched by Caine's: Vivien Allen notes the latter had 'a passion for books and a magpie mind that could pick up and retain masses of information, insatiable curiosity [...] and driving ambition'.²⁰ Stoker described their similarities:

There was to both men a natural expression of intellectual frankness, as if they held the purpose as well as the facts of ideas in common. The two men were very much alike in certain intellectual ways. To both was given an almost abnormal faculty of self-abstraction and of concentrating all their powers on a given subject for any length of time. To both was illimitable patience in the doing of their work. And in yet one other way their powers were similar: a faculty of getting up and ultimately applying to the work in hand an amazing amount of information. When Irving undertook a character he set himself to work to inform himself of the facts appertaining to it; when the time for acting it came, it was found that he knew pretty well all that could be known about it. Hall Caine was also a 'glutton' in the same way. He absorbed facts and ideas almost by an instinct and assimilated them with natural ease.²¹

Caine's play, like Bornier's, was to be called *Mahomet*. This was a common English spelling of the prophet's name well into the twentieth century; 'Mahometan' was regularly used for 'Muslim' and 'Mahometanism' for 'Islam'.²² We know from an interview Caine gave to 'R. B.' for *Wit and Wisdom* in the early summer of 1890 (unpublished until the following year) that his sources included Washington Irving's *Life of Mahomet* (1849), Richard Burton's three-volume *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* (1855–56), William Muir's four-volume *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam, to the Era of the Hegira* (1858–61), William Gifford Palgrave's two-volume *Personal Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia* (1862–63), and Stanley Lane-Poole's *The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammad* (1882) and *Studies in a Mosque* (1883).

¹⁹ *New York Herald*, 16 October 1905.

²⁰ Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 21.

²¹ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, pp. 116–17.

²² See H. W. Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 338–39.

Irving lent him several volumes of Burton's new translation of the *Arabian Nights*, which included copious annotations on Islamic religious practices. Caine also consulted the Qur'an, 'Mohammedan pamphlets and newspapers', 'works on Buddha', 'lives of Christ by Farrar, Renan, Strauss, Neander, and others' and 'various copies of the Bible, Bunyan, Jeremy Taylor, Fuller, and such like'.²³ Caine had just purchased a house in Keswick, Cumbria, and it was there, at Hawthorns, that he researched and wrote *Mahomet*. As he drafted the play, the floor of his study grew into 'as wild a chaos of books and papers as the eyes of mortal man ever gazed upon'.²⁴ This first-floor room, which looks north and west onto the fells rising above Derwentwater, was furnished with, among other treasures, a sofa, desk, and chair given him by Dante Gabriel Rossetti; a carved oak casket in which Rossetti had stored his manuscripts and that now held a packet of his letters and poems; a bust of Shakespeare that had stood on a bookcase in Rossetti's Cheyne Walk house; Rossetti's death mask; a portrait of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, by the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron; and an upholstered armchair designed by William Morris. Suspended from the ceiling in one corner of the room was the lantern said to have been used by Eugene Aram on the night he murdered his wife's lover, once owned by Rossetti and later by Irving. Some of these objects, as well as the scattered research material on the floor, can be seen in Illustration 3. On the few occasions Caine left this peaceful refuge for London, he consulted books, manuscripts, and prints at the British Museum and the London Library.²⁵

²³ *Wit and Wisdom*, June 1891. Internal evidence suggests 'R. B.' is the Scottish novelist Robert Buchanan (1841–1901), who had accused Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites of moral corruption in an essay called 'The Fleshly School of Poetry' published under the pseudonym Thomas Maitland in the *Contemporary Review* in October 1871. Rossetti responded with 'The Stealthy School of Criticism' in the *Athenaeum* in December 1871. Buchanan later retracted much of what he had written and dedicated his novel *God and Man* (1881) to Rossetti. See John A. Cassidy, 'Robert Buchanan and the Fleshly Controversy', *PMLA*, 67 (March 1952), 65–93, and Christopher D. Murray, 'D. G. Rossetti, A. C. Swinburne, and R. W. Buchanan: The Fleshly School Revisited', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* (Autumn 1982), 206–234, and (Spring 1983), 176–207. Buchanan and Caine were close friends; see Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 137 and p. 165.

²⁴ *Wit and Wisdom*, June 1891.

²⁵ Caine had been a member of the London Library since 1886, when he was proposed for membership by Mackenzie Bell. Caine proposed Bram Stoker for membership in 1890; Irving became a member the same year, proposed by Walter Herries Pollock.



Illustration 3: Hall Caine in his study at Hawthorns, Keswick, from a photo by A. M. Pettit. Mary Caine Scrapbooks, 1890–94, Manx National Heritage, Douglas.

In March 1890, Caine went to Morocco to gather details of Muslim and Jewish life for the play and for a new novel, *The Scapegoat*, which would be published by Heinemann the following year. He sailed from Liverpool to Gibraltar and then took a ferry to Tangier. From his base at the Grand Hotel Villa de France, he made several forays into the city and surrounding desert. Over the course of three weeks, and against the advice of British consular officials, he explored the Kasbah alone on foot at all hours of the day and night, an experience that would shape his depiction of the Meccan marketplace in the first scene of *Mahomet*.²⁶ Caine felt compelled to conduct such thorough research in part because he was aware some critics would think it impossible for a Christian to portray Islam sympathetically. 'It must be allowed that such a difficulty exists', he admitted. 'I am a Christian, and in any contrast of the two men, Jesus and Mahomet, perhaps I am insensibly inclined to regard Mahomet with less favour [...] It is not, however, as a Christian, but as a dramatist, that a man writes his play'.²⁷ In fact, *Mahomet* is exceptionally enlightened for its time. Caine found much to admire in Islam and the lives of those who practised it devoutly. On his return from Morocco, he set to his task in earnest, drafting scenes by hand and then sending the manuscript pages to Stoker, who had them typed up for Irving's review. These pages were returned to Caine with Irving's edits and frequently with suggestions from Stoker, who had just begun writing *Dracula*.²⁸

²⁶ Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 209.

²⁷ Caine, 'A Literary Causerie', p. 386.

²⁸ In a note dated 8 March 1890, Stoker sketches out the plot of the first three chapters of the novel; in a note dated 14 March 1890 he outlines the entire story. See Robert Eigheten-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller, *Bram Stoker's Notes for 'Dracula': A Facsimile Edition* (London: McFarland & Company, 2008), p. 17 and p. 29, and Joseph S. Bierman, 'The Genesis and Dating of *Dracula* from Bram Stoker's Working Notes', in *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*, ed. by Margaret L. Carter (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), pp. 51–55.

Bornier's 'Mahomet': Controversy in Paris

In late March, however, came surprising news from across the Channel: the French government announced it was halting the Comédie-Française production of Bornier's play.²⁹ Rehearsals had begun in the summer of 1889 in anticipation of a November premiere.³⁰ Claretie had commissioned extravagant costumes and sets; hired the composer Henri Maréchal, well known for his musical settings of sacred subjects; and engaged Mounet-Sully, Paul Mounet, Albert Lambert fils, Adeline Dudlay, Julia Bartet, and Marthe Brandès for the principal roles. French reports detailing the progress of the preparations had been picked up by Turkish newspapers and were published alongside strongly worded editorials protesting the play's representation of Muhammad. By late summer, word had reached the highest levels of the Ottoman government in Constantinople, distorted, like a message passed during a game of Chinese whispers, out of all recognition. 'The sultan had been informed, I know not how, that my play was a violent diatribe against the prophet', Bornier recalled.³¹ Despite not having read the play, which at this point remained unpublished, Abdülhamid II had perceived in it an insult to Muslim traditions forbidding the representation of the prophet and other figures sacred to Islam. He instructed his ambassador in Paris, Essad Pasha, to intervene.³² Claretie, summoned by French ministers to describe the play's plot and tone, assured them that Muhammad was portrayed in a positive light. This was duly reported to the Turkish ambassador.³³ Pasha, however, continued to insist that Bornier be required to make

²⁹ The most complete account of the suppression of Bornier's play is Pierre Martino, 'L'interdiction du *Mahomet* de M. Henri de Bornier' in *Cinquantenaire de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger (1881–1931): Articles publiés par les professeurs de la faculté, par les soins de la Société historique algérienne* (Algiers, 1932), pp. 333–42. More recently, Christopher B. Balme has used the play to illustrate how the concept of 'the public sphere' articulated by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas can be applied to theatrical and para-theatrical events that extend beyond the borders of a single nation-state. See *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 107–27.

³⁰ Stewart, *La vie et l'oeuvre d'Henri de Bornier*, p. 165.

³¹ Bornier, 'L'héroïsme au théâtre', p. 159.

³² Stewart, *La vie et l'oeuvre d'Henri de Bornier*, p. 166.

³³ *Le Temps*, 12 October 1889.

drastic changes to the text; if he were unwilling to do so, he argued, the French government should act to suppress it. René Goblet, the French minister of foreign affairs, was amused. In a letter to Edouard Lockroy, minister of public instruction and fine arts, he described the Sublime Porte's main concern: that the play ridiculed Islam. 'The idea of Turkey making diplomatic overtures about a literary work has given me a good laugh', he wrote. Lockroy joked in return that the sultan should be informed that Muhammad is not cuckolded until the fourth act.³⁴ Indeed, to the French bureaucrats, the matter must have seemed like a scene from Beaumarchais' *The Marriage of Figaro* (1778) come to life. In Act V of that comedy, Figaro imagines he has written a play about Muhammad when, 'next thing, some envoy from God knows where turns up and complains that in my play I have offended the Ottoman empire, Persia, a large slice of the Indian peninsula, the whole of Egypt, and the kingdoms of Barca, Tripoli, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. And so my play sinks without trace, and all to placate a bunch of Muslim princes, not one of whom, as far as I know, can read but who beat the living daylights out of us and say we are Christian dogs!'³⁵

Then more pointed questions began to be raised in the French papers. An article in *La Presse* pointed out that production of the play could be used by rival nations to stoke anti-colonial sentiment in Algeria and Tunisia. 'Assuredly the matter is a delicate one', it stated. 'We do not doubt the good intentions of M. de Bornier, but the Muslim objections seem very serious'. It urged Bornier to withdraw his play and concluded 'there are some figures that international convention should ban from being represented on the stage' of any country.³⁶ *Le Figaro* summarised the Turkish objections, which included one that would be heard again when Irving's plans to produce a play based on the prophet's life became known: it was the mere fact of representation, not whether Muhammad was portrayed sympathetically, that

³⁴ Edouard Lockroy, 'Souvenirs', *Le Temps*, 2 April 1912.

³⁵ Pierre Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*, trans. by David Coward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 193.

³⁶ *La Presse*, 14 October 1889.

was the issue ('c'est contre le fait de le montrer sur la scène que l'ambassadeur proteste').³⁷ A line would be crossed the moment the character appeared on stage and before he uttered a single word.

The controversy was followed closely in English newspapers and journals, especially as it related to France's colonial interests. On 19 October, the *Era* noted that 'the appearance of the Prophet in a stage play cannot fail to be considered as a mark of disrespect by the Mahomedan subjects of France in Algeria' and predicted the production would be cancelled for that reason.³⁸ The same day, the *Standard* reported that the French government had not only not conceded to the Turkish demand, it had pointed out to Essad Pasha that religious figures were frequently portrayed on the French stage: only the year before the Théâtre Libre had produced a play in which Christ was a central character (this was Rodolphe Darzens's *L'Amante du Christ*, first performed on 19 October 1888). Pasha reportedly replied that 'if Christians did not mind having their religion and its Founder treated with such blasphemous contumely it was otherwise with the Moslems'.³⁹

In October 1889, as the date of the play's premiere approached, objection to it arose from other quarters. The Cairo correspondent of the *Journal des débats* described the interest with which the controversy was being observed in Egypt: 'You might be surprised to learn that the matter on everyone's lips here is the proposed production of Bornier's *Mahomet*. From Constantinople to Cairo and from Smyrna to Morocco, everyone has read all about it. This news has caused an indignant astonishment that could be used against French interests'. The correspondent did not expect Parisian theatregoers, accustomed to seeing popes, cardinals, and priests on stage, to understand Muslim objections to the play. He asked readers to put themselves in the place of 'the Arab who lives in the vast Sahara, the fellah tilling his patch of soil — in short, all the millions of sincerely believing Muslims who

³⁷ *Le Figaro*, 16 October 1889.

³⁸ *The Era*, 19 October 1889.

³⁹ *The Standard*, 19 October 1889.

have not been thus conditioned — for them, the theatre is not what it is for us. For them, theatre means contempt and scorn’. If the French proceeded with the play, he added, it would be seen in Egypt as a hurtful ‘act of mockery and denigration, an attempt to ridicule the faith of true believers [...] it would be an outrage against the Islamic faith’.⁴⁰ At the same time, a letter signed ‘An Algerian’ published by several newspapers in France noted the production would be interpreted as an act of deliberate provocation that could be exploited by those seeking to damage French interests in Africa. The writer urged the Comédie-Française to drop the production and called on others to pressure it to do so.⁴¹

Bornier responded to the first of these attacks in a letter published on 29 October in the *Journal des débats*. After declaring the ‘rights of art and the freedom of the theatre’ in France were so self-evident they needed no defence, he again denied his prophet had anything in common with the monster depicted by Voltaire. He pointed out that not only did Muslims not object to seeing Muhammad on stage, they had put him there themselves many times: *ta’ziyeh*, dramas commemorating the martyrdom of Muhammad’s grandson, Husayn ibn Ali, had been performed in Iran for a thousand years. He referred to one called *The Death of Muhammad* that included representations of the prophet and his family. Was further proof needed that Muslims did not regard the theatre with suspicion? Bornier also thought the *Journal*’s correspondent had exaggerated the impact made in the Muslim world by the mere announcement that his play would be produced in France. He claimed to have received a letter from an eminent Muslim spiritual leader thanking him for bringing the prophet’s life story to a Christian nation.⁴²

Bornier’s response was reprinted the following day in *Le Temps*, which was losing patience with the recalcitrant playwright. The Turkish ambassador had twice stated the Sublime Porte’s position to the French government, describing as

⁴⁰ ‘Lettre du Caire’, *Journal des débats*, 28 October 1889.

⁴¹ Quoted in Pierre Martino, ‘L’interdiction du *Mahomet* de M. Henri de Bornier’, p. 338.

⁴² *Journal des débats*, 29 October 1889.

‘unfortunate’ the impression that would be made in Constantinople should *Mahomet* be performed. As for France’s Muslim subjects in Africa, who knew what action they might take if their religious feelings were hurt? The newspaper pointed out that the *ta’ziyeh* dramas Bornier used to support his position were not, properly speaking, stage plays, but rather a form of religious expression similar to the European passion plays of the Middle Ages: they were meant to educate, not entertain. Bornier had also failed to recognise that the *ta’ziyeh* were produced by Persian Shiites, who did not recognise the authority of the Sunni caliph Abdülhamid II. (A similar debate on the relevance of the *ta’ziyeh* would be part of the public debate on Caine’s play the following year.) ‘It is necessary to ask’, the article concluded, ‘if it is an appropriate moment for the patriotic author of *La Fille de Roland* to cause these problems for France just as Kaiser Wilhelm II is about to embark on a visit to Constantinople’.⁴³ At least two observers thought Bornier had brought his troubles upon himself. ‘He shows us Mahomet as a weak man tricked by women and as a charlatan from beginning to end [...] I can’t imagine anything more hurtful to the Turks than such a spectacle’, said F. Lefranc [the pseudonym of a distinguished member of the University of Paris].⁴⁴ To turn a drama into ‘an argument about which is superior, the messiah or the author of the Koran, is to abandon the role of playwright for the role of preacher’, added Édouard Thierry, a former *administrateur* of the Comédie-Française.⁴⁵

As the stalemate continued in Paris, a discernible *froideur* had developed between Abdülhamid II and France’s ambassador to Constantinople, Gustave Lannes de Montebello. Montebello told his superiors that the sultan had discussed *Mahomet* with him and had demanded that the play be suppressed. Although one could resist the remonstrances of Essad Pasha, it was impossible for the French government to ignore a direct overture from the sultan. Eugène Spuller, who had

⁴³ *Le Temps*, 30 October 1889.

⁴⁴ *Revue d’art dramatique*, 1 May 1890.

⁴⁵ *Revue d’art dramatique*, 15 May 1890.

succeeded Goblet as minister of foreign affairs, asked for a copy of the play on 13 February 1890. Following a meeting of the Council of Ministers a few days later, Pierre Tirard, president of the council, informed Claretie the production must be postponed pending further deliberation. ‘To speak frankly’, wrote Yveling Rambaud in *Le Gaulois* on 9 March, ‘the *Mahomet* of M. de Bornier is very, very sick [...] all hope is lost’. He recounted the famous myth of Muhammad’s coffin: ‘Oriental legend has it that the great prophet arranged for his body, upon his death, to be placed in an iron coffin set on trestles inside a magnetized cave. When the trestles were removed, the coffin remained suspended in the air, held there by the equal attraction of the four walls of the cave. Such is the fate of M. de Bornier’s *Mahomet*: it is suspended and will remain suspended in mid-air for a long time’.⁴⁶

Bornier offered to change the play’s title and accept the prohibition of the play in Algeria and Tunisia, but despite these concessions, the French government decided on 22 March to ban the play altogether. ‘Because of the diplomatic difficulties that would arise from the presentation on a French stage of the *Mahomet* of M. de Bornier, the Council of Ministers, in one of its last meetings, decided that the tragedy in question cannot be presented in a state theatre or any other theatre’, *Le Temps* reported on 1 April.⁴⁷

Pierre Martino has persuasively argued that the decision to ban the play was linked to French fears that Abdülhamid II would use the incident to justify stronger relations with Germany.⁴⁸ In October and November 1889, Queen Victoria’s eldest grandson, the German emperor Wilhelm II, had visited the sultan in Constantinople, and many in the French government wondered nervously if Turkey was considering joining the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy). In addition, an

⁴⁶ Yveling Rambaud, *Le Gaulois*, 9 March 1890.

⁴⁷ *Le Temps*, 1 April 1890. The banning of the play required a ‘special action’ on the part of the Council (the equivalent of the British cabinet), since it had already been approved by a censor acting for the Ministry of the Interior following a ‘censorship rehearsal’. See Robert J. Goldstein, ‘France’, in *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship of the Theater in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp. 106–07. Dramatic censorship ended in France in 1906, more than sixty years before it ended in England.

⁴⁸ Martino, ‘L’interdiction du *Mahomet* de M. Henri de Bornier’, pp. 339–341.

important Franco-Turkish trade agreement that had been in place for thirty years would soon expire and France did not want to jeopardize its renewal. A desire not to offend the religious sensibilities of its Muslim subjects in colonial Algeria and Tunisia was another major consideration.

The sultan wasted no time showing his appreciation for the decision. 'I am very grateful for this action, for I see in it a fine consideration for me and for my subjects', he told Montebello. 'You have also alleviated the concern of your own Muslim subjects, who would have been hurt by the performance of such a play'.⁴⁹ The same day he learned the play would be withdrawn, he invited Montebello, the staff of the French embassy, and leaders of the French community in Constantinople to dinner and showered them with medals and decorations. He also announced that Turkey would henceforth recognise France's sovereignty over Algeria and Tunisia. To many, the loss of *Mahomet* seemed a small price to pay for such a reward, and at least one newspaper wondered if the French government had manufactured the entire affair to achieve this very end. 'It is not paying too dear a price, whatever the value of the work sacrificed, and we don't doubt that the patriotic playwright will be the first to rejoice in this outcome', said *Le Figaro*. 'We lost only a play; we won a national success'.⁵⁰

Actors and writers took another view. 'It seems the thought of having Mahomet explain his faith and feelings in alexandrine verse spoken by M. Mounet-Sully, the most serious of our actors, in the Comédie-Française, which is as solemn as a temple, was too much for the Sultan to bear', said Jules Lemaître. 'We have spared him this pain, and it is perhaps natural we should be more tolerant than the 'Grand Turk' and his subjects [...] Wisdom has always consisted, in large part, of giving way to the ignorance of others'.⁵¹ Many who had read the play lamented the loss of the staged spectacle, which would have featured a series of picturesque

⁴⁹ *Le Temps*, 1 April 1890; *La Justice*, 1 April 1890.

⁵⁰ *Le Figaro*, 10 April 1890.

⁵¹ Jules Lemaître, *Impressions de Théâtre* (Paris: Lecène, Oudin et Cie, 1891), pp. 231–32. Lemaître was the drama critic of the *Journal des débats* at the time of the controversy.

scenes and ‘impressions exotiques’.⁵² All details had been extensively researched by Bornier and then by the Comédie-Française’s designers. ‘One hears the voice of the muezzin, one learns the names of the prophet’s sword and helmet’, wrote Philippe de Grandlieu.⁵³ Mounet-Sully was disappointed with the play’s withdrawal, calling it ‘unjust and wrong’. He noted that Bornier’s prophet had nothing to do with Voltaire’s prophet, and that his own performance would have revealed Mahomet to be an apostle.⁵⁴

The suppression of the play was widely reported in England. ‘It is now settled that the piece must be withdrawn’, wrote the Paris correspondent of *The Times*. ‘The Sultan was assured that Mahomet was treated with the utmost respect in the play, but he still objected, and the Government was bound to defer to him’.⁵⁵ The *Daily News* noted that France had narrowly avoided ‘the wrath of the Sultan’ and then told readers Mounet-Sully would have no need of the ‘green turban and other suitable clothing, which he wore while rehearsing at home the tirades which the author puts into the Prophet’s mouth’.⁵⁶ The *Spectator* wondered what all the fuss was about and attributed the play’s banning to the French government’s dislike of nobility (Bornier was a viscount) and its anti-Christian bias.⁵⁷

The news soon reached the Lyceum Theatre. In a letter dated 14 March, Stoker told Caine, ‘I see de Bornier’s play is *not* to be produced, the government will not allow it. It will not affect us anyhow except perhaps that we must not call [our version] *Mahomet*. We must call it *The Prophet* or some such title’.⁵⁸ On 1 May, clearly sensitised by events in Paris and determined to control the way that Irving’s plans were made public, Stoker wrote to Caine again: ‘Regarding *Mahomet*, if you send me the manuscript my wife will typewrite it herself and so we shall be sure of

⁵² *Revue d’art dramatique*, 1 May 1890.

⁵³ *Le Figaro*, 10 April 1890.

⁵⁴ Jean Mounet-Sully, *Souvenirs d’un tragedian* (Paris: Pierre Lafitte, 1917), p. 117.

⁵⁵ *The Times*, 13 March 1890.

⁵⁶ *Daily News*, 17 March 1890.

⁵⁷ ‘M. de Bornier’s “Mahomet”’, *The Spectator*, 21 June 1890.

⁵⁸ Bram Stoker to Hall Caine, 14 March 1890, MS 09542, Box 51, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

secrecy'.⁵⁹ Two days later, Stoker is reassuring an agitated Caine: 'make your mind quite easy [...] the play is a good one and will make a success'.⁶⁰ At this point, neither Irving nor Stoker thought the international pressure that had been brought to bear on the French play had any relevance to the Lyceum *Mahomet*. Yet the elements of a similar showdown between government authority and dramatic art were quickly coming together at Irving's theatre in Wellington Street.

Caine's 'Mahomet': Synopsis and Analysis

With Paris in a frenzy over the banning of Bornier's play, Caine quietly continued work on his own version of the prophet's story, which would centre on Muhammad's flight from Mecca (the Hijra of 622 CE) and his triumphant return there from Medina some years later. On 17 May Caine wrote to Irving from Hawthorns to tell him he had completed the first three acts of *Mahomet*. 'They seem to me to justify our expectations of the subject [...] They possess me. I can scarcely put my hand to anything else'. He worried that Ellen Terry would be unhappy with her part and asked Irving to reassure her that he would soften 'the one act of great treachery which she would have to do' with additional passages of pathos and also that the final two acts would show the noble and contrite aspect of her character. 'You will see that acting on your hint I have given her one pretty, playful scene (with the boy) [...] If I could at some time have a chat with her I might much enhance the charm of it'. Caine noted that he had added a situation for her at the end of the third act that seemed to him to 'afford scope for acting such as hardly anything in modern drama [...] I must not weaken the effect of it by saying in advance what it is. What I've said already will sound vain enough, but the subject

⁵⁹ Bram Stoker to Hall Caine, 1 May 1890, MS 09542, Box 51, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

⁶⁰ Bram Stoker to Hall Caine, 3 May 1890, MS 09542, Box 51, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage.

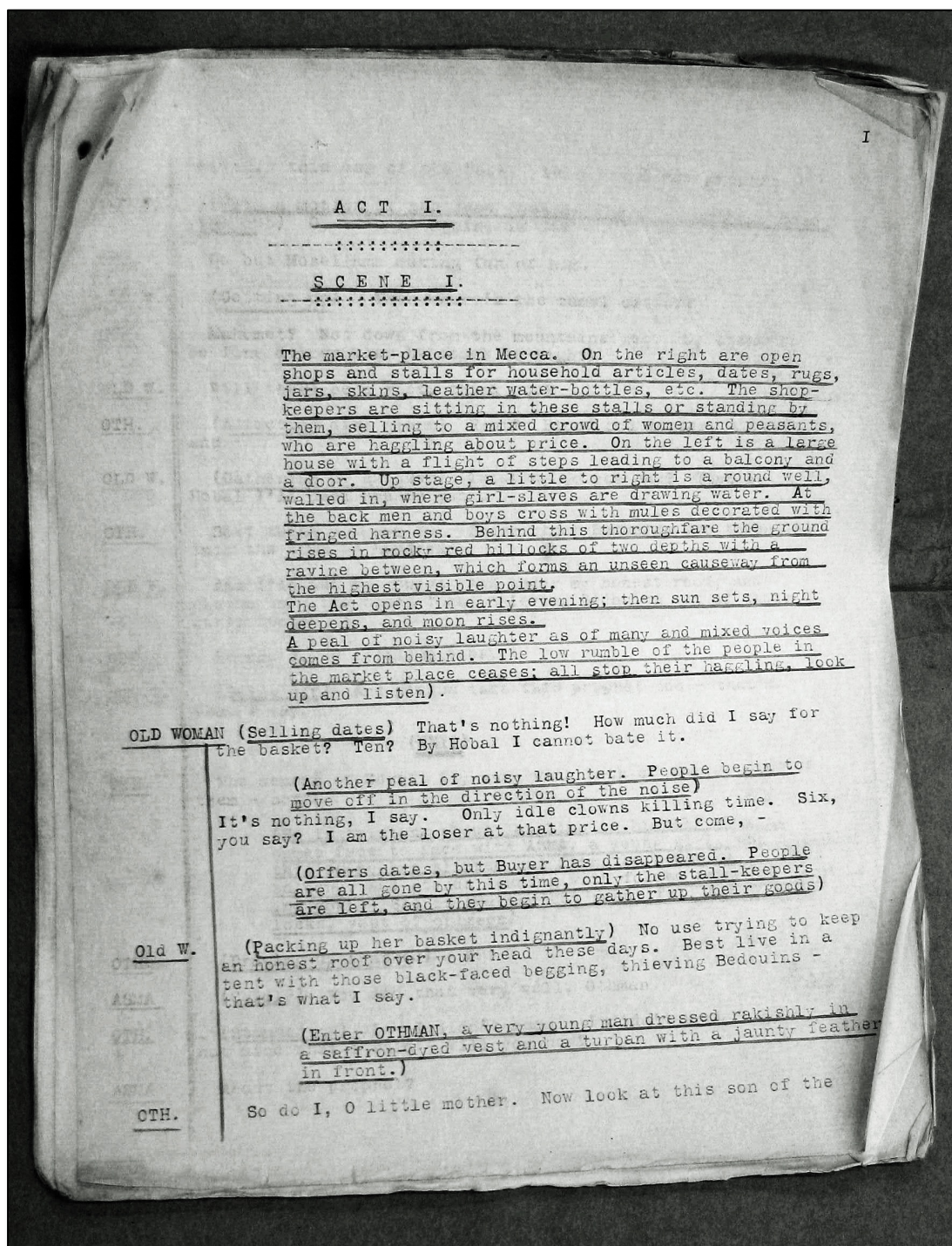


Illustration 4: Manuscript page from 'Mahomet', MS 09542, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage, Douglas.

possesses me, and you will forgive the vanity'.⁶¹ It is unclear what, if anything, Ellen Terry knew about Irving's plans to produce a play based on the life of Muhammad. No reference to it is made in her autobiography and neither the play nor Hall Caine is mentioned in her letters extant from this period. She owned a first edition of Caine's *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* but apparently none of his novels.⁶²

Caine was especially pleased with his portrait of Mahomet. 'The prophet himself I must leave you to judge of. I love him', he told Irving. 'Naturally he is least operative in the third act, where he is the victim of a base plot, and only when in the fourth and fifth acts the evil is laid bare before him will all his greatness appear. But I have no doubt of him even in the third act, and in the first and second he is without equal'. Caine asked to meet with Irving to review the three completed acts and to discuss the remaining work.⁶³

As the detailed synopsis that follows makes clear, the final form of the play — in four acts, not five — does in fact owe little to Bornier. The historical events on which it is based took place over a period of twenty years, from about 610, the year Muhammad received his first revelation, to 630, the year he conquered Mecca. Caine compresses the action to just two years: Acts I and II are set in 622 (the year of the *hijra*, Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Yathrib, later called Medina) and Acts III and IV in 624, sometime after the historical Battle of Badr, which took place in March of that year. Like Bornier, Caine depicted events that had some basis in history and which occurred over a long period of time. This has the effect of giving his play the feel of a biography. The synopsis also reveals the many features that *Mahomet* had in common with Caine's fiction, including a charismatic leader on a mission to reform the world, two men in love with the same woman, a friendship tested by misunderstanding and preserved by sacrifice, the rights of women, and the treatment of religious minorities.

⁶¹ Hall Caine to Henry Irving, 17 May 1890, Laurence Irving Collection.

⁶² See *Catalogue of the Working Library of Ellen Terry at Smallhythe Place* (Tenterden, Kent: National Trust, 1977).

⁶³ Hall Caine to Henry Irving, 17 May 1890, Laurence Irving Collection.

Act I

[Scene 1: The marketplace in Mecca; open shops and stalls on the right, large house with steps, balcony, and door on the left; a round well; behind, hills of two depths with ravine between for Mahomet's entrance; early evening, then sunset, then night with rising moon.]

The play begins in Mecca just before the return of Mahomet — ‘this son of the desert, this man of the book, this brand new prophet’ — from the Jabal al-Nour mountain. He is a member of the Banu Hashim clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe that controls the Kaaba, a site of pilgrimage for those seeking the intercession of its 360 idols. Waiting for him are his daughter, Fatimah, and her young son, Hosein. ‘All the town is astir, and the air is full of his name’. Also waiting for him is Rachel Laredo, a Jewess, who wants her lover, Omar, to kill Mahomet. She is seeking revenge for the murder of her father by some of Mahomet's followers. ‘Is he not the enemy of my people? Has he not raised an outcry against us?’ she asks. Mahomet — a ‘man of forty years, bare-headed, his hood fallen back, dressed in the pilgrim's garb of sheepskin, and walking with a staff’ — appears in the distance with the setting sun behind him. He used to be called ‘el-Amin’ (‘the trustworthy’) when he drove the camels of his late wife Khadija; now he is called ‘the madman’ and spends his days alone in the desert and his nights preaching to jeering throngs of people in the streets of Mecca. When he returns to the city on this evening, a would-be rival called Moseilama mocks him. Mahomet proclaims his doctrine is ‘to worship one God and to serve no false gods’. When the crowd threatens him, Rachel takes him into her house, thinking to provide an opportunity for Omar to kill him. Mahomet is visited at Rachel's house by a group of merchants from Yathrib (later called Medina), who invite him to preach there. Omar's companions, including his uncle, Aboo Jahl, urge him to kill Mahomet: after he strikes the first blow they will also strike him. ‘That will be for your safety’, Aboo Jahl tells Omar, ‘so that if a blood feud should come of this night's work it will be the family of one against the families of the Coreish [Quraysh]’. Omar hesitates: ‘No, no! What has he done to me? Nothing!’ The plot is overheard by Othman, whose lover, Asma, is Rachel's servant. Othman tells Asma to warn Mahomet.

[Scene 2: A corridor in Rachel's house, with open arches through which Mecca can be seen. Possibly an outside patio/courtyard open to the sky, with arches at back.]

At midnight, Omar reluctantly goes to Rachel's house. She tells him ‘it is not Mahomet, nephew of Aboo Talib, but Omar, nephew of Aboo Jahl, who should be at the head of the Coreish’. She tells Omar that Mahomet would drive all Jews out of Mecca and that he is the one person who can end the influence of ‘this turbulent babbler’. Omar tells her he will kill Mahomet for her sake.

[Scene 3: A room in Rachel's house, window at back, doors right and left; night.]

Rachel lulls Mahomet to sleep with a song and a slow ‘Egyptian’ dance. Omar raises a knife to kill him but his courage fails. Mahomet wakes and persuades Omar to convert to Islam. Omar provides Mahomet with a password (‘brotherhood’) that will allow him to escape his enemies waiting outside. Mahomet wraps himself in Omar's cloak and passes out of the house using the password. Omar takes Mahomet's place on the couch; when Aboo Jahl and the others rush into the room brandishing their weapons, they are stunned to discover that Mahomet has escaped.

Act II

[Scene 1: Open desert between Mecca and Medina.]

Mahomet and his followers, including Aboo Bekker (an adviser), Omar, and Fatimah have fled Mecca and are approaching Yathrib after several days on the open desert. 'Twelve midnights past, [Islam] was driven out of Mecca in disgrace, with derision, before the assassin's knife [...] yet the day is coming when it will return in honour, with triumph and before bended knees', says Mahomet. The group discusses the general character of women: Aboo Bekker believes them 'faithful only in infidelity, constant only in inconstancy, stable only in instability'; Mahomet takes a more measured view and tells Fatimah that her mother, Khadija, had been the perfect woman, chaste and true. Rachel arrives in a caravan with Asma and tells Mahomet she has converted to Islam and wishes to join him. Aboo Bakker and Fatimah suspect Rachel's motives but Mahomet dismisses their concerns. Privately, Rachel tells Omar her conversion was insincere and that she has come to be with him, not with Mahomet. Omar, dismayed at her duplicity, tells her to return to Mecca but she refuses.

[Scene 2: Inside the gate of Medina; an open place with a wall having a great gate at an angle on left at back; battlements; minarets; dais in centre; evening.]

Omar begins to tell Mahomet of Rachel's involvement in the plot to murder him in Mecca but Mahomet will not listen. Rachel lies to Mahomet, telling him that Omar has breached a promise to marry her. Mahomet says she will become his wife instead.

Act III

[Scene 1: Inside the gate of Medina as before (wall, gate, dais), everything else larger and more imposing; mosque with door under two minarets; dawn.]

Two years pass. It is sometime after the Battle of Badr, in which a small Muslim army from Medina won a victory over the Qurayshi-led Meccan army near a group of important wells on the Syrian trade route. Mahomet, now married to Rachel, has brought peace and prosperity to Medina. He regularly hears the petitions of those who have followed him to Medina; from a dais in the square outside the mosque, he dispenses alms and settles arguments. Rachel continues to seek the moment of her revenge against Mahomet. The Bedouin Otba, Asma's father and one of the conspirators against Mahomet in Mecca, arrives secretly in Medina. Mahomet sends Omar on a mission to the leaders of Mecca, demanding that the city adopt Islam. When they refuse and sentence Mahomet to death, Mahomet vows that Mecca, and the Quraysh who rule the city, will fall. 'Mecca is the heart of Arabia', he says. 'Not till Mecca becomes Moslem will the empire of Islam be complete. She is the stronghold of the infidel and we must go out against her'. He names Omar his successor, the first caliph of Islam. Otba demands to see Asma. Mahomet reveals a childhood connection to Otba that moves Otba to convert to Islam — as a young boy, Mahomet had saved the infant Otba from the jaws of a lion cub. Otba tells Mahomet he will help him conquer Mecca: he will lead five hundred of Mahomet's followers, dressed as Bedouins, into the city, then throw open the gates to a second army of five thousand.

[Scene 2: Inside Mahomet's house; colonnade at back through which can be seen minarets of mosque.]

From Fatimah's young son Hosein, Rachel learns that Mahomet is to march on Mecca. She and Hosein play soldiers, using fans for swords [this is the 'one pretty, playful scene (with the boy') that Caine added for Terry and described to Irving in May 1890]. Rachel later

professes her continuing love to Omar, who falls briefly into her embrace before rejecting her. Rachel is encouraged by Omar's lapse and breaks into hysterical sobs: 'He is yet mine, mine, mine!' Mahomet tells Rachel how Mecca will be attacked and she sees her chance for revenge at last. She persuades Mahomet to accompany Otba at the head of the advance party disguised as a pilgrim and then writes a letter to the leaders of Mecca telling them of Mahomet's plans. Murabak, Rachel's slave, takes the letter, which Rachel has concealed in his hair, to Mecca. Omar discovers that Rachel has arranged for Mahomet to lead the advance party and accuses her of sending him to a certain death. Rachel tells Omar he will soon be the first caliph and her king: 'It is all for you, Omar, all, all!' Omar tells Rachel he hates her ('from this hour all love dies out of my heart') and vows that Mahomet will not go with Otba.

[Scene 3: Inside the mosque. Columns. Flat roof with dome. Rostrum (minbar) with steps up at right. Night.]

As Mahomet addresses the people of Medina from the *minbar* of the mosque on the eve of the attack on Mecca, he is persuaded to let Omar go with Otba instead. Rachel is forced to dress Omar in the disguise that Mahomet would have worn, then falls to the ground with a scream.

Act IV

[Scene 1: The plain outside Mecca; tent at right; tents on dark cloth behind; lights of Mecca in the distance. Night, then dawn.]

Mahomet and the army of five thousand are encamped at night on the plain outside Mecca. A messenger brings the news that the advance party has been captured. Murabak is apprehended as he returns from delivering Rachel's letter and is brought before Mahomet. When Murabak refuses to say who sent him to Mecca and is threatened with torture, Rachel confesses. Mahomet thinks Rachel meant to take revenge on Omar for his refusal to marry her. Rachel tells him the truth: that he himself had been the object of her plot. Mahomet now suspects an adulterous relationship between Rachel and Omar: 'There has been double treachery in this, and the greater half has been his [...] I thought him my best friend, but he has been my worst enemy. I could have sworn to his truth, but he is guilty, guilty, guilty'. Rachel admits her involvement in the plot to kill Mahomet in Mecca and that she lied about her conversion to Islam. She tells Mahomet the situation is partly of his own making: 'I became the wife of Mahomet, true. But why? By what means? Was it of my own doing? Of my seeking? Then if I have been your wife by no choice of my own is it my fault that I have never loved you?' She tells Mahomet that Omar is innocent but he does not believe her. Intending to kill Omar, Mahomet arranges to have him returned to the camp for one hour in exchange for Fatimah, Hosein, and one thousand men. When Fatimah faints at this news, Rachel puts on a veil, assumes Fatimah's place, and is taken to Mecca as a hostage. Othman, who has been put in charge of the jail in which Otba, Omar, and the advance party are imprisoned, is ordered to find four thousand Bedouins to attack Mahomet's camp. Othman tells Otba that if he is given permission to marry Asma, he will arrange to bring Mahomet's army into Mecca instead. Otba agrees. Othman makes his way to Mahomet's camp and tells Asma to watch for a light on the wall of the city: this will be the signal that will tell Mahomet he is free to enter Mecca unopposed. Omar is returned to Mahomet's camp. Mahomet strips him of his sword, sash, and cloak, accusing him of adultery with Rachel. Omar denies this and tells Mahomet that he gladly led the advance party knowing it would save the prophet's life at the probable cost of his own. He tells Mahomet he had loved Rachel in the past, but no longer. Mahomet realises his mistake and begs Omar's forgiveness. He sees that Rachel was right about Omar's innocence: 'I have come between them. They are the victims of my pride and destiny. It is thus that greatness falls. She was a

woman and I could give her glory, forgetting that she might not therefore give me love'. They discover Rachel has gone to Mecca in place of Fatimah. Asma rushes in after seeing the light on the walls of the city and tells Mahomet that Mecca is his.

[Scene 2: The courtyard of the castle in Mecca; high, blank, white wall with battlements; door clamped with iron leading to Aboo Jahl's home. Dawn.]

Moseilama boasts to Othman that Mahomet will soon be captured. Otba arrives and announces the city has fallen to Mahomet and his army. Moseilama flees, as do Jonas and Aboo Jahl.

[Scene 3: The marketplace in Mecca, same as before. Dawn, then sunrise.]

Mahomet and his army enter the city peacefully. In Mecca, Mahomet forgives those who persecuted him. He is reunited with Rachel and Hosein. He announces he will return to the desert to rest and pray: 'The faith of Islam is founded, its empire begun [...] Mahomet's task is finished; his life's work is done'. He takes his leave of Fatimah, Hosein, Rachel, and Omar, telling Omar to 'be good to my people, for they are my children'. He also tells Omar that he is to marry Rachel after a suitable period of time. He then turns to the crowd: 'Farewell, everyone who has followed me in hunger and thirst and the want of all things. I must leave you now. But God has been more merciful to me than to Moses, for he has suffered me to see the day of my people's glory. The face of Allah shine on you forever! He rides upon the heavens; his excellence is in the sky. Truth has come and falsehood has fled before the sword. The night is gone, and look, the day has dawned! Farewell! Farewell!' At the very moment the sun rises over the horizon, Mahomet climbs the hill outside the city and then descends behind it, going out at the place he was first seen.

Caine structures his play around a series of events in the life of the historical Muhammad derived from the multiple sources he consulted. Thus *Mahomet* begins with Muhammad's return to Mecca from Jabal al-Nour, the mountain where he is said to have received his first revelations from the archangel Gabriel. He preaches a strict monotheism to the people of Mecca and is rejected by them. He is visited by a delegation of men from the nearby oasis town of Yathrib, who invite him to move there. After an attempt on his life in Mecca, he flees in disguise to Yathrib, which soon grows into Medina, the first great Muslim centre. He discovers that one of his wives may have been unfaithful to him with a trusted friend. He prepares for war against Mecca, is nearly betrayed by a letter carried to the enemy in the locks of a slave's hair, and finally returns there in triumph.⁶⁴ All of these events are detailed

⁶⁴ Among the items related to *Mahomet* in the Hall Caine Papers at Manx National Heritage is one called 'Private Document'. This is Caine's original treatment of the subject; from it we learn that Caine had intended the play to begin with a short prologue explaining Rachel's hatred of Mahomet and her reasons for seeking his death. Caine describes the prologue as follows: 'The young Mahomet loves Rachel Laredo, but is about to put aside his earthly love for a time that he may prepare himself

with varying degrees of emphasis in two books known to have been used by Caine in constructing the plot of his play, Washington Irving's *Life of Mahomet* (1849) and William Muir's four-volume *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam, to the Era of the Hegira* (1858–61). In addition, some of the play's dialogue is drawn nearly verbatim from Stanley Lane-Poole's *The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammad* (1882). Irving's *Life of Mahomet* in particular seems to have served as a template for Caine and it is this text that provides an especially important key to understanding his choices in presenting Muhammad's life story. The book's thirty-nine chapters, comprising 'the admitted facts concerning Mahomet'⁶⁵ in chronological order, are followed by a primer on the basic tenets of Islam. Its approach is distinctively temperate for the period in which it was written: it rejects the idea that Muhammad was a 'gross and impious imposter' while praising his 'perfect abnegation of self', his 'ardent, persevering piety' and the 'pure and elevated and benignant' precepts of the Qur'an.⁶⁶ But while the author finds much to admire about Islam, he cannot completely escape an orientalist critique of the faith and its founder, noting that after Muhammad's flight to Medina, he became prey to 'worldly passions and worldly schemes'.⁶⁷ He questions the source of Muhammad's revelations, suggesting that although he was 'undoubtedly a man of great genius', he suffered from 'mental hallucination' and 'a species of monomania'.⁶⁸ Caine chooses to ignore this judgement, focusing instead on the book's detailed account of specific

for the work to which God seems to have called him. Rachel is the daughter of a Jewish usurer in Mecca, and among his debtors is a young spendthrift named Omar, who is one of Rachel's admirers. Omar comes to the house of the Jew drunk to borrow money for a generous purpose. The Jew refuses to lend and abuses Omar, whereupon Omar strikes back at the Jew and accidentally kills him under circumstances that lead Rachel to think Mahomet has killed her father. Her love of Mahomet, already stung by his abandonment of her, turns to hatred, and she resolves to pursue and destroy him'. This prologue does not appear in the final version of the play and it seems likely it was cut as Caine developed his ideas in collaboration with Irving during the writing process. In the final version, for example, the death of Rachel's father is explained as the action of a street mob inspired by Mahomet's preaching, not as the result of being struck by Omar; Rachel's father is not described as a usurer; and Mahomet does not have a prior personal relationship with Rachel.

⁶⁵ Washington Irving, *Life of Mahomet* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850), p. iv.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 197–98, p. 199, p. 200.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

events in Muhammad's life. Its simplicity and emphasis on the prophet's deeds and exploits may well have appealed to him over the far more scholarly volumes by Muir: instead of learned exegeses of medieval Arabic sources, Washington Irving provided a wealth of lively incident and detail from which Caine could easily assemble a framework for his own inventions and embroideries.⁶⁹

A striking example of this involves Caine's transformation of the generally accepted historical narrative concerning Muhammad's victorious return to Mecca in 630 CE. That year, Washington Irving tells us, Muhammad prepared for a secret expedition to take the city by surprise. Despite his precautions, the attack was nearly derailed when one of his followers, Hateb (Hatib ibn Abi Balta'ah), whose impoverished family had remained in Mecca, thought he could gain favour and protection for them by revealing Muhammad's plans to the Coreish. Hateb wrote a letter detailing these plans and sent it to Mecca concealed in the braids of a Hashemite slave girl. Informed of Hateb's betrayal through a revelation, Muhammad sent six followers in pursuit of the girl and seized her on the road before she reached Mecca. Only when threatened with death did she produce the letter. Summoned to Muhammad's presence, Hateb acknowledged his treachery but pleaded the cause of his destitute family. When urged to execute Hateb, Muhammad counselled forgiveness, recalling Hateb's brave conduct in previous battles.⁷⁰

Caine turns this story to highly dramatic effect by making a warning letter to Mecca the means by which Rachel will achieve her long-awaited revenge against Mahomet. (This is the 'one leading idea, which stirs my blood to think of' centring in the 'Jewish mistress' that Caine described to Henry Irving in November 1889.)

⁶⁹ See William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam to the Era of the Hegira*, 4 vols (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858–61). Caine likely found, as did many contemporary reviewers of this work, that Muir went too far in imposing his own beliefs onto his subject; he suggests that Muhammad, 'the once sincere enquirer', succumbed to 'the mere fancy of an excited imagination' that may have proceeded from 'the Evil One and his emissaries' and which cast him 'into the meshes of deception' (II, p. 90–91). Matthew Dimmock has recently described Muir's Muhammad as 'a cynical manipulator, a fallen man consumed by lust and power, situated within a Christian universe as a shadow of Christ'. See *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 214.

⁷⁰ Washington Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 147–48.

Shortly after Rachel learns of Mahomet's plans to march on Mecca and persuades him to lead the advance party, she writes a letter apprising Meccan leaders of the impending attack, signing it 'a friend of the Coreish'. She rolls it up and ties it into the hair of Murabak, who is described in Caine's stage directions as a 'black Egyptian slave'. She orders him to deliver the letter to Aboo Jahl in Mecca. After Omar replaces Mahomet at the head of the advance party, Rachel asks the prophet if he fears betrayal, perhaps by a woman motivated by passion. He rejects this idea. Rachel begins to tell him what she has done but is interrupted by the news that Omar has been captured and Murabak apprehended. The slave refuses to talk at first, telling Mahomet only that a woman sent him. When he is threatened with whipping, Rachel confesses, after which the events of the play's denouement follow one another in swift succession: Rachel sends herself as a hostage to Mecca; Omar is accused of adultery and then cleared of that charge; Othman opens the city's gates to Mahomet's army, which enters unopposed; and Mahomet takes his leave of his followers.

Unlike the letter carried by Hateb's messenger, the letter hidden in Murabak's hair is delivered to its intended recipient. Where Hateb's plot failed, Rachel's machinations succeeded, although with the unintended result that Omar is arrested instead of Mahomet. Caine has changed the sex of the messenger but kept the slave status. While Hateb is motivated by an unselfish concern for the well-being of his family, Rachel is inspired by her hatred of Mahomet, which drives the play's plot. Muhammad forgives Hateb; Mahomet forgives Rachel. Thus one can see Caine picking and choosing the elements from the historical record that will fit the traditional melodramatic form he favoured at this point in his development as a dramatist. It was a technique he also used to create his characters, several of whom are modelled on historical figures, including Muhammad's companions Abu Bakr and Umar, his enemy Abu Jahl, his followers Asma and Uthman, his rival Moseilama, his daughter Fatimah, and his grandson Hosein. Caine describes his characters both in stage directions and in the scenario he developed for Irving's

consideration in January 1890: a closer look reveals additional details about the relationship of the play to its historical sources and how Caine appropriated and adapted these.⁷¹

‘Aboo Bakker’, described simply as ‘a follower of Mahomet’ in Caine’s scenario, is based on the known historical figure Abdullah ibn Abi Quhafah, nicknamed Abu Bakr (c. 573–634 CE), one of Muhammad’s senior *sahaba*, or close companions and disciples. In the play, Caine depicts him as an old man who advises and warns the prophet from a position of greater maturity and experience; in reality, he was the same age as Muhammad.

The character of ‘Omar’ is described in the play and in the scenario as ‘a young Arab of noble birth, handsome and manly’ and ‘passionate, heroic in a high degree, the unrequited lover, a brave man’. He is based on the known historical figure Umar ibn al-Khattab (577–644 CE), a companion who became the second caliph (not the first, as in Caine’s play) after Abu Bakr. Like the historical Umar, Caine’s ‘Omar’ resists Muhammad’s teachings and plots to kill him before confessing and converting to Islam. The scene in which ‘Omar’ takes Mahomet’s place on the couch in Rachel’s house as assassins wait outside is based on a story told not of Umar but of Ali ibn Abi Talib (c. 600–661 CE), who risked his life by sleeping in Muhammad’s bed while the prophet escaped from Mecca with Abu Bakr on the night now known as Laylat al-Mabit. (Caine is here conflating two separate plots to murder Muhammad, both masterminded by Abu Jahl.) In the play, ‘Omar’ is accused of adultery with ‘Rachel’, one of Mahomet’s wives; according to Muslim tradition, it was another man, Safwan bin al-Mu’attal who was thus accused with Aisha, Muhammad’s favourite wife (as depicted in Bornier’s *Mahomet*).

The character of ‘Abu Jahl’ is based on Amr ibn Hisham (c. 556–624 CE),

⁷¹ In the discussion that follows I have placed characters’ names in quotation marks to distinguish them from known historical figures. Modern studies of Muhammad and his companions include Kecia Ali, *The Lives of Muhammad* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), Jonathan Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), and Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (London: Gollancz, 1995).

also known as Abu Jahl (meaning ‘father of ignorance’), who was in history and in Caine’s play the maternal uncle of Umar/‘Omar’. Depicted as a ‘wolf’ by Caine, Abu Jahl was openly hostile to Muhammad and his followers. Like the historical Abu Jahl, Caine’s ‘Abu Jahl’ devises a plan to murder Muhammad that involves multiple sword blows delivered by men from different clans so Muhammad’s family cannot easily prosecute a blood feud. His presence in Act IV of the play is an anachronism, since the historical Abu Jahl was killed in the Battle of Badr in March 624 CE, and the final two acts are set after that battle.

In the play, ‘Asma’ is the daughter of Otba, a Bedouin. In history, she was the daughter of Abu Bakr and known as Asma bint Abu Bakr (c. 595–692 CE). Caine seems to have borrowed only her name; he gives her an affectionate suitor in ‘Othman’ but the historical Asma was unhappily married and divorced her abusive husband. Similarly, ‘Othman’ has a historical antecedent in Uthman ibn Affan (577–656 CE), who became the third caliph, after Abu Bakr and Umar, but Caine used only his name and profession as a trader in the play.

‘Moseilama’, described by Caine in the scenario as ‘a little pert man, a jester who gets his comeuppance’, is based on the historical figure of Moseilama, who after meeting Muhammad in Medina set himself up as a formidable rival prophet. He proposed to Muhammad that they share power in an exchange Caine appropriates as dialogue in the play: ‘Moseilama, the apostle of God, to Mahomet, the apostle of God: we are both prophets, let the earth be half mine and half thine’ — to which Muhammad replies, ‘Mahomet, the apostle of God, to Moseilama, the liar, the earth is God’s alone’. This incident is recounted in Washington Irving’s *Life of Mahomet*.

The names of Caine’s ‘Fatimah’ (Mahomet’s daughter) and ‘Hosein’ (Mahomet’s grandson) were those of the historical figures Fatimah bint Muhammad (c. 605–615) and Husayn ibn Ali (626–680 CE). Fatimah was a child of five when her father received his revelations on Mount Hira; Caine makes her an adult in his play. Fatimah was renowned as a protector of her father, a trait emphasised by Caine. The historical Husayn was born after the events depicted in the play.

These examples show Caine adopting, altering, and conflating for dramatic effect and expediency the historical record he discovered through his study of the religion. Although many of his characters are rooted in conventional depictions of figures present at the birth of Islam, Caine has fit them into roles that serve the traditional pattern and purpose of melodrama: one becomes the wise elder who counsels the hero, one becomes the faithful friend and supporter who betrays the hero's trust, two become young lovers who provide comic relief. Most remarkable, of course, are the ways that Caine transformed the historical Muhammad into a sympathetic stage Mahomet and addressed both the treatment of women and religious minorities with the addition of Rachel, one of the great unplayed female tragic roles of the Victorian period.

Although not mentioned as one of Caine's sources in Robert Buchanan's article for *Wit and Wisdom*, it is inconceivable that Caine did not consult or was not familiar with Thomas Carlyle's landmark assessment of Muhammad's achievements in the second of four lectures delivered in May 1840 and later collected and published as *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841). In these lectures, Carlyle explored the lives of what he called 'Great Men', including 'their manner of appearance in our world's business, how they have shaped themselves in the world's history, what ideas men formed of them, what work they did'.⁷² In 'The Hero as Prophet', Carlyle is concerned to dispel the common mid-Victorian perception of Muhammad as 'a scheming Impostor, a Falsehood incarnate' and his religion as 'a mere mass of quackery and fatuity'. After observing that 'a greater number of God's creatures believe in [Muhammad's] word at this hour than in any other word whatever', he asks: 'Are we to suppose that it was a miserable piece of spiritual legerdemain, this which so many creatures of the Almighty have lived by and died by? I, for my part, cannot form any such supposition'.⁷³ Muhammad,

⁷² Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic* (London: James Fraser, 1841), p. 1.

⁷³ Ibid. ('Lecture II [Friday, 8th May 1840]. The Hero as Prophet. Mahomet: Islam'), pp. 67–125 (p. 70). Carlyle was not uniformly impressed by Islam; he had little use for the Qur'an as literature, for example ('a wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite', p. 104) and thought in some respects

Carlyle tells us, was regarded in his time as ‘a man of truth and fidelity [...] a man rather taciturn in speech, silent when there was nothing to be said, but pertinent, wise, sincere, when he did speak’. He was ‘an altogether solid, brotherly, genuine man’ with ‘a serious, sincere character; yet amiable, cordial, companionable’.⁷⁴ In this description we recognise the Muhammad that Caine wrote for Irving: Carlyle’s ‘wild son of the desert’ and ‘deep-hearted son of the wilderness’⁷⁵ becomes Caine’s ‘son of the desert’.⁷⁶ As he worked on the play in the spring of 1890, Caine told the actor that the character had affected him profoundly: he had been ‘very moved’ by his ‘nobility, his simplicity, his unselfishness, his shrewd wisdom, his humour, his rapt passion’.⁷⁷ A full fifty years after Carlyle urged those in attendance at his lecture on Muhammad to dismiss ‘the lies which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man’, we find Caine doing just that, in dramatic form. His was an entirely new stage Mahomet, owing nothing to Voltaire and very little to Bornier. The mistakes his prophet makes (believing Rachel, doubting Omar, rejecting the concerns of Aboo Bakker and Fatimah) he makes out of pride and a trusting nature. Of course, this is a trait that makes the ‘Hero-Prophet’ vulnerable to the plot that overtakes him in the third act and on which the effectiveness of the play as a melodrama depended. In fact, Carlyle unwittingly captures melodrama’s essence when he describes, in his discussion of Muhammad’s faults, the ‘faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best’:

the religion was a ‘bastard kind of Christianity, but a living kind, with a heart-life in it’ (p. 101); still, Carlyle argued, ‘neither can the faults, imperfections, insincerities, even, of Mahomet, if such were never so well proved against him, shake this primary fact about him’: that he was destined to ‘kindle the world’ (p. 74). See also W. Montgomery Watt, ‘Carlyle on Muhammad’, *The Hibbert Journal*, 53 (1954–55), 247–54, and Robert A. Donovan, ‘Carlyle and the Climate of Hero-Worship’, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 42 (Winter 1973), 122–41.

⁷⁴ Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic*, p. 85.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98, p. 87.

⁷⁶ Hall Caine, *Mahomet*, I. 1.

⁷⁷ Hall Caine to Henry Irving, 17 May 1890, Laurence Irving Collection.

Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended; ever, with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew. Poor human nature! Is not a man's walking, in truth, always that: a succession of falls? Man can do no other. In this wild element of a Life, he has to struggle onwards; now fallen, deep-abased; and ever, with tears, repentance, with bleeding heart, he has to rise again, struggle again still onwards.⁷⁸

Carlyle asks: 'Of all acts is not, for man, *repentance* the most divine?' The 'struggle again still onwards', often accompanied by an act of atonement for one's faults and errors, has always been the domain of theatrical melodrama and, as we have seen, a persistent theme of Caine's novels and plays both before and after *Mahomet*. In Carlyle's lecture we find, as we find in the world of melodrama, a desire to inscribe sense and meaning onto the chaos of experience and the personal battles of men and women: in Peter Brooks's words, a wish to be reassured that 'the universe is in fact morally legible, that it possesses an ethical identity and significance'.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Caine, following Carlyle, makes Muhammad a sort of Romantic visionary or mystic: he is an emissary of the 'Infinite Unknown', his message a 'fiery mass of life cast up from the great bosom of Nature herself', who sees in the world around him evidence of 'an unspeakable Power, a Splendour, and a Terror not to be named'.⁸⁰ Caine's Mahomet, 'this dreamer of the desert, this stargazer, this maniac', is inseparable from this sublime world, a 'land where no man is wronged'. He is first seen descending the rocky slopes of the hills surrounding Mecca at sunset; he is last seen ascending those same slopes at sunrise as he tells his followers, 'I came out of the desert and to the desert I must return'.⁸¹ His world, like the world of Carlyle's Muhammad, is 'a manifestation of God's power and presence'⁸² in which he can rest and pray. What would this have meant to a Lyceum audience largely ignorant of Islam? Matthew Dimmock has suggested that Carlyle's Muhammad was 'an emblem of natural faith lost in an era of barren rationality' who resonated with a mid-

⁷⁸ Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic*, p. 75.

⁷⁹ Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, p. 43.

⁸⁰ Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic*, p. 73, p. 74, p. 112.

⁸¹ Caine, *Mahomet*, I. 1; IV. 3.

⁸² Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic*, p. 111.

Victorian society in the throes of ‘industrialisation, scientific empiricism, and social change’.⁸³ By 1890, when Caine was drafting his play, these developments had expanded by several orders of magnitude. If the divine really had fled British national life, here was an attempt, through the form of romantic melodrama, to reconnect with it through a ‘Great Man’ — a concept in itself quintessentially Romantic. Beyond Caine’s desire to present a portrait of the founder of Islam that was both enlightening and entertaining, the play would have provided the Lyceum’s patrons with an opportunity to consider the shifting status of traditional Christian forms of faith and the rise of religious doubt at the exact moment the first mosques appeared in English cities and the increasingly visible presence of Muslim subjects throughout the British Empire began to transform the nation’s relationship with Islam.⁸⁴

The character of Rachel, like the character of Sofia in Bornier’s play, is, at least initially, an implacable avenger of her persecuted people; in Caine’s scenario she is described as having a ‘strong race feeling’. Through her, Caine comments on contemporary issues concerning the treatment of religious minorities and the rights of women.⁸⁵ We learn her story early in Act I: her father, identifiable as a Jew by his tallit and stramel, was beaten to death on his way to the synagogue by some of Mahomet’s followers after hearing the prophet preach against the Israelites. When Rachel asks her lover Omar to murder Mahomet in revenge for her father’s death, it is with the demand that he ‘scour this vermin out of Mecca’.⁸⁶ Mahomet has, in fact, been exhorting his followers to drive away from the city ‘the Jews that swarm in it — they hold your purse, they are masters of your usury, they will burn your beds

⁸³ Dimmock, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad*, p. 211.

⁸⁴ The Liverpool Moslem Institute and the Shah Jahan mosque in Woking were established in 1889 by William Henry Quilliam and Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner, respectively; they are discussed more fully in the following chapter.

⁸⁵ Caine’s Rachel participates in what Nadia Valman has called ‘discursive contestations over religious, national, and gendered identities’ centred on the rhetorical figure of the Jewess, which was ‘both remarkably durable and infinitely malleable’ over the Victorian period. See *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century British Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 209, p. 13.

⁸⁶ Caine, *Mahomet*, I. 1.

from under you'.⁸⁷ Echoing Bornier's Mahomet, who proclaimed that Arabia was no place for Christians, Caine's Mahomet declares that Arabia is no place for Jews: 'Arabia should belong to the Arabs', he says. Unlike Bornier's play, however, there is no scene of forced Jewish emigration in Caine's *Mahomet*, perhaps because Caine had begun educating himself on the terrible plight of modern Jews in Africa and Eastern Europe in preparation for two future novels. The first of these, *The Scapegoat*, was 'a scathing indictment of Moroccan tyranny'⁸⁸ praised by 'the most intelligent and influential members of the respectable Jewish community in London'.⁸⁹ According to Stoker, Caine 'so steeped himself in the knowledge of Jewish life and ideas and ritual that those who read his book almost accepted him as an authority on the subject'.⁹⁰ The second, a story set in the Jewish ghetto of Krakow, Poland, had interested Irving as the basis of a possible play. Caine outlined it for the actor during a Lyceum supper in November 1892, more than a year after *Mahomet* had been suppressed. Stoker recalled that 'any form of oppression was noxious to [Irving]; and certainly the Jewish 'Exodus' that was just then going on [in Russia and Eastern Europe, including Poland] came under that heading. I think that he had in his mind the possibilities of a new and powerful play'.⁹¹ Neither the novel nor the play materialised, however. Vivien Allen notes that Caine's connections with the British Jewish community stretched back to his days in Liverpool; after moving to London, he became friends with Hermann Adler, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, and with the novelist Israel Zangwill, who enlisted Caine in the Zionist movement, a cause that interested him as early as 1888.⁹² Although historians disagree on whether or not there was a concerted Muslim effort to 'cleanse' Arabia of all Jews during Muhammad's lifetime, it is generally conceded that groups of various sizes were expelled at different times in response to specific acts of

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 6 July 1891.

⁸⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 10 October 1891.

⁹⁰ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 117.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 123. More than two decades earlier, Irving had his first major London success with a play about the murder of a Polish Jew in Leopold Lewis's *The Bells*.

⁹² Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 209.

resistance or active opposition, a fact Caine uses to lend additional credibility to Rachel's animus towards Mahomet.⁹³

Rachel's false conversion to Islam is a remarkable moment in Act II and a further example of Caine's departure from the historical record for dramatic effect. When Omar fails to kill Mahomet in her house, Rachel follows him to Yathrib, overtaking Mahomet's caravan in the desert just outside the city. Her 'Eastern' clothing has been replaced by a burqa that covers her from head to foot. She tells Mahomet she has disclaimed her family and her faith. Her motives are immediately suspected by Mahomet's adviser Aboo Bekker and by his daughter Fatimah: 'No Jew', says Aboo Bekker, 'ever forsook his faith — the tongue that says he does has lied'.⁹⁴ Such conversions, although not unknown in Muhammad's time, were rare, as Jews of that period expected that the true prophet, or messiah (*mashiach*), would be a descendant of King David: they explicitly rejected Muhammad's claim to be a messenger of God.⁹⁵ From the beginning of Act IV, Rachel shows contrition for her behaviour and tries to confess her treachery to Mahomet. Later she bravely substitutes herself for Fatimah and is taken as a hostage for Omar into the enemy camp. Her faith at the end of the play is ambiguous: she has not genuinely converted to Islam but kneels at Mahomet's feet. Her vengeful rage has softened: 'I have an enemy', she tells the prophet, touching her breast, 'and she is here'.⁹⁶ The historical Muhammad may have married a Jewish woman, Rayhana bint Zayd, who had been enslaved following the Battle of the Trench and the execution of all men belonging to her tribe, the Banu Qurayza, in 627 CE. Some sources say Muhammad freed and married her following her conversion to Islam; others that she rejected Muhammad's

⁹³ See Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Gordon Darnell Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia: From Ancient Times to Their Eclipse Under Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), and Walid N. Arafat, 'New Light on the Story of Banu Qurayza and the Jews of Medina', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 (1976), 100–07.

⁹⁴ Caine, *Mahomet*, II. 1.

⁹⁵ See Jacob Immanuel Schochet, *Mashiach: The Principle of Mashiach and the Messianic Era in Jewish Law and Tradition* (New York: S.I.E., 1992).

⁹⁶ Caine, *Mahomet*, IV. 3.

proposal, kept her Jewish faith, and became a concubine. Beyond Rachel's Jewish faith and intimate relationship with Mahomet, Caine seems not to have borrowed very much from the historical record: in the play, she is not a slave but follows Mahomet willingly to Yathrib in pursuit of Omar. Caine may have taken her name from the tragic heroine of Fromental Halévy's grand opera *La Juive* (*The Jewess*), first performed at Covent Garden in 1835 and revived throughout the century. In her strong and unyielding 'race feeling' — if not her capacity for self-sacrifice — she resembles Sir Walter Scott's Rebecca of York, the Jewish character who is the sentimental core of *Ivanhoe* (1819). Like other young Jewish women in the Romantic 'belle Juive' tradition (of which Scott's Rebecca is the archetype), Rachel bewitches men with her beauty and becomes an object of desire; Mahomet exclaims 'How beautiful! How beautiful thou art, O Rachel!' and Aboo Bekker twice calls Mahomet a good man 'betrayed by the beauty in a woman's face'.⁹⁷ With her bold manner — for example, when she steps in to rescue Mahomet from the braying crowd, when she performs a sensual 'Egyptian' dance, when she assumes Fatimah's place as a hostage — she exhibits a transgressive femininity unusual for her time and place. Her unwillingness to sacrifice her love of Omar for the good of the nascent Muslim community she has married into makes her dangerous: her sexual abandon threatens the relationship between Mahomet and Omar and thus the stability of the new enterprise. (In this she is the exact opposite of Scott's self-denying Rebecca, whose renunciation of the Normanised *Ivanhoe* clears the way for him to marry the Saxon princess Rowena.) By the end of the play, Rachel's desire has been subdued, although with Mahomet's retreat to the desert, she is enabled to marry Omar and eventually achieve her ends.

Had *Mahomet* been staged, it would have participated in what contemporary critics identified as a 'boom' in the depiction of Jews in fiction and drama in the last

⁹⁷ Ibid., I. 3; II. 1; IV. 1. 'Rachel' is also a biblical character, the wife of Jacob and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, progenitors of two of the twelve tribes of Israel. In Islam she is considered an honoured woman.

decade of the nineteenth century. Beyond Caine's own romance, *The Scapegoat*, which was serialised in *The Illustrated London News* in fourteen parts between July and October 1891 and then published in two volumes by Heinemann later that year, novels with central Jewish characters included George du Maurier's *Peter Ibbetson* (1892), *Trilby* (1894), and *The Martian* (1897); Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* (1892); Walter Besant's *The Rebel Queen* (1893); Marie Corelli's *Barabbas: A Dream of the World's Tragedy* (1893); George Meredith's *Lord Ormont and His Aminta* (1894); Charlotte Yonge's *The Pilgrimage of the Ben Beriah* (1897) and *The Patriots of Palestine: A Story of the Maccabees* (1898); and Anthony Hope's *Quisanté* (1900).⁹⁸ 'Scarcely a novel is now issued from the press without a Jewish subject or a Jewish personage or a Jewish reference and the attitude is far more complementary than of old, even if the zeal is not always according to knowledge', wrote Zangwill in his review of Sydney Grundy's *An Old Jew*, which was produced by John Hare at the Garrick Theatre in 1894 and revived as *Julius Sterne* at the Coronet Theatre the following year.⁹⁹ Zangwill's own plays, including his dramatisation of *Children of the Ghetto*, were landmarks in the depiction of Jewish life and culture on the American and British stage.¹⁰⁰ Du Maurier's *Trilby* enjoyed a notable stage success at the Haymarket Theatre in 1895 with Herbert Beerbohm Tree

⁹⁸ For a comprehensive list, see Edgar Rosenberg, *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960).

⁹⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 January 1894. Of *An Old Jew*, Edna Nahshon has noted: 'Anglo-Jewish intellectuals recognised the symbolic aspect of the opening date, 1894, which marked the centennial of Richard Cumberland's *The Jew* (1794), the first and until then only philosemitic play of the English stage'. She noted both plays 'share the presumption of Jewish alterity and victimhood and provide their Jewish protagonists with sentimental monologues intended to stir compassion and goodwill'. See her 'Philosemitism on the London Stage: Sydney Grundy's *An Old Jew*', in *Jewish Theatre: A Global View*, ed. by Edna Nahshon (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 132–52 (pp. 138–39). In 1814, exactly twenty years after the premiere of *The Jew*, Edmund Kean made a sensational London debut with a sympathetic rendering of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* — an interpretation unrivalled until Irving undertook the role and rejected both 'the ferocious red-wigged villain of [Charles] Macklin and the Romantic anti-hero of [Edmund] Kean' to create the most dignified Shylock yet seen on the English stage (Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, p. 424). See also Alan Hughes, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean*, pp. 224–41, and John Gross, *Shylock: Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992). For a list of British plays with Jewish characters produced up to 1926, see M. J. Landa, *The Jew in Drama* (London: P. S. King, 1926).

¹⁰⁰ *Children of the Ghetto* was produced at the Herald Square Theatre in New York City in October 1899 by George C. Tyler. It transferred to the Adelphi Theatre, London, in December 1899.

as Svengali and Henry Irving's daughter-in-law Dorothea Baird as Trilby; this play ended with the reciting of the Shema, a traditional Hebrew prayer. Two years later, Wilson Barrett produced a play on the Babylonian captivity called *The Daughters of Babylon* ('a Jewish sequel to *The Sign of the Cross*'¹⁰¹) that turned on obscure Hebrew rites and matters of law.

In 1892, Caine shared his view of the matter in a warmly received dinner address at a meeting of the Maccabeans, a charitable society whose members were prominent Jewish literary and professional men. He described his experience of trying to write a 'heroic Jew' for the stage:

Some time ago a well-known actor called on me to ask if I could write a play that would fit him with an appropriate part. I took time to consider, and then propounded a scheme that centred in a Jew. My Jew was an heroic Jew — he did great things in a great way, but he did them in the way of a Jew, for he was a Jew to the inmost fibre of his being. There lay the rock on which my craft foundered. The actor would have nothing to say to my Jew. 'An heroic Jew on the English stage is an impossibility', he said. 'We give that class of person to the man who plays eccentric comedy'. Now, why was this? Was it merely that the public had never had anything better offered to them than the zany out of the broker's shop in Whitechapel? Or was it that the public would reject the heroic Jew because they had found nothing heroic in the Jewish character to go upon? I concluded that there was no reason in the nature of things why the nobler types of Jewish character should not find acceptance in literature just as they find it in life, and I resolved at all hazards to make the experiment of trying an heroic Jew on the English public. I have not yet been able to try him on the stage, but I have, as you know, tried him in a novel with results that surpass my expectations; and I believe that just as the heroic Jew has been accepted in fiction, so he would be accepted on the boards; and that the dramatist will do a good work who breaks down the absurd superstition that the English public will take nothing in the person of a Jew but the buffoon in a bad hat.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Thomas, *The Art of the Actor-Manager*, p. 139. *The Sign of the Cross*, one of Barrett's greatest popular successes, opened at the Lyric Theatre, London, in 1896. See Jeffrey Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 125–51, and *Playing Out the Empire: Ben-Hur and Other Toga Plays and Films, 1883–1908*, ed. by David Mayer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 104–14.

¹⁰² The address was published as 'The Jew in Literature', *Literary World*, 20 May 1892.

Caine was referring to *The Scapegoat*, which had been published the year before; it would never be staged. Caine's opinion, like Henry Irving's, ran counter to a general rise in anti-Semitism during this period.¹⁰³

Through Rachel, Caine also explores the issue of women's rights, which, as we have seen, becomes one of his major preoccupations. As in Bornier's play, Mahomet is confronted by a woman who accuses him of having neglected her needs and the needs of Muslim women generally. When his companions tell Mahomet he has been deceived by Rachel's false conversion, his pride prevents him from seeing the truth: that Rachel is in love with Omar. When Omar rejects her, Mahomet marries her without consulting her, and it is this action that precipitates the final crisis in Act IV. After confessing to being involved in the plot to kill him in Mecca and to following him to Medina only to be with Omar, she tells him: 'I became the wife of Mahomet – true. But why? By what means? Was it of my doing? Of my seeking? Then if I have been your wife by no choice of my own is it my fault that I have never loved you?' She tells Mahomet that he himself is to blame: 'You thought you were my benefactor, you believed you were protecting me from dishonour [...] You were only coming between us – you, our master, a living barrier more terrible than death, you, our Prophet, a tie that was to hold us together and yet apart'. After he learns that Omar, in order to save his life, had replaced him at the head of the advance party going into Mecca, Mahomet admits the legitimacy of Rachel's grievance. 'She was right. He is innocent and I have come between them [...] They are the victims of my pride and destiny. It is thus that greatness falls'. The parallel scene in Bornier's play between Mahomet and Ayesha prompts Mahomet to renounce his status as a prophet, turning over the leadership of the *umma* to Abou-Becker and committing suicide by drinking Sofia's poison. Caine does not go that far; his prophet does not abandon his calling or faith but entrusts it to Omar before

¹⁰³ On Jews during the late-Victorian period, see Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876–1939* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979); and Milos Kovic, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

disappearing into the desert. In both plays, selfish desire is punished: in a woman, it threatens the stability of the community; in a man, it is a weakness that makes him unfit to lead others. Rachel's protest that she had been married against her will and that therefore Mahomet shares some of the blame for subsequent events foreshadows the assertiveness of Caine's later heroines who are similarly subject to male gaze and predation, if not outright ownership, including the Glory Quayle of the second version of *The Christian* (1907) and Donna Roma Volonna of *The Eternal Question* (1910). These women push back against traditional gender restrictions; they possess an agency of their own that reflected Caine's personal view that women should enjoy equal sexual rights with men — rights that men infringe at their peril. In this, as in his very public philosemitism, Caine's opinions were more liberal than most of his contemporaries.¹⁰⁴

One can only speculate on how that most feminine of actresses, Ellen Terry, would have portrayed Rachel had the production of *Mahomet* gone forward. Throughout her career, critics describing her stage presence emphasised her tenderness, grace, modesty, and sensitivity. Jeffrey Richards has noted that her charm lay in her 'musical voice, her graceful movement, her physical beauty, and an impression of almost permanent youthfulness', all of which 'were used to project that idealised femininity which so entranced Victorian audiences'.¹⁰⁵ Even her Lady Macbeth, performed at the Lyceum during the 1888–89 season and which would have been a vivid memory for a *Mahomet* audience in 1890–91, was not the virago Sarah Siddons had played a century earlier but 'fair, feminine, nay, perhaps even fragile' and 'captivating in feminine loveliness'.¹⁰⁶ Caine was so concerned about Terry's reaction to the part of Rachel that he asked Irving to tell her he would

¹⁰⁴ On gender roles during the late-Victorian period, see Ben Griffin, *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain: Masculinity, Political Culture, and the Struggle for Women's Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender, and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

¹⁰⁵ Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁶ Terry's personal notes on Lady Macbeth, quoted in Roger Manvell, *Ellen Terry* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), p. 192. On Terry's controversial interpretation of Lady Macbeth, see Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), pp. 250–66.

balance ‘the one act of great treachery’ Rachel commits — the attempted murder of Mahomet in her house in Act I — with passages of touching pathos elsewhere. The final two acts, he assured Irving, would show Rachel’s remorse for her actions. Irving’s suggestion that Caine add a ‘playful’ scene for her with Hosein, which would show her maternal side, demonstrates that he, too, was concerned Terry would be unhappy with or ill suited to the character as originally written.¹⁰⁷ And from Act II onwards, her body would have been swathed in a burqa and frequently a veil: for perhaps the first time in her career, Ellen Terry would be barely recognisable as Ellen Terry while in costume, a circumstance that might have shocked the legions of admirers drawn to the Lyceum by her beauty.

‘Mahomet’ and Theatrical Orientalism

To what extent would a Lyceum production of *Mahomet* have participated in what John M. MacKenzie, writing of the Victorian theatre, called ‘the exploitation of the oriental Other’?¹⁰⁸ In his ground-breaking and influential examination of nineteenth-century European narrative fiction, Edward Said noted the connection between ‘the prolonged and sordid cruelty of practices such as slavery, colonialist and racial oppression, and imperial subjection on the one hand, and the poetry, fiction, philosophy of the society that engages in these practices on the other’.¹⁰⁹ Certainly theatre should be added to Said’s list of expressive cultural forms, and, by extension, the activities of those most closely associated with it at the height of the British Empire, the actor-managers. Like the authors Said examines in his work, who, although not ‘mechanically determined by ideology, class, or economic history’ are ‘very much in the history of their societies, shaping and shaped by that

¹⁰⁷ Hall Caine to Henry Irving, 17 May 1890, Laurence Irving Collection.

¹⁰⁸ John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 176.

¹⁰⁹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. xiii.

history and their social experience in different measure',¹¹⁰ Victorian actor-managers helped form and were in turn formed by the wider political, economic, and social environments in which they worked. Orientalism during the nineteenth century was, in Said's view, a 'collective notion' having as its purpose the construction of racial 'others' as part of a process of national self-definition: it was a 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' by means of 'making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it'. Ultimately, it was 'a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them")': an entirely one-way exchange that went beyond ignorant distortion to presumptuous invention from a position of greater power.¹¹¹ 'Knowledge of the Orient', Said asserted, 'because generated out of strength, in a sense *creates* the Orient, the Oriental, and his world'.¹¹² That is, Western representations of the East could not help distorting their subjects: European peoples and values were assumed to be superior to non-European peoples and values, and this posture inevitably marked Western depictions of Eastern cultures across a wide range of aesthetic forms and practices.

In this view, simply by being a play written by an Englishman on the life of Muhammad and the rise of Islam (that is, on a non-European subject), *Mahomet* could be expected to share tropes of orientalist discourse with other late-Victorian depictions of the East, and indeed, as MacKenzie, Meisel, Marty Gould, Edward Ziter, and others have shown, Victorian dramatists and actor-managers could draw on an extensive stock of linguistic, scenic, costume, and musical conventions that

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. xxii.

¹¹¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 7. p. 3, p. 43.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 40. On Said and his critics, see Daniel M. Varisco, *Reading Orientalism* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2007); Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents* (New York: Overlook Press, 2006); Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory, Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London and New York: Verso, 1997) and Fred Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996).

would instantly telegraph ‘exotic East’ to an audience.¹¹³ In Said’s terms, they had access to a sort of ‘library or archive of information commonly and, in some of its aspects, unanimously held’, bound together by ‘a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective’.¹¹⁴ *Mahomet* certainly provided significant scope for orientalist display, and it is not difficult to imagine the extravagant romantic realism, typical of the Victorian theatre in general and Henry Irving’s Lyceum Theatre in particular, with which *Mahomet* would have been staged: the swirling sights and sounds of the Meccan marketplace; the approach of Mahomet from the rocky red hills surrounding the city as the fiery sun sets behind him; the entrapment of Mahomet by Rachel as she sings and performs a harem dance as he falls asleep on the divan, a scene lit by spirit lamps; Omar poised above the sleeping Mahomet with knife in hand; the heat- and wind-blasted desert between Mecca and Medina, with its burning red sand and ridges of black volcanic rock; Mahomet’s weary caravan of followers, their meagre worldly possessions strapped to the backs of camels; the prosperous city of Medina, with its massive gate, high stone battlements, and graceful minarets; Mahomet’s address to the people of Medina in the spacious mosque, its enormous columns, intricately patterned walls, and high dome illuminated by flickering flambeaux as his followers make offerings of gold and silver; Rachel’s collapse in the mosque as she is forced to prepare her lover for a mission she knows he is unlikely to survive; Mahomet’s encampment on the plain outside Mecca, with tents extending to the horizon and the lights of the city glittering in the distance; Mahomet’s exit in a blaze of rising sun, symbolic of the dawn of a new day for humanity. Much of the action of the play is accompanied by multiracial throngs of men, women, and children, including Arabs, Jews, Bedouins, and Egyptian slaves. Hundreds of supernumeraries and dozens of live animals would have been required. Without question the production would have been a thrilling

¹¹³ In addition to MacKenzie’s *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts*, see Meisel’s *Realizations*, Gould’s *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and the Imperial Encounter*, and Ziter’s *The Orient on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹¹⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 41.

theatrical realisation of Richard Burton's East, brought to vivid life by Irving and his designers.

In the nearly forty years since the publication of *Orientalism*, Said's polemical stance, which indicted the entire history of the Western study of Eastern and especially Arab and Islamic cultures, has been refined by the nuanced critiques of scholars who have provided, in Clifford Geertz's term, 'thick descriptions' of specific interactions.¹¹⁵ Most, like Robert Irwin, have found Said's accusation that the West's engagement with the East was always 'essentialist, racist, patronising, and ideologically motivated' to be untenable in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Furthermore, it was simply not true that the language of orientalism was 'the hegemonic discourse of imperialism'.¹¹⁶ In fact, as Irwin argues, Westerners who engaged with the East in good faith tended to be anti-imperialists, 'as their enthusiasm for Arab or Persian or Turkish culture often went hand in hand with a dislike of seeing those people defeated and dominated by the Italians, Russians, British or French'.¹¹⁷ Given Irving's attention to detail based on extensive research and Caine's personal investment in the nationalist aspirations of Arabs throughout the Maghreb and in Egypt, it would be wrong to characterise *Mahomet* as a straightforward instance of orientalist appropriation. This is because Caine's desire for the fame and financial rewards that would come from having a successful play in London, which might have tempted him into relying on the standard stock of Eastern stereotypes or working with a less punctilious actor-manager, was matched by his genuine respect for Islam. If *Mahomet* diverges from the historical record to

¹¹⁵ See 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3–30. The goal of such descriptions, Geertz asserted, 'is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics' while accepting that cultural analysis is always intrinsically incomplete and provisional. The advantages and disadvantages of this method for literary and historical research are explored at length in Jerome J. McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) and Robert D. Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹¹⁶ Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge*, p. 3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

heighten dramatic interest and effect, it neither demonises nor caricatures Islam and its founder. It is the only nineteenth-century play — and one of only a few creative works in any medium of the period — that attempted to show a fully rounded and largely sympathetic portrait of Muhammad to non-Muslim audiences. It is an important example of what MacKenzie has called the ‘endlessly protean’ orientalism of the late nineteenth century, ‘as often consumed by admiration and reverence as by denigration and depreciation’.¹¹⁸ Written by one who repeatedly sought inspiration through travel and contact with Arab cultural traditions, *Mahomet* is a work of appreciation, not vilification.

It is possible that Irving contemplated commissioning a well-known artist to design the scenery and costumes for *Mahomet* — perhaps Lawrence Alma-Tadema, who excelled in painting ancient world subjects (he would later design Irving’s productions of *Cymbeline* in 1896 and *Coriolanus* in 1901). If not, Joseph Harker, who designed the Lyceum *Ravenswood* (1890), would probably have assumed this responsibility.¹¹⁹ The scene would have been lavishly and minutely detailed in an effort to satisfy the voracious appetite of the theatre audience for what MacKenzie has called ‘excitement, escapism, and education’.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts*, p. 215. On the use of Islamic subjects by Victorian novelists and poets, see Syed Zaidi, *Victorian Literary Orientalism* (New Delhi: APH, 2010); on the imperial dimensions of nineteenth-century fiction in the context of scholarship by Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Victorian Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). A. R. Kidwai provides an extensive list of related material in all genres in *Literary Orientalism: A Companion* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2009). Ahmad Gunny surveys four centuries of orientalist writing in *The Prophet Muhammad in French and English Literature, 1650 to the Present* (Markfield: The Islamic Foundation, 2010).

¹¹⁹ Harker later worked on several orientalist spectacles, including two by the actor and playwright Oscar Asche based on Arabian Nights tales: *Chu Chin Chow* (His Majesty’s Theatre, London, 1916; Manhattan Opera House, New York City, 1917) and *Mecca* (Century Theatre, New York City, 1920; His Majesty’s Theatre, London, 1921). For the London production of the latter, the title was changed to *Cairo* at the Lord Chamberlain’s insistence, ‘out of concern for the sensitivities of the Empire’s subjects’. See Steve Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama, 1900–1968: Volume 1, 1900–1932* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003), pp. 268–69, and Brian Singleton’s *Oscar Asche, Orientalism, and British Musical Comedy* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004), p. 142, and ‘Narratives of Nostalgia: Oriental Evasions about the London Stage’, in *Representing the Past*, ed. by Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, p. 351–77.

¹²⁰ MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts*, p. 189.

‘Excitement’ and ‘escapism’ are immediately understandable in the context of late-Victorian melodrama — but what about ‘education’? If, as Ziter states, ‘theatrical orientalism celebrated geographic knowledge’ through productions that ‘employed archaeological and ethnographic research to reproduce and interpret the shape of distance spaces’,¹²¹ then *Mahomet* would have provided the Lyceum audience with a primer on that portion of Arabia known as the Vilayet of the Hejaz (or Hijaz), a narrow strip of mountainous land on the western edge of the peninsula with a coastal plain adjacent to the Red Sea that in 1890 was a province of the Ottoman Empire. (It would remain in Ottoman hands until Sharif Hussein bin Ali, leader of the Arab Revolt, became its king in 1916, supported by the British government and the guerrilla operations of T. E. Lawrence. Hussein ruled until 1925, when he was deposed by Abdulaziz ibn Saud, who in 1932 united his territories, including the Hejaz, into the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.¹²²) At the time Caine was writing *Mahomet*, both Mecca and Medina were located within the boundaries of the Ottoman Hejaz. Thus the prophet’s exclamation ‘Arabia for the Arabs!’ as he preaches to the people of Mecca in the very first scene of the play would have been understood by the Lyceum audience in the wider contemporary geopolitical context of the Ottoman occupation of ancient Arab lands. Had the production gone forward, it may well have contributed to the national discussion of this occupation and to the crystallisation of public opinion that resulted in British support of anti-Ottoman insurgency in the region during the early twentieth century. It might also have resonated with that part of the public that objected to Britain’s own imperial enterprise elsewhere, including India.¹²³

¹²¹ Ziter, *The Orient on the Victorian Stage*, p. 182, p. 18.

¹²² See Randall Baker, *King Husain and the Kingdom of Hejaz* (Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1979); Gerald de Gaury, *Rulers of Mecca* (London: George C. Harrap & Co., 1951); Saleh Muhammad Al-Amr, *The Hijaz under Ottoman Rule, 1869–1914: Ottoman Vali, the Sharif of Mecca, and the Growth of British Influence* (Riyadh: Riyadh University Publications, 1978); and William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz under Ottoman Control, 1840–1908* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1984).

¹²³ In the phrase ‘Arabia for the Arabs’, the Lyceum audience would have heard echoes of ‘Egypt for the Egyptians’, the slogan used by the army officer and nationalist Ahmed Arabi Pasha (c. 1840–1911) during the 1881 revolt against Khedive Tewfik that eventually led to the British occupation of the country.

The audience would also have received a lesson in Hejaz desert ecology and its profound impact on the Arab worldview. More than half of *Mahomet*'s second act is set on the trackless open desert between Mecca and Medina, with its deep fumas, suffocating simooms, and empty, dun-coloured expanse of sky. 'Savage inaccessible rock-mountains, great grim deserts, alternating with beautiful strips of verdure: wherever water is, there is greenness, beauty; odoriferous balm-shrubs, date-trees, frankincense-trees', said Carlyle in his lecture on Mahomet. 'Consider that wide waste horizon of sand, empty, silent, like a sand-sea, dividing habitable place from habitable. You are all alone there, left alone with the Universe; by day a fierce sun blazing down on it with intolerable radiance; by night the great deep Heaven with its stars. Such a country is fit for a swift-handed, deep-hearted race of men'.¹²⁴ From Washington Irving, Caine draws his image of Mahomet marching on Mecca through the 'lonely passes of the mountains' to the plain outside the city.¹²⁵ The Lyceum's designers would have rendered these scenes onto painted flats and backdrops and into three-dimensional, 'built-up' set pieces. Irving eschewed the use of stage floor grooves, preferring the more flexible 'free plantation' system that aided the illusion of reality, which would have been increased even further by his genius for lighting. He began replacing the theatre's gas lighting system with electric lamps in 1891, and thus *Mahomet* would have been one of the first Lyceum productions to take advantage of the colour and atmospheric effects they made possible.¹²⁶ The eye would have been ravished by this glimpse of a starkly beautiful landscape so far from the experience of most of those in the audience. It would have

¹²⁴ Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic*, p. 76. MacKenzie notes that the African desert enthralled many European artists: 'Quite apart from the biblical resonances of retreat for spiritual renewal, the restoration of courage and purpose, the desert represented a great purifying force' (*Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts*, p. 59). In Caine's *Mahomet*, the prophet comes from and goes back into the desert, that 'land where no man is wronged', to rest and pray.

¹²⁵ Washington Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, p. 148.

¹²⁶ 'The relation of light to paint was a highly developed science in the Lyceum', says Meisel, 'where the chief gas man and light master (according to the scene-painter William Telbin) was Irving himself' (*Realizations*, p. 416). Stoker noted that Irving used coloured lights 'as a painter uses his palette' in 'Irving and Stage Lighting', *The Nineteenth Century and After*, 411 (May 1911), pp. 903–12 (p. 911). Also see Alan Hughes, 'Henry Irving's Artistic Use of Stage Lighting', *Theatre Notebook*, 33 (1979), 100–09.

seemed another world altogether to Londoners, offering an idealised, atavistic alternative to urban life and its attendant pressures.¹²⁷

But the most important ‘lesson’ delivered by Irving would have been on Islam itself. In its realistic depiction of Muslim sacred spaces, including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and the interior of a mosque, *Mahomet* would have been a landmark in the representation of Islam on the English stage. Caine is careful to get the details of Muslim belief and practice correct: Mahomet preaches a strict monotheism; he claims to be merely a messenger, not divine himself; he disavows any ability to perform miracles; in response to a muezzin’s call to prayer his followers recite the *fatiha*, the seven-verse first chapter of the Qur’an. Irving had staged religious ceremonial before, notably in his 1882 production of Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, and had made changes when informed that certain dressings of the altar during the wedding scene indicated the presence of sacramental bread. Irving ‘cared always and in every way for the feelings of the public’, Stoker recalled. ‘In religious matters he was scrupulous against offense’.¹²⁸ He would certainly have taken equal care in preparing the scene set inside Mahomet’s mosque in Medina and in his depiction of Muslim prayer.

In this respect, Caine’s play is a theatrical counterpart of the period’s orientalist paintings, which abounded in more or less accurately depicted scenes of Islamic piety. Like the artists of those works, Caine admired the way that faith permeated every aspect of community life and would have agreed with them that it provided ‘a lesson to the West in religious constancy and simplicity’.¹²⁹ While conducting their research, he and Irving would have gleaned useful information from

¹²⁷ A far more personal geography seems also to have influenced Caine: the scene of Mahomet descending from the hills outside Mecca at sunset at the beginning of the play may have been inspired by the view from the study of his house in Keswick. The west window of that room looks out over a jumble of fells that comprise one of the most picturesque views in the Lake District. In the spring, the sun sets spectacularly in the dip between the heights of Grasmoor and Grisedale Pike, over the Coledale valley. Perhaps Caine, who wrote the first three acts of the play in this room in the spring of 1890, decided how Mahomet would make his striking entrance while gazing out the window.

¹²⁸ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, I, p. 105.

¹²⁹ MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts*, p. 60.

the canvases of (for example) Jean-Léon Gérôme, whose *Prayer in the Desert* (1864), *The Muezzin*, *The Call to Prayer* (1866), and *Prayer in the Mosque* (1871) provide a wealth of detail regarding architecture, interior design, clothing, and character, especially the pious bearing of Muslims undertaking their daily devotions.¹³⁰ They might also have studied examples of Islamic decorative arts in the galleries of the South Kensington Museum or the British Museum, or visited one of the many late-Victorian interiors decorated in the ‘oriental’ style. Chief among these was the Holland Park house of Sir Frederick (later Lord) Leighton, the Royal Academy president who was one of Irving’s closest friends. This featured an Arab Hall designed by George Aitchinson that incorporated Leighton’s collection of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Turkish and Syrian tiles. Irving and his designers would have gathered, sifted, and then translated these sources into historically correct and theatrically effective stage pictures that would educate a London audience whose only previous contact with the ‘East’ might well have been a visit to Liberty’s sumptuous but ersatz Arab Tea Room or one of the city’s many Turkish baths.

It would be Caine collaborators Wilson Barrett and Herbert Beerbohm Tree, however, and not Irving, who would have the greatest success with plays set in the ancient world (generally defined as Mediterranean and Near East societies that flourished before the fall of Rome in the fifth century but which could, without strain, be extended less than two hundred years to encompass the life of Muhammad and the rise of Islam in a region now considered part of the Near East).¹³¹ In addition to *The Sign of the Cross* (first-century Rome, 1896) and *Daughters of Babylon* (sixth-century BCE Babylonia, 1897), Barrett produced *Claudian* (fourth-century

¹³⁰ Irving would ask Alma-Tadema, much to the latter’s chagrin, to imitate some of Gérôme’s paintings, including *The Death of Caesar*, for a production of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* that was later abandoned. See Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, p. 235.

¹³¹ Although his 1881 production of Tennyson’s *The Cup* is credited with launching a vogue for ‘toga plays’, Irving met with mixed success on the two subsequent occasions he visited the ancient world. His *Cymbeline* enchanted Lyceum audiences in 1896, but his *Coriolanus* failed in 1901. See David Mayer, *Playing Out the Empire*, p. 20, and Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage*, pp. 152–168.

Byzantium and Bithynia, 1883), *Junius or the Household Gods* (sixth-century BCE Rome, 1885), *Clito* (fifth-century BCE Athens, 1886), *Pharaoh* (thirteenth-century BCE Egypt, 1892), *Virginius* (fifth-century BCE Rome, 1893), and *Quo Vadis* (first-century Rome, 1900). Tree was similarly catholic in his taste for ancient world settings: besides productions of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (first-century BCE Rome, 1898) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (first-century BCE Alexandria and Rome, 1906), he produced *Hypatia* (fifth-century Alexandria, 1893), *Herod* (first-century BCE Judea, 1900), *Ulysses* (Homeric Greece, 1902), *Nero* (first-century Rome, 1906), and *False Gods* (fourteenth-century BCE Egypt, 1909). Of these, *Hypatia*, an adaptation by G. Stuart Ogilvie of Charles Kingsley's 1853 novel of the same name that was designed by Alma-Tadema, is especially reminiscent of Caine's *Mahomet*.¹³² Here the battle is between paganism and Christianity, with the beautiful Neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia torn between the Roman prefect Orestes, who can help her vanquish the religion, and a young Christian monk called Philammon, for whom she has developed an inconvenient passion. Hypatia and Orestes are both historical figures, as is Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, whose feud with Orestes precipitates the deaths of both Orestes and Hypatia. The play features a scheming Jewish elder, Isacchar, played by Tree, who resembles the usurer Isaac Laredo of *Mahomet's* discarded prologue. The cosmopolitan Alexandrian marketplace in *Hypatia* recalls the bustling Meccan marketplace in the first scene of *Mahomet*. Like Caine, Ogilvie foregrounds a love triangle complicated by religious rivalries against an expansive ancient setting in a story that is both broadly accurate in its historical outlines and amplified by dramatic invention.

By paying meticulous attention to the *mise-en-scène* of the spectacular past worlds they brought to life on their stages, all three actor-managers — Barrett, Tree, and Irving — provided 'excitement, escapism, and education'. They sought not only to entertain, but also to elevate and enlighten. To dismiss their plays as instances of

¹³² I am indebted to Jeffrey Richards, Emeritus Professor of Cultural History, Department of History, Lancaster University, for this reference.

simple-minded orientalism in the Saidian sense is to fail to appreciate their genuine interest in the historical places and times they found so fascinating and which offered ample scope for their individual acting talents and the skill of the playwrights and artists with whom they worked.

Mahomet and the 'Unrepresentable'

Ironically, perhaps, Irving's pictorial sensibility would have been put to use in representing what Muslims in Britain, India, Turkey, and elsewhere believed was fundamentally unrepresentable according to Islamic law: the bodies of Muhammad, members of his family, and his companions. Although the Qur'an does not explicitly address this subject, several hadith forbid the visual depiction of animate beings in general and revered figures in particular. Were Irving and Caine unaware of this? If so, it would seem a signal failure to understand the 'oriental Other' that both men thought the play respected. What seems more probable is that they were aware of it, at least generally, but believed it would not apply to a stage play by a non-Muslim writer performed by a non-Muslim actor in a non-Islamic nation before a non-Muslim audience. In such circumstances, how could it offend? Irving, testifying in April 1892 before a parliamentary select committee considering changes in the licensing and regulation of theatres, stated that the Lord Chamberlain's concerns — that the play would hurt the religious sensibilities of Britain's Muslim subjects — 'certainly had never occurred to me'.¹³³ And Stoker later wrote, 'none of us had the slightest idea that there could be any objection in a professedly Christian nation to a play on the subject'.¹³⁴ In the complete absence of other evidence, and in view of the good faith shown in their private correspondence with Caine, we should take Irving and Stoker at their word. What no one had counted on was the Lord Chamberlain's

¹³³ Evidence given by Henry Irving, 4 April 1892, *Report from the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index*. London: HMSO, 1892.

¹³⁴ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 120.

extension of the ban on the representation of sacred Christian figures to the representation of sacred Islamic figures, a step Stoker called ‘a bolt from the blue’.¹³⁵ Furthermore, there were earlier English and continental plays on the life of the prophet that would have been known to Irving, which may have given him a false sense of security in his collaboration with Caine. An overview of these provides a more robust context for understanding the controversy that arose over the Lyceum *Mahomet*.

The first was William Percy’s *Mahomet and His Heaven* (1601), which Matthew Dimmock has identified as the ‘only early modern play extant to personify Muhammad’, that is, to feature an actor portraying the character, which was even then a highly provocative and ‘potentially sacrilegious act’.¹³⁶ Percy (1570–1648), the brother of Henry Percy, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, seems to have written the play as a private entertainment for the Northumberland household at Petworth or Syon Park: no evidence of its professional production has survived. Like Shakespeare’s *Othello*, it may have been inspired by the arrival in London of the Moroccan ambassador Abd el-Ouahed ben Messaoud ben Mohammed Anoun.¹³⁷ In earlier plays, Mahomet had been represented by a stage property (in Robert Greene’s *Alphonsus of Arragon* of 1587, for example, Turks are shown worshipping a large brass head that breathes fire.)¹³⁸ In Percy’s play, an actor dressed in a green robe and turban pinned with a silver crescent portrays a Mahomet surveying Arabia from heaven and growing angry at the immorality he sees. When he threatens to punish man’s greed and lust with a forty-day drought, angels persuade him to let two of their number go see what, if any, virtue might still exist in the world. An intricate, three-stranded plot unfolds. After finding matters on earth to be even worse than Mahomet suspects, the angels meet the beautiful but mischievous Empress

¹³⁵ Ibid. See Part II, Chapter 2 (‘Controversy’) and Chapter 3 (‘Consequences’) below for a fuller discussion of the Lord Chamberlain’s reasons for intervening in the planned production.

¹³⁶ Matthew Dimmock, *William Percy’s ‘Mahomet and His Heaven’* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 2.

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 7–10.

¹³⁸ Dimmock, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad*, pp. 101–111.

Epimenide and return to heaven with her; two comic characters charged with finding the worst villain in Arabia select a corrupt lawyer and a dissolute dervish and ask Mahomet to choose between them; and Epimenide's handmaidens entice two of her unrequited suitors, both of whom are thieving clerics, into going with them to find their mistress. Just as Mahomet is about to pass judgement on this motley group, his enemy Haly arrives, renounces his sectarian beliefs, and promises to follow Mahomet's 'Alcoran' (Qur'an). Just deserts are meted out (Epimenide is banished to the moon), the handmaidens are wed to the clerics, and Arabia avoids destruction. The play ends with a song celebrating religious unity. Dimmock argues that Percy, like Voltaire a century later, uses Islam as a convenient hook on which to hang a discussion of contemporary Christian church politics, noting that the play's 'language of reform and error', its 'lament at the human consequences of religious strife', and 'particularly the focus on an ultimately mistaken reforming of scripture' all indicate 'an assertion of the primacy and truth of orthodoxy' — in this case, given the Percy family's associations and sympathies, the orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic church. In his depiction of 'an Arabia that is a satirical version of England, and portrayals of Mahomet as a kind of Christ and Haly as a kind of Luther/Tyndale figure', Dimmock concludes, 'William Percy imagines Mahometanism anew in a provocative synthesis with his own religious position'.¹³⁹ But more important than this was the daring way in which the play flouted both ancient Islamic proscriptions against the physical portrayal of the sacred and early modern (post-Reformation, largely Protestant) Christian prejudices against the impersonation of religious figures on stage.

The first English version of Voltaire's *Mahomet* (1742) was produced on 25 April 1744 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The five-act *Mahomet the Impostor: A Tragedy* had been closely translated from the French play by two men of the church with theatrical leanings, James Miller (1704–1744), rector of Upcerne, Dorset, and

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 141.

John Hoadly (1711–1776), son of the bishop of Winchester, chaplain to the Prince of Wales, and close friend of David Garrick. Dennis Delane, a popular Irish actor, portrayed Mahomet and Mrs Gifford the object of his lust, Palmira, in a production that featured a 27-year-old Garrick as the juvenile lead Zaphna. According to David Erskine Baker's *Biographia Dramatica*, the play was 'little more than a tolerable translation of the *Mahomet* of Voltaire' that met with 'tolerable success'.¹⁴⁰ It was revived the following November for the benefit of Dorothy Miller, the widow of the playwright, and then in London on at least twelve different occasions during the last fifty years of the eighteenth century.¹⁴¹ Its prologue nods to Voltaire, 'our Gallick bard', whose play had revealed 'What Blasphemies Imposture dares advance'. But France had proven itself 'deaf' to his 'Crusade' against the religious fanaticism embedded in the Catholic priesthood. In post-Reformation England the case was different: 'No Clergy here usurp the free-born Mind / Ordain'd to teach, and not enslave Mankind / Religion here bids Persecution cease / Without, all Order, and within, all Peace'.¹⁴² The London audience could view the piece with self-satisfaction, treating it as a foreign curiosity, an entertaining satire on religious corruption elsewhere in the world: England had already won its war against despotic priests and fraudulent doctrine.

The play is set during the Muslim siege of Mecca in 630 CE. Mahomet's beautiful ward Palmira [Voltaire's 'Palmire'], captured two months earlier by the Meccans, begs to be allowed to return to him. Alcanor [Voltaire's 'Zopir'; an

¹⁴⁰ David Erskine Baker, Isaac Reed, and Stephen Jones, *Biographia Dramatica; or, A Companion to the Playhouse*, 3 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, 1812), III, p. 7.

¹⁴¹ According to Harold L. Bruce, *Mahomet* was acted at Dublin in the season of 1753–54; at Drury Lane in 1765–66 and 1766–67; at Covent Garden in 1767–68, 1768–69, and 1771–72; at Drury Lane in 1775–76 and 1778–79; at Covent Garden in 1785–86 and 1786–87; at Drury Lane in 1794–95; and at Covent Garden in 1796–97. See his 'Period of Greatest Popularity of Voltaire's Plays on the English Stage', *Modern Language Notes*, 33 (January 1918), 20–23 (p. 22). An advertisement announcing the play's publication noted that it was based on Voltaire's tragedy, which had been suppressed 'on account of the free and noble sentiments, with regard to Bigotry and Enthusiasm, which shine thro' it; and which the French Nation found full as applicable to itself, as to the bloody Propagators of Mahomet's Religion' (*Daily Post*, 24 November 1744).

¹⁴² Voltaire, *Mahomet the Impostor. A Tragedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By His Majesties Servants*, adapted by James Miller and James Hoadly (London: J. Watts and B. Dod, 1744).

anagram of 'Al Coran'], chief of the Meccan senate, refuses. Fifteen years earlier, Mahomet had killed his wife and abducted his children; he is not inclined to show mercy in return. Mirvan, Mahomet's general, arrives to offer peace. The Meccan senate agrees to a one-day truce and Mahomet enters the city. Zaphna, one of Mahomet's young disciples [Voltaire's 'Séide'], has followed Mirvan to Mecca to see Palmira. Mahomet, who loves Palmira, perceives a rival in Zaphna. He tells Mirvan that Zaphna and Palmira are brother and sister: they are the children he took from Alcanor. Mahomet tells Alcanor his children are alive and that he can be reunited with them if he renounces his pagan faith and destroys the city's idols; Alcanor refuses. Mahomet and Mirvan order Zaphna to kill Alcanor. Zaphna agrees after he is promised Palmira and a place in paradise. Mahomet decides Zaphna must die after he kills Alcanor; that way, both of his rivals will be removed. Zaphna is in torment: he does not want to kill Alcanor but tells Palmira that unless he does so, they will be parted forever. His resolve strengthened, Zaphna stabs Alcanor in the Kaaba as he prays to the city's idols. Before he dies, Zaphna and Palmira learn he is their father. Zaphna, driven mad by this information, sets off to seek revenge on Mahomet but is seized and taken to prison, where he begins to suffer the effects of some delayed-action poison he was given before killing Alcanor. Palmira is taken to Mahomet, whom she now hates. The Meccans, angered at the death of Alcanor, free Zaphna from prison. They kill Mirvan and then, with the weakened Zaphna leading the way, confront Mahomet. Before Zaphna can exact his revenge, however, he dies from the effects of the poison. Mahomet tells the Meccans that Zaphna's death is a sign from God. Palmira, to avoid having to marry Mahomet, stabs herself to death. Mahomet, seeing the futility of his machinations, tries to kill himself but is stopped by his followers.

Like Percy's *Mahomet and His Heaven*, the Miller-Hoadly *Mahomet* included the impersonation of Muhammad onstage. Several editions of the play include frontispieces depicting the actors who undertook the role, including Robert Bensley and John Palmer, in costume as the character. In these images we see

certain conventions beginning to develop — conventions owing more to the leering sultans of the wildly popular Arabian Nights tales than to the recent work of orientalists, whose accounts of the Arabian world and the rise of Islam were just beginning to make an impression on the English public.¹⁴³ As in Percy's play, Mahomet wears an ostentatiously feathered turban with a large silver crescent affixed at the front. An ermine-trimmed robe is worn over wide sirwal trousers gathered at the ankle; the shoes are flat and heelless. (The predominant colour of these items of clothing is presumably green, the colour traditionally associated with Muhammad.) A curved scimitar hangs from a jewelled scabbard at the waist. His hair and face are dark. In one of the illustrations, Mahomet holds an open Qur'an — an anachronism, as the revelations received by Muhammad were not written down until after his death. The figure is glamorous, threatening, fascinating, and repulsive all at once. As Dimmock notes, 'any actor playing Mahomet was simultaneously oriental despot, raging tyrant, papal impostor, and Mahometan archetype'.¹⁴⁴ The revolutionary nature of Caine's Mahomet can be seen in his desire to depart from these conventions by having the character wear a humble white *djellaba*, and although the Qur'an is mentioned in dialogue in Caine's play, it is not indicated as a property in the stage directions.

The religious content of the Miller/Hoadly play seems to have aroused no comment during the entire period it was part of the Georgian repertory. When it did create controversy, in Dublin in March 1754, it was for a different reason altogether.

¹⁴³ The first English version of the Arabian Nights tales was a hasty translation of *Les mille et une nuits, contes arabes traduits en français*, a twelve-volume work by the French diplomat and classicist Antoine Galland published between 1704 and 1717; this anonymous 'Grub Street' edition (called *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*) appeared between 1706 and 1721 and inspired more than eighty other collections of the tales by 1800. See Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), especially pp. 49–57, and Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2005). The Eastern fantasies proffered by the exotic tales of Scheherazade were countered by works such as George Sale's magisterial English translation of the Qur'an (1734), which, Dimmock asserts, 'was doubtless familiar to many in the Drury Lane audiences of 1743–44' (*Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad*, p. 206); it provided an alternate narrative to Voltaire's (and thus Miller and Hoadly's) depiction of Muhammad as an 'Insolent Impostor' and 'Bigot-Tyrant' (Voltaire, *Mahomet the Impostor. A Tragedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane*, I. 2; II. 2).

¹⁴⁴ Dimmock, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad*, p. 205.

Since the previous autumn, the Irish parliament had been debating a clause in a bill that gave King George II the right to determine how any surplus in the Irish treasury would be used. But tired of being told what to do by London and wanting to send a clear message to the king, the bill had been defeated in January. The king responded aggressively by proroguing the Irish parliament in February. Those members of the Irish parliament who had supported his right to determine how Irish monies were spent had been accused of selling their loyalty for bribes or preferment. The Miller-Hoadly *Mahomet* had just opened at Thomas Sheridan's Smock Alley Theatre and its bold theme of liberty confronting tyranny was not lost on the theatre's patrons. On the night of its second performance, a large section of the audience cheered Alcanor's speech near the end of Act I: 'If, ye Powers Divine! / Ye mark'd the Movements of this nether World, / And bring them to account, crush, crush those Vipers, / Who, singled out by a Community / To guard their Rights, shall for a Grasp of Ore, / Or paltry Office, sell 'em to the Foe!' When they demanded that the speech be repeated, West Digges, the actor playing Alcanor, declined. The audience shouted for Sheridan, who ignored the calls and left the theatre. A six-hour riot ensued. Sheridan attempted to explain his actions in a pamphlet (*A Vindication of the Conduct of the late Manager of the Theatre-Royal Humbly address'd to the Publick*), but this did little to restore him to the good graces of the theatre's patrons. He left Dublin, not to return for two years.¹⁴⁵

On 30 January 1800, more than fifty years after the Miller-Hoadly *Mahomet* was performed in London, a new German version of Voltaire's play was performed at the Weimar Court Theatre. This was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Mahomet: Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzüge*, which Henry Irving may have known in translation. Goethe had studied Islam as part of a childhood quest to discover which of the

¹⁴⁵ See Christopher Morash, *A History of the Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 59–66, Helen M. Burke, *Riotous Performances: The Struggle for Hegemony in the Irish Theatre, 1712–1784* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), pp. 209–40, and Esther Keck Sheldon, *Thomas Sheridan of Smock Alley* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 195–214.

world's great religions best suited his own temperament. In the early 1770s, he sketched out some scenes for an original play on the life of Muhammad. According to Katharina Mommsen, the extant fragments of this play 'represent the most remarkable act of homage that a German writer ever rendered the founder of Islam'.¹⁴⁶ Part of the fourth act, a dialogue between the characters Ali and Fatima, was later recast as the poem 'Mahomets Gesang' ('Song on Muhammad'). Goethe's prophet, like Carlyle's less than a century later, was a man in touch with the beauty and power of nature: Goethe conceives of Mahomet's career as a river that starts as a faltering brook and gains strength and speed as it approaches the sea. In 1799, at the request of his Francophile patron, Karl August, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Goethe reluctantly undertook a translation of Voltaire's play, which the duke had seen performed in Paris. The austerity of French classical tragedy suited neither Goethe's talent nor his temperament; he found it difficult to set aside his admiration of the historical Muhammad and give voice to Voltaire's power-hungry tyrant and unscrupulous libertine. As Caine would do ninety years later, Goethe immersed himself in the *Arabian Nights* as he wrote. He chose to develop the scenes between Séide and Palmire and also softened the rough edges of Voltaire's prophet by inventing more generous reasons for his actions. As Mommsen notes, 'Goethe omitted or shortened some passages, especially those incriminating Mahomet most strongly, and augmented others, drawing interest to the lovers, making the tone more gentle and idealistic, imputing more noble motives for certain actions, and having characters other than Mahomet assume the guilt for misdeeds'.¹⁴⁷ The result was a

¹⁴⁶ Katharina Mommsen, *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*, trans. by Michael M. Metzger (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2014), p. 88.

¹⁴⁷ Mommsen, *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*, p. 106. Karoline von Günderrode's *lesedrama* called *Mahomed, der Prophet von Mekka* (1805), took Goethe's humanising of Voltaire's Mahomet even further; her radically original prophet is driven not by the need for imperial conquest or the satiation of lust but by his desire for knowledge and spiritual fulfilment; Voltaire's plot is discarded in favour of a narrative derived from French historians of Islam including Henri de Boulainvilliers and Jean Gagnier. Like Caine's *Mahomet*, it spans Muhammad's life from his revelations on Mount Hira to his return to Mecca; although it is a spiritual forebear of Caine's play, there is no evidence he was familiar with it. See Stephanie M. Hilger, 'Staging Islam: Karoline von Günderrode's *Mahomed, der Prophet von Mekka*', in *Women Write Back: Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture, 1790–1805*, ed. by Stephanie M. Hilger (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 91–117.

Mahomet far less repellent and cruel than Voltaire's original. This artful blank verse drama failed, however, having, according to Lesley Sharpe, 'aroused some hostility in the non-aristocratic members of the audience, as French classical drama was associated with the French cultural hegemony the Germans felt they had successfully thrown off and more recently with the French *ancien régime* and its tyranny'.¹⁴⁸ Despite Goethe's attempts to temper Voltaire's Mahomet, some in the audience were dismayed at what they felt was the defamation of a great world religion. In a letter to the poet Karl Ludwig von Knebel, Caroline Herder wrote, 'Though in the beginning we took pleasure in the innovative production, the discipline and decorum of the gestures [...], and the magic of Goethe's language and rhythms, so pleasing to the ear, we became increasingly indignant about the action from one scene to the next. I would never have thought Goethe capable of such sins against history — he made Mahomet a brutal, banal charlatan, murderer, and libertine'.¹⁴⁹ Despite this initial setback, Goethe's *Mahomet* was performed widely for the next fifty years. Like the Miller-Hoadly translation, it featured an actor impersonating Muhammad, in this case, Heinrich Voß (and later Pius Alexander Wolff), who was joined by Johann Jakob Graff as Zopir, Karoline Jagemann as Palmire, and Friedrich Haide as Séide.

Another German play on the life of Muhammad, a five-act verse drama by the renowned Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall called *Mohammed oder die Eroberung von Mekka* (*Muhammad, or the Conquest of Mecca*), was published in Berlin in 1823. This was written at the suggestion of the French writer and *saloniste* Madame de Staël and performed privately. In a long introduction to the play, Hammer-Purgstall said his purpose had been to present a more historically accurate picture of the prophet. See Ingeborg H. Solbrig, 'Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall', in *Major Figures of Nineteenth-Century Austrian Literature*, ed. by Donald G. Daviau (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), pp. 278–308 (pp. 285–86). The philosopher Otto von der Pfordten turned Muhammad into a kind of Faust figure in *Mohammed, dramatisches Gedicht in fünf Aufzügen* (*Muhammad, a Dramatic Poem in Five Acts*), which was published in Heidelberg in 1898; there is no record of its performance.

¹⁴⁸ Lesley Sharpe, 'Goethe and the Weimar Theatre', in *The Cambridge Companion to Goethe*, ed. by Lesley Sharpe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 122. On Goethe's lifelong engagement with Islam and the Muslim world, see Jeffrey Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism: Muslim Currents from Goethe to Emerson* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014). Goethe's admiration for Islam would find its fullest expression in his 1819 collection of lyric poems, *West-östlicher Divan* (*West-Eastern Divan*), which was inspired by the works of the Persian poet Hafez. See Mommsen, *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*, pp. 124–234.

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in Mommsen, *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*, p. 107.

The play apparently raised no concern over its religious content. However, as in Dublin, an audience alert to the play's wider political resonances found much to interest them in this study of a charismatic personality. As Knebel told Goethe a week after the play opened, '*Mahomet* is a masterpiece of Voltaire's talent — and endlessly adaptable to contemporary times'.¹⁵⁰ As recast by Goethe, the play alluded both to the French Revolution and what came after it: his Mahomet is a military adventurer who returns home from exile ambitious for his own political advancement and ruthless in applying the most expedient means of gaining his ends. He suspends the rule of law and abolishes an ancient religion beloved of the people, replacing it with one of his own cynical invention. Goethe could have had any number of Revolutionary leaders in mind as a template for his prophet (Nicholas Boyle has suggested Mirabeau and Reubell) but the most obvious model, and the one immediately perceived by those in Goethe's audience, was Napoleon Bonaparte, who had just overthrown the Directoire and established himself as First Consul of France.¹⁵¹ The resemblance was striking enough to lead to the play's suppression in Austria; it was only after Bonaparte's final defeat in 1815 that the play was permitted on Viennese stages.¹⁵²

An American Mahomet, George H. Miles's five-act blank verse drama *Mohammed, the Arabian Prophet*, appeared in London in 1853 in an adaptation by the actor McKean Buchanan. Miles's play had won a writing competition sponsored by the American actor Edwin Forrest in 1849.¹⁵³ In a preface, Miles explains that he

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in David B. Richards, *Goethe's Search for the Muse* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1979), p. 64.

¹⁵¹ Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), II, p. 645.

¹⁵² Ingeborg H. Solbrig, 'The Theater, Theory, and Politics: Voltaire's *Le Fanatisme ou Mahomet le prophète* and Goethe's *Mahomet* Adaptation', *Michigan Germanic Studies*, 16 (Spring 1990), 21–43 (p. 26).

¹⁵³ The Baltimore-born George Henry Miles (1824–71) abandoned a law career to write for the stage. Forrest initiated the competition to find new plays that suited him; the top prize of \$3,000 for a play 'well adapted for representation' went unawarded. Miles won a lesser amount for submitting the play with the 'highest literary merit'. See James Rees, *The Life of Edwin Forrest with Reminiscences and Personal Recollections* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Brothers, 1874), pp. 439–441. This was not the first *Mahomet* on the American stage: the Miller-Hoadly translation of Voltaire's play had been produced by John Howard Payne in New York City as early as 1809. Payne, like Garrick, portrayed

had approached his subject from a specific point of view: he thought Muhammad a ‘sincere impostor’, earnestly believing in the unity of God and detesting idolatry but guilty of ‘wilful deceit’ for lying about the divine provenance of his revelations. ‘The lesson conveyed by the life and death of the Arabian impostor’, Miles asserts, ‘is the inability of the greatest man, starting with the purest motives, to counterfeit a mission from God without becoming the slave of hell’.¹⁵⁴ The plot follows Goethe — not his translation of Voltaire but rather his earlier design for an original play on the life of the prophet, which Miles discovered in Goethe’s autobiography, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*From My Life: Poetry and Truth*). It differs in some important ways from previous plays on Muhammad’s life and from Caine’s effort forty years later, as a short synopsis makes clear.

The play opens on Mount Hira on Laylat al-Qadr, the night the historical Muhammad is said to have received his first revelation. He tells Cadijah (Khadija), his first wife, that an angel has spoken to him: the people of Mecca must abandon the idols of the Kaaba and worship only Allah. He coerces Cadijah into converting to his new faith. In Mecca, the rival tribes of Hashem and Ommeya await the death of the city’s elderly Hashemite governor, Abu Taleb, Mohammed’s uncle and protector. Sophian, an Ommeyan, is secretly ambitious to succeed him. Ali, Abu Taleb’s son, and Fatima, Mohammed’s daughter, marry. As Mohammed preaches, Sophian challenges him and nearly provokes him into a duel. Abu Taleb warns Mohammed that Sophian has the support of most Meccans and the Bedouins. Alone, Mohammed admits his imposture: ‘Omniscient God, / If I have tampered with thy awful name, / And feigned communion with thy majesty, / If I have falsely worn the Prophet’s mantle, / And falsely sworn to be thy messenger, / ‘Tis to reclaim the erring soul of man, / To fix his longings on thy deathly beauty, / To wipe the stigma

Zaphna; his Palmira was Edgar Allan Poe’s mother, Eliza. See *Memoirs of John Howard Payne, the American Roscius* (London: John Miller, 1815) and Geddeth Smith, *The Brief Career of Eliza Poe* (London: Associated University Presses, 1988).

¹⁵⁴ George H. Miles, *Mohammed, the Arabian Prophet, a Tragedy in Five Acts* (Boston: Phillips, Samson, & Co., 1850), p. vi, pp. vii–viii.

from Arabia's brow. / [...] / But Allah, curse me not! and, if I bring / A nation to adore thee, shall I not / Deserve the splendid title I usurp, / And *be* the Prophet I pretend to be?' Cadijah dies after a short illness. Mohammed arranges to take refuge in Medina should he and his followers be forced out of Mecca. Hoping to gain influence over Mohammed, Omar, an ambitious young Meccan, persuades the wealthy Abubeker to allow his daughter, Ayesha, to marry the prophet. Abu Taleb dies and Sophian becomes governor of Mecca. Concerned at Mohammed's growing influence, Sophian plots to murder him. Caled, one of Sophian's lieutenants, is secretly attracted to the new faith and warns Mohammed, who disguises himself as a Bedouin to escape Mecca. When Sophian arrives at Mohammed's house, he finds only Ali, dressed as a decoy in the prophet's mantle and turban. Mohammed establishes himself in Medina and marries Ayesha. Sophian and the Meccans engage Mohammed and the Medinans in the Battle of Badr. Mohammed triumphs against a force three times larger than his own and enters Mecca peacefully. He banishes Sophian to the desert and orders his followers to destroy the idols of the Kaaba. On the eve of a military campaign against Damascus, Mohammed falls ill. Ayesha, who had not wanted to marry Mohammed, tells Ali she loves him; he rejects her but Mohammed finds them in an embrace. Mohammad throws Ali into prison. Thinking he is dying, Mohammed names Omar as his successor, even though he knows Omar has been seeking to replace him. Disguised as an Egyptian physician, the exiled Sophian arrives, bringing a powder he says will cure Mohammed. Omar recognises Sophian and guesses the powder is actually poison but says nothing. Fatima begs Mohammed to release Ali from prison and he does so. Ali hears Sophian admit his ruse but arrives at Mohammed's house too late to prevent him from taking the poison, which had been stirred into a cordial. Mohammed forgives all who have wronged him and dies without admitting his imposture.

Here we have another drama in which an actor impersonates Muhammad onstage. Miles's stage directions indicate that the character wears a green mantle and a green turban with a crescent, following the custom established in the earlier plays.

In his notes on the text, the author cites Humphrey Prideaux, George Sale, Edward Gibbon, Washington Irving, and Edward William Lane as sources and admits to ‘copious plagiarism from the Koran’. He was familiar with Voltaire’s *Mahomet*, and, as noted above, followed Goethe’s unrealised plan for a play on the subject. Miles’s work is notable for its emphasis on Muhammad as a military leader and for its spectacular staging of the Battle of Badr, which the author had ‘versified from Gibbon’.¹⁵⁵ As in Bornier’s play, Muhammad dies by ingesting poison, although here the context is murder, not suicide. Although never performed by Edwin Forrest, *Mohammed* was produced by the actor J. A. J. Neafie (1815–92), first while on tour in New Orleans in 1851 and then the following year at Brougham’s Lyceum, New York City.

Miles’s play was ‘altered and arranged’ by the American tragedian McKean Buchanan for production at the Pavilion Theatre in Whitechapel Road, Mile End, in 1853.¹⁵⁶ Buchanan compressed the play to two acts of three scenes (Act I) and nine scenes (Act II) by trimming dialogue and discarding the fifth act. Thus, his version ends with Mohammed’s return to Mecca and Sophian’s banishment to the desert; as the curtain falls, the prophet is very much alive and looking forward to future conquests. The engagement began on 21 February and may have included Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard III*; August von Kotzebue’s *The Stranger*; and Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *The Lady of Lyons*. These plays formed Buchanan’s English touring repertoire in 1853–54 but it is not known which, if any, he performed at the Pavilion: no reviews have been discovered and the playbills do not provide titles. The same lack of documentation prevents us from knowing with certainty whether *Mohammed* was performed. That Buchanan intended to present it

¹⁵⁵ Miles, *Mohammed, the Arabian Prophet*, p. 156, p. 165.

¹⁵⁶ This according to a note on the cover of the manuscript submitted for licensing: *Mohammed, a Drama in Two Acts*, Add MS 52939 E, Lord Chamberlain’s Collection, British Library. Born in Philadelphia, Buchanan (1823–72) served three years in the U.S. Navy before becoming an actor and manager. He was a frequent visitor to England and also toured Australia. In addition to the 1853 season at the Pavilion Theatre, he appeared in 1852 at Drury Lane, in 1854 at the City of London Theatre, and in 1859 at the Standard Theatre. His repertoire was the standard mix of Shakespeare and melodrama.

is clear from the fact it was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's Office for licensing on 7 April. It was approved the next day by William Bodham Donne, acting for John Kemble, without remark on its religious content. This is significant because, as John Russell Stephens has shown, plays intended for East End theatres like the Pavilion, which attracted the working class, were subject to particularly thorough examination.¹⁵⁷ Donne would not have issued a license for Buchanan's adaptation if he felt the play would in any way have been a breach of decorum or a provocation to riot. Islam was simply, to use a modern metaphor, not on Donne's radar: it fell outside of the categories of religious subject and language normally proscribed by his office. Muslims were not visible in the streets of London, nor were their beliefs widely known or discussed. The life of Muhammad, who disclaimed divinity, was not the life of Jesus Christ, whose divinity is central to almost every faith based on his teachings; the Qur'an was not Biblical scripture. In the pre-Indian Rebellion world of 1853, a theatre manager might reasonably rely on this interpretation of the Theatres Act of 1843; in 1890, Irving, Stoker, and Caine found that the empire's sands had shifted beneath their feet.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Stephens, *The Censorship of English Drama*, p. 69, p. 93. Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow devote an entire chapter to the Pavilion Theatre and its patrons in *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001). In 1853, a newspaper recorded Buchanan's visit and described the Pavilion as 'the once stronghold of the nautical drama, now like the rest aiming at the loftiest attainments of the poet's art', noting that 'the audiences [...] possess the acceptable characteristic of being easily pleased and what they lack in refinement they make up for in earnestness of applause' (quoted in A. E. Wilson, *East End Entertainment*, London: Arthur Barker, 1954, pp. 78-79). On Donne's tenure as Examiner of Plays, see Robert Bell, 'Dramatic Anxieties: William Bodham Donne, Censorship, and the Victorian Theatre, 1849-1874' (unpublished doctoral thesis, McMaster University, 2005) and T. Hughie Jones, 'William Bodham Donne: Portrait in a Landscape' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 2002).

¹⁵⁸ On the term 'Indian Rebellion': the name of this event continues to be contested, especially in India, and historians have struggled to find a neutral term for it. At the time it was called the 'Indian Mutiny' or 'Sepoy Mutiny' in Britain and in the colonial press; today the Government of India prefers 'First War of Independence', a term insisted on by the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. I use 'Indian Rebellion of 1857' or 'Rebellion' as a way of avoiding the pejorative sense of 'mutiny' and also because many Indian scholars have persuasively argued that a geographically limited conflict lacking a nationalist motivation fails to rise to the level of a true 'war of independence'. See *The 1857 Rebellion*, ed. by Biswamoy Pati (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

At the root of the controversy over the Lyceum *Mahomet* was the antipathy of Sunni Islam to the visual representation of Muhammad and persons associated with him, including his family and companions.¹⁵⁹ Underlying this antipathy was the belief that such representations, even those intended as simple aids to reflection in the context of devotional practice, could become idols revered in their own right. The Qur'an warns repeatedly of the dangers of idolatry, which is seen as a rejection of the indivisibility of God (*tawhid*) that is the foundational tenet of Islam. Although most commonly thought of in connection with attacks on painting and sculpture, accusations of idolatry have, historically, also been levelled against the theatre by each of the Abrahamic faiths. In the Christian context, Michael O'Connell has shown how antitheatrical writers in sixteenth-century England linked the 'embodiment' or 'incarnation' of biblical figures on stage (in lingering forms of the medieval mystery cycles that would eventually be suppressed by Elizabeth I) with the representational art of the church, which had been under attack (both literally, with hammer and pike, and metaphorically, through Reformation and then Puritan propaganda) since the reign of Henry VIII.¹⁶⁰ O'Connell describes how the antitheatricalists then extended their argument, out of a 'deeper religious anxiety about the very nature of theatre and its modes of representation', to the secular drama then attracting large audiences to the new public theatres. His observation that

¹⁵⁹ Islam has never been a completely aniconic faith. While Sunni Islam consistently shuns figural representation, Shia Islam has a long tradition of such imagery. Jamal J. Elias has noted how, 'on the one hand, Muslims display a widespread (though not comprehensive) taboo on religious depictions, and a narrower — but still prevalent — distrust of treating material objects as supernatural or divine. On the other, they embrace a religious culture that is rich in images, reacts to the images of others in complex ways, and is spatially focused around an object — the Ka'ba building in Mecca — and its associated primary ritual of pilgrimage, which incorporates somatic engagement with material objects such as stones and pillars'. See *Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 2–3. On traditions of Islamic aniconism, see Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, trans. by Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 77–81, and Jean-François Clément, 'L'image dans le monde arabe: interdits et possibilités', in *L'image dans le monde arabe*, ed. by Gilbert Beaugé and Jean-François Clément (Paris, CNRS Editions, 1995), pp. 11–42.

¹⁶⁰ See Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 3, 'God's Body and Incarnational Drama', pp. 63–88. Christian iconoclasm was most often justified on the basis of the second of the ten biblical commandments (Exodus 20:4–5), which prohibits the making and worshipping of 'graven images'.

these writers considered all plays to be ‘idolatrous in an etymological sense: they were εἰδωλα, *imagines*, images, things seen’¹⁶¹ is useful in understanding the analogous Muslim objection to the staging of the sacred. In the Sunni Islam tradition, some things *should not be seen*; these include Allah and Muhammad (even though the latter is not considered divine). The immediacy of theatrical performance lent urgency to Muslim claims that the impersonation of Muhammad by an actor — that is, making his figure ‘seen’ — was a form of idolatry. Several of the antitheatrical writers studied by O’Connell asserted that the real danger of plays ‘comes in the experience of *seeing them performed*’ (my emphasis).¹⁶² Henry Irving himself was well aware of the power of the theatre in this regard. ‘The words that seem cold and lifeless in the study quicken and awaken our minds and hearts when spoken with due point and fire, helped by the dramatic environment of the stage’, he wrote in an essay published just as the *Mahomet* controversy reached its climax.¹⁶³

If one thinks of the theatre in the broad phenomenological sense that its unique power lies in its ability to ‘make present’ through actors the physical bodies of others,¹⁶⁴ one can understand why Muslims would believe that conjuring the figure of Muhammad on a stage in the West End of London would not only generate a rival to the historical Muhammad but also profanely assume a power of creation rightfully belonging only to Allah. The idea that this play was the work of a Christian dramatist with wide-ranging artistic license to invent character and incident was particularly disturbing to Muslims. The personality, words, and life experiences of a revered prophet and his companions should not, they felt, be fair game for exaggeration and misrepresentation in the interest of amusing an audience.

¹⁶¹ O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye*, p. 15, p. 19.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁶³ Henry Irving, ‘The Ethics of the Stage’, *Treasure Trove*, 8 October 1890.

¹⁶⁴ On the phenomenology and semiotics of the theatre, see Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of the Theatre* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985); Bruce W. Wilshire, *Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as a Metaphor* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982); Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (London: Routledge, 2008); and Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

As Jonathan E. Brockopp has noted, Muhammad is ‘the central animating figure of the Islamic tradition, imitated in virtually every act of ritual, leadership, devotion to God, morality, and public comportment’.¹⁶⁵ Actions perceived to demean or ridicule him are therefore especially distressing to Muslims, cutting as they do to the very heart of the religion. In fact, as we will see in the next chapter, British and Indian Muslims repeatedly expressed the concern that the Lyceum *Mahomet* would make a ‘mockery’ of Muhammad. It was this, more than anything else, which was to provoke their anger and immerse Irving, Caine, and Stoker in an international controversy with far-reaching effects on the practice of dramatic censorship in Britain through the remainder of the nineteenth century and beyond.

¹⁶⁵ Jonathan E. Brockopp, ‘Introduction’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, ed. by Jonathan E. Brockopp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 1.

Chapter 2 – Controversy

On 31 May 1890, Irving completed his twelfth Lyceum season, which had included *The Dead Heart*, *The Bells*, *Louis XI*, and *Olivia*. On 3 June, he set off with Terry on a short provincial tour featuring platform readings of excerpts from *Macbeth* set to the music of Sir Arthur Sullivan. In late June, just as Irving was about to begin a two-week engagement at the Grand Theatre, Islington, rumours that he intended to portray the prophet of Islam began to spread. ‘The very fact of approaching de Bornier regarding his play had somehow leaked out’, Stoker recalled.¹ On the twentieth of that month, the French *Journal des débats* asserted that Bornier’s *Mahomet* had inspired the English production. Although this was true, a longer paragraph in the *Pall Mall Gazette* one week later went to great length to clarify the connection: ‘We are in a position to state that, though Mr. Irving had never the very slightest intention of producing M. Henri de Bornier’s play at the Lyceum, or any play founded upon it, he bought the English rights of it, partly as an act of courtesy, and partly to hold control of the subject’. The paper noted that Irving had commissioned an Eastern play from a well-known English novelist and dramatist. ‘This play, which is not in any sense whatever an adaptation of M. de Bornier’s play, but an entirely original work, in all its essentials quite different, is now nearly written and ready, and report speaks of it in very warm terms’.² Such highly detailed information could only have come from someone intimately involved with the planned production; almost certainly it was provided by Caine himself or by one of his literary friends on his behalf. If the goal had been to distance the Lyceum production from the banned French play, it was an ill-conceived strategy that

This chapter includes some material by the author published in an earlier version as ‘The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine’s *Mahomet*’ in *Henry Irving: A Re-evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager*, ed. by Richard Foulkes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 49–63.

¹ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 120.

² ‘Théâtres et Concerts’, *Journal des débats*, 20 June 1890; ‘Mr. Irving as “Mahomet”’: New Schemes at the Lyceum’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 June 1890.

backfired terribly, serving only to bring Irving's plans to the notice of Muslim communities at home and abroad.

In July, Irving — at this point unconcerned or perhaps even unaware of the increasing disquiet over the prospect of a Lyceum *Mahomet* — reunited with Terry for a brief holiday in Winchelsea before returning to London to prepare for the new season, which would include Herman Merivale's *Ravenswood*, an adaptation of Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Stoker left London at the same time for a holiday with Florence and son Noel in Whitby, where he continued working on the novel tentatively called *The Un-Dead*.³

Within weeks of the appearance of the paragraph in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, however, the thriving Indian newspaper industry had publicised the possibility of a Lyceum *Mahomet* to every corner of the subcontinent. The growth of English literacy there during the second half of the nineteenth century led to the establishment or expansion of a number of important English-language newspapers, including the *Times of India*, the *Statesman*, the *Hindu*, and the *Tribune*. An Indian-owned vernacular press, including scores of newspapers published in Urdu and Hindi, also flourished. Of this media-rich environment, the poet Altaf Husayn Hali observed that 'every moment fresh news comes in from all lands [...] Events on every continent are known to all, and the whole world knows what the whole world is doing. Nothing that happens anywhere is any more concealed. All that takes place on the face of the earth is seen as in a mirror'.⁴ Julie F. Codell has described the ways in which 'English newspapers and periodicals circulated to the colonies, and news from the colonies bounced back to London, as well as to the rest of the British

³ Before arriving in Whitby, Stoker 'had begun his novel and outlined his villain. He had originally planned to have his vampire enter England via Dover but, by the time he returned to London, he had found a name for his vampire, had a new location for his villain's arrival in England as well as a picturesque background for Lucy's defilement'. It was at the Whitby public library during this visit that Stoker came across the name 'Dracula' for the first time in William Wilkinson's *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia*. See Eighteen-Bisang and Miller, *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula*, p. 4, p. 285, and p. 288.

⁴ Altaf Husayn Hali, 'Poet's Call for Resurgence and Progress under the British Rule', in *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan, 1857–1968*, ed. by Aziz Ahmad and G. E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970), pp. 97–99 (p. 98).

Isles and from colony to colony [...] Everyone read the news from metropole and from colony simultaneously as news circulated in print and later in telegraphic news services'.⁵ It did not take long for word of the Lyceum *Mahomet* to spread: in today's parlance, the story 'went viral'. Some papers were sceptical of the story. The *Indian Daily News*, for example, thought rumours of the production were premature given Irving's announced intention to produce *Ravenswood*. 'It is true Mr. Irving has purchased *Mahomet* from M. de Bornier, but for the present it will be added to numerous other unperformed pieces in the Lyceum library', the paper's London correspondent reported confidently, noting that both the India Office and the Ottoman sultan were likely to object to it.⁶ The *Overland Mail* thought the 'mere notion of anything being done in England to wantonly outrage Mahommedan susceptibilities' was preposterous. It felt sure that 'any intentional affront would never be contemplated for a moment'. However, 'an infinitely greater injury, and one which will provoke a far deeper feeling of resentment' could be caused through ignorance: 'the story that the faith of Islam had been held up to derision in places of amusement in England would fly from one Mahommedan country to another, and over the whole extent of Mussulman India with lightning rapidity, and it would lose nothing in the telling'.⁷

Indeed, for the reasons described in the previous chapter, the reaction to the rumour Irving would produce a play featuring an actor portraying Muhammad was immediate and vociferous. Stirred to action by what they read in the press and were told in their mosques, Muslims throughout India and England organised protests that included large public meetings, monster petitions, and letter writing campaigns. Among the many Indian newspapers calling on the British government to ban the

⁵ Julie F. Codell, 'Introduction', in *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press*, ed. by Julie F. Codell (London: Associated University Presses, 2003), pp. 16–17. Also see Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c. 1880-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), especially pp. 99–118. On the press in India, see Zareer Masani, *Indian Tales of the Raj* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 44–50.

⁶ *The Indian Daily News*, 21 July 1890.

⁷ *The Overland Mail*, n.d., reprinted in the *Indian Daily News*, 10 November 1890.

production were the Urdu-language *Mihr-i-Nimroz* (Bijnor) and *Shams-ul-Akbar* (Madras).⁸ On 30 July, the Gujarati paper *Káside Mumbai* (Bombay) reported that ‘a memorial to Her Majesty the Queen is being got up to protest against the drama being represented’ and noted that ‘the British Government is more alive to the susceptibilities of its subject races than any other European Government, and it is, besides, an ally of the Turkish Empire, and will not, we are certain, allow this play to be acted’.⁹ The Calcutta-based *Urdu Guide Darussaltanant* argued that ‘the peace-loving character of the British Government should induce it to stop the contemplated representation of *Mahomed* [sic] on the British stage, for such representation is calculated to hurt the feelings of Her Majesty’s Mahomedan subjects’.¹⁰ The Urdu-language *Jubilee Paper* reported that a large protest against the play had taken place on the *maidan*, or public square, near Shah Mina’s tomb in Lucknow, a city at the centre of the Indian Rebellion thirty-three years earlier; the *Akhbár-ul-Momnin* asserted that the Sunni organisers of this protest had abused Shias and called for the abolition of Muharram celebrations.¹¹ Similar gatherings were held across India. But perhaps the most effective pressure tactic brought to bear on the British government were the personal overtures made by prominent Indian Muslims who knew how to use their connections with colonial administrators as well as the colonial media to their advantage.

Among those who led protests was Abdul Luteef, or Latif (1828–93), founder of the Mohammedan Literary Society in Calcutta and a leading advocate for the social, cultural, and intellectual progress of Muslims in Bengal. Luteef had taken

⁸ *Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Central Provinces, and Rajputana*, No. 33 of 1890 (p. 532), L/R/5/67, India Office Records, British Library; *Report on Native Papers Examined by the Translators to the Government of Madras*, No. 17 of 1890 (p. 194), L/R/5/105, India Office Records, British Library.

⁹ *Report on Native Papers Published in the Bombay Presidency*, No. 31 of 1890 (p. 6), L/R/5/145, India Office Records, British Library.

¹⁰ *Report of Native Papers (Bengal)*, No. 41 of 1890 (p. 963), L/R/5/16, India Office Records, British Library.

¹¹ *Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Central Provinces, and Rajputana*, No. 3 of 1891 (p. 47) and No. 4 of 1891 (p. 72), L/R/5/68, India Office Records, British Library.

an active role in protesting the proposed Comédie-Française production of Bornier's play; now he was incredulous that a similar sacrilege might happen in London. In a letter to the former Indian viceroy Thomas Baring, 1st Earl of Northbrook, on 2 September 1890, Luteef reminded him that in the former instance, 'the protests of the Turkish ambassador against such an exhibition were backed up by agitation in India'. He hoped 'the British government will not show less regard than the French for the religious susceptibilities of the followers of the Prophet and will exercise all legal powers as well as moral persuasion to prevent such an outrage to Mohammedan feeling'. Rumours of the play were 'very much occupying the minds of the Indian Mussalmans' and Luteef urged Northbrook to 'find an early opportunity of mentioning the matter, in such manner as may be thought proper, to the statesmen responsible for the good government of the Empire at home and abroad'.¹²

The 'agitation in India' Luteef mentions had included protests and, in at least two cases, the boycott of city theatres. 'The managers of the native theatres in Bombay have fallen upon evil days', the *Bristol Mercury* reported in February 1890. 'Owing to the arrival of a report that at a certain performance in Paris an impersonation of the Prophet Mahomet was presented, in violation of the maxims of

¹² Abdul Luteef to the Earl of Northbrook, 2 September 1890, LC1/547/118, National Archives. Versions of this letter were also sent to another former viceroy, George Robinson, 1st Marquess of Ripon, and to the current viceroy, Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5th Marquess of Lansdowne. In 1886, Luteef had been instrumental in suppressing a Hindu play intended for performance in Calcutta called *The Religious Hero Mahommed*. In that instance he was successful not only in preventing the production of the play but also in stopping its distribution in printed form. See the *Indian Daily News*, 24 June 1890. As viceroy, Northbrook had promulgated the Dramatic Performances Control Act of 1876, which sought to prohibit plays that were 'scandalous, defamatory, seditious, or obscene'. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee notes the law was a response to a play satirising an Indian official who had hosted the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) on his visit to Calcutta earlier that year. It was later used to ban a number of plays critical of the Raj. See Mukherjee, *The Story of the Calcutta Theatres, 1753–1980* (Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi, 1982), pp. 45–47, and Nandi Bhatia, *Acts of Authority/Acts of Resistance: Theater and Politics in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004). Luteef knew he would have an ally in Northbrook, given the former viceroy's prior experience with and support of dramatic censorship. On censorship in India more generally, and its conflict with British ideas of personal liberty and freedom, see Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (London: The British Library, 2014), especially Part Two, 'British India: Liberalism and Imperialism', pp. 87–143.



Illustration 5: Abdul Luteef in an undated photograph (author's collection).

Islamism, the sacerdotal authorities have proclaimed an edict prohibiting the faithful, under pain of fines and forfeiture of customary burial rites, to enter any playhouse. The result is said to be that the native Bombay theatres, which have relied much on the Mahomedan element, find their seats nearly empty'.¹³ In March, the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph and Star* reported that the ban had been extended to Pune; the fine for a first offence was given as five rupees (about ten shillings) and the fine for a second offence as ten rupees (about one pound). A third-time offender would be 'excommunicated'.¹⁴ The same week that Luteef wrote to Northbrook, the *Era* reported that one of the groups behind the boycott, the Vayaz Islam society, had met the previous month in Bombay to discuss how to address rumours of the English production and had decided to send a letter of protest to the British government.¹⁵ This letter was later endorsed by large groups of Muslims in Dhárwár (Dharwad) and Hubli.¹⁶ From Lahore in the north to Madras in the south, and from Bombay in the west to Calcutta in the east, Muslim India was growing increasingly indignant over the proposed Lyceum production.

Northbrook did not need further prompting and responded by forwarding Luteef's letter to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, comptroller of the Lord Chamberlain's Office. Describing Luteef as a 'somewhat prominent Mahomedan gentleman of Calcutta', he asked Ponsonby-Fane to look into the situation as a matter of urgency. 'I forget how many millions of Mahomedan subjects Her Majesty has in India who would naturally be greatly shocked, not to speak of the impropriety of introducing on the stage the head of one of the principal religions of the world', he wrote.¹⁷

¹³ *Bristol Mercury*, 11 February 1890.

¹⁴ *Sheffield Evening Telegraph and Star*, 22 March 1890.

¹⁵ *The Era*, 6 September 1890; this meeting was also reported in *The Colonies and India*, 10 September 1890, and in a number of Urdu-language newspapers in India; see, for example, *Report on Native Papers Published in the Bombay Presidency*, No. 32 of 1890 (p. 9), L/R/5/145, India Office Records, British Library.

¹⁶ See *Report on Native Papers Published in the Bombay Presidency*, No. 48 of 1890 (p. 15), L/R/5/145, India Office Records, British Library.

¹⁷ Earl of Northbrook to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, 23 September 1890, LC1/547, National Archives.

Luteef did not rest with missives to Northbrook, Ripon, and Lansdowne: he also sent an impassioned letter to several English-language newspapers in India, which had the effect of mobilising even broader Muslim condemnation of the play. Recalling his previous efforts against Bornier's *Mahomet*, he wrote:

Little did I then think that the evil which we Mohammedans so much dreaded would raise its head in England itself [...] I can assure you that this news has been received by the Indian Mussulmans with the greatest regret and surprise [...] The English papers have directly and immediately a large circulation in India, and every important or interesting item of English news is perused by a small circle of readers in English and a very large number of readers in the vernacular through the translations and summaries furnished by the indigenous Press. [...] Her Majesty's Government have been always alive to the political importance of avoiding any injury to the religious feelings of the subject Indian races, and I trust that far-seeing and temperate men of all parties, whether in office or out of it, will cooperate in preventing the contemplated outrage. Ordinarily, the matter might not have any importance attached to it in the eyes of the British public, but the French incident, the Turkish protest, and the agitation which even then spread up to India, should open the eyes of all thinking men to the inadvisability of allowing such representations to take place.¹⁸

Luteef was a trusted broker between the British administrators of India and the Muslim community there. He had been one of the original founders of the pro-British Anjuman-i-Islami in Calcutta in 1855 and in his letter to Northbrook he told the former viceroy of 'the great anxiety which I have always felt for the preservation of the most harmonious relations' between Britain and India and 'the many sacrifices' he had made to 'interpret faithfully the one to the other'.¹⁹ His life's mission was supporting Muslim intellectual and artistic advancement, especially in Bengal, and promoting Western awareness of Islamic culture. In 1883, Queen Victoria made him a Companion of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire. The high esteem in which he was held by the British administrators of India is

¹⁸ Abdul Luteef, Letter to the Editor written on 2 September 1890 in Calcutta and published on 22 September in the *Overland Mail* and the *Homeward Mail*; reprinted in the *Indian Mirror*, 21 October, and the *Indian Daily News*, 23 October.

¹⁹ Abdul Luteef to the Earl of Northbrook, 2 September 1890, LC1/547/118, National Archives.

reflected in the speed with which his concerns about the Lyceum production were addressed. One week after Luteef's letter was published, Richard Assheton Cross, the Secretary of State for India, requested that the Lord Chamberlain's Office and the Home Office investigate whether the production was rumour or fact: 'the representation of any such play would I am quite sure give the greatest offense to all Mohammedans', he told Ponsonby-Fane.²⁰

Muslims in England were also beginning to organise in response to the rumoured production. On 26 September a letter from the vice president of the Liverpool Moslem Institute, Rafiüddin Ahmad, appeared in *The Times*. News of the play, he declared, had caused 'deep agitation' among the Queen's Muslim subjects. 'The Indian Mussulmans, universally noted for their religious zeal, are deeply irritated to learn of the proposed mockery of their prophet on the stage of a country which has pledged itself to respect their religious feelings, and the Queen of which has been destined by Providence to reign over a greater number of Moslems than any single ruler, Mahomedan or Christian, on the surface of the globe'. He asked the newspaper's readers: 'Is it right and proper to hurt the religious feelings of so many of your fellow-subjects in the East, to satisfy the whims or fill the coffers of a theatrical company, however influential it may be?' He underscored the issue's global significance in language sure to arrest the attention of Britain's imperial administrators:

You should take into consideration the important fact that England is daily drawn in close contact with the Mahomedan world in India, Egypt, Persia, Turkey, Zanzibar, etc., and her relations with the important Mahomedan Powers are fast being cemented and strengthened. Is it wise, in the face of these facts, to allow in the heart of your Empire a representation of a play which so seriously offends the religious feelings of 180 millions of human beings in the world? [...] However decent the play may be, still it is a play of the most serious matter in the world.²¹

²⁰ Viscount Cross to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, 29 September 1890, LC1/547/119, National Archives.

²¹ Letter to the Editor, *The Times*, 26 September 1890. Maulvi Rafiüddin Ahmad (1865–1954), a journalist, was a personal friend of Queen Victoria's 'Indian Secretary' Abdul Karim (the Munshi)

Edward Frederick Smyth Pigott, the Examiner of Plays, sent a copy of this letter to Ponsonby-Fane, his immediate superior. (Ponsonby-Fane reported to Edward Bootle-Wilbraham, Lord Lathom, the Lord Chamberlain). ‘With respect to the enclosed’, he wrote, ‘pray assure all whom it may concern, whether Mahomedans or Managers, that I shall never dream of submitting to you, for the LC’s licence, any piece calculated to offend the religious feelings of any portion of Her Majesty’s subjects of whatever creed’. Muslims, he asserted, had ‘the same right to be respected as Christians, and we do not permit Jesus Christ to be represented on the stage’. He observed that he had, however, ‘never heard a whisper of any such intention on the part of any manager of a theatre in Great Britain and I make it my business to know all that is going on in theatrical affairs’.²² Clearly he had missed the announcement of Irving’s plans in the *Pall Mall Gazette* three months earlier. He told Ponsonby-Fane that he could not take ‘official notice’ of rumours but would have to wait until the play was submitted for licensing before acting. If, as Tracy C. Davis has argued, Pigott failed at first to realise ‘the insensitivity of allowing the depiction of Mohammed, though always forbidding representation of Jesus Christ and Judaeo-Christian personalities’, he quickly learned the political ramifications of allowing Irving to proceed with Caine’s *Mahomet*. However, it is difficult to accept Davis’s conclusion that Pigott was ‘initially indifferent to depiction of the Prophet’ given the emphatic wording of his note to Ponsonby-Fane.²³ Some London

and soon became one of her most trusted advisors on Indian and Muslim affairs. It seems likely Ahmad discussed the Lyceum *Mahomet* with the queen, but no evidence of this has survived. Ahmad described her study of Hindustani for *The Strand Magazine* in 1892. He also wrote on East-West relations for *The English Illustrated Magazine*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The National Review*, and *Nineteenth Century*. Twice in the 1890s Victoria sent him to Constantinople as an envoy to Abdülhamid II. Her suggestion that he be given a diplomatic post in the British consulate there was rejected by Salisbury, the prime minister. Following the queen’s death in 1901, Ahmad returned to India, where he was elected to the Bombay Council and served as minister of agriculture and then as minister of education. He was knighted in 1932. A portrait of him by Rudolf Swoboda hangs in a prominent position in the Durbar Corridor in Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. See *The Times*, 9 March 1954 and 25 March 1954.

²² Edward F. Pigott to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, 28 September 1890, LC1/547, National Archives.

²³ Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage*, p. 149, p. 150. For a sketch of Pigott’s career, see Stephens, *The Censorship of English Drama*, pp. 32–34 and pp. 92–114.



Illustration 6: Rafiuddin Ahmad in an undated photograph (author's collection).

newspapers, unaware of the true state of affairs, found Ahmad's claims patently absurd. 'We can hardly believe that the manager of any English dramatic troupe would be guilty of such execrable taste, not to use a harsher term, as to travesty, in however decorous a manner, the life and character of one who is held in the highest reverence by some fifty millions of Her Majesty's subjects', said the *Globe*. 'If any such objectionable purpose be meditated, it will never get beyond the Lord Chamberlain's office'. The paper suggested that far from convulsing the entire Muslim community in India, the matter had exercised only 'some little clique or coterie' and that much of the 'indignation' seemed to be generated by a single source: Luteef and his Mohammedan Literary Society. 'We prefer to believe that Mr. Ahmad has given too ready credit to idle rumour', it concluded.²⁴

However, the India Office in London had received numerous letters from multiple sources describing the effect that production of the play would have on the ability of the government to maintain peace in key regions of the subcontinent. At the same time, communications warning of dire consequences started to pour into Calcutta and district offices. In October, the president of the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Amritsar, Sheikh Ghulam Hassan, sent a telegram to James Broadwood Lyall, lieutenant-governor of the Punjab, in Lahore. 'The play if performed will wound the religious feelings and susceptibilities of the whole Muhammadan world', he asserted, requesting that Lyall ask the viceroy to take every possible step to 'stop it altogether'.²⁵ Two weeks later, Donald Mackay, Lord Reay, the former British governor of Bombay and a future Under-Secretary of State for India, told Lathom 'how very agitated' Muslims were over the play. It was paramount, he told the Lord Chamberlain, that those in the Bombay Presidency not be provoked. He asserted, ominously, that there was 'no greater menace to the peaceful government of India than the fanaticism of the Mahomedans when once it is roused [...] I was obliged to

²⁴ *The Globe*, 26 September 1890, reprinted in *The Indian Mirror*, 25 October 1890.

²⁵ Sheikh Ghulam Hassan to H. C. Fanshawe [secretary to James Broadwood Lyall], 13 October 1890, L/P&J/6/291: 2237 (1890), India Office Records, British Library.

be very watchful during my residence in Bombay'.²⁶ In Delhi, a group of Muslim clerics told Deputy Commissioner Robert Clarke they were concerned but unwilling to give any unnecessary publicity to newspaper reports. Clarke told his superior, Colonel L. J. H. Grey, that the clerics had considered 'getting up a monster petition which would of course be signed by every Mussalman in Delhi and one of them, a well-known preacher, pointed out what an effect might be produced if he were simply to read' one of the newspaper reports during a sermon (for example, the notice published in the 22 November 1890 issue of the *Rahbar-i-Hind*, a Lahore-based, Urdu-language newspaper). Clarke told Grey he had thanked the clerics for taking the 'quieter and probably more effective course of representing their anxiety' directly to him. He noted that Muslims in Britain had written to native newspapers in India, asking for their support in the form of editorials opposing the play; some of these had created 'grave anxiety' among the general Muslim population. He told Grey the 'mere fact of Muhammad being represented by an actor on the stage could not be other than painful to every believing Mahomedan' and suggested that the play would, should it go forward, ignite 'a public movement which would be much regretted'.²⁷

Government officials began to worry they might be facing an uprising on the scale of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, which had been sparked by the rumour that Muslim and Hindu troops were being forced to bite open rifle cartridges that had been greased with pork and beef fat. The performance of a play that challenged the most profound religious sensibilities of Muslims on a stage in the very heart of the imperial capital could certainly be perceived as presenting a similar, if not stronger, provocation. The positive relationship between Indian Muslims and the British administrators of the Raj had been sustained by a reciprocal understanding: that in exchange for their loyalty and recognition of the lawfulness of British rule, Muslim

²⁶ Lord Reay to the Earl of Lathom, 29 October 1890, LC1/547, National Archives.

²⁷ See Robert Clarke to Colonel Leopold John Herbert Grey, [24?] November 1890, LC1/547, National Archives. For related documents, see L/P&J/6/291: 2237 (1890), India Office Records, British Library.

subjects would receive a fair share of British ‘favours’ in the form of infrastructure improvements, education provision, agricultural support, and trade preferences. Most importantly, Indian Muslims trusted that the Queen would uphold the promise made in the proclamation issued on 1 November 1858 following the transfer of East India Company powers to the crown: ‘We declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted by reason of their Religious Faith or Observances; but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the Law’.²⁸ Indian Muslims now found themselves greatly ‘molested’ and ‘disquieted’ by the possibility of a British stage play they felt was blasphemous. For their part, the British shuddered to think about a repeat of the events of 1857. They were already, in September 1890, facing growing discontent owing to a widespread grain shortage and religious riots in Calcutta, Delhi, and Benares; soon they would be dealing with a revolt in Manipur during which the chief commissioner of Assam and four other officials would be murdered. These events indicated a level of native hostility in some parts of the country that the British were unwilling to test further by failing to act on the Lyceum *Mahomet*. In England, Rafiüddin Ahmad’s letter to *The Times* had hinted that the ‘religious zeal’ of Indian Muslims could be channelled into unrest or even insurrection. The stakes were high: should a revolt gain wide traction, it was conceivable that Britain could lose a significant part, or perhaps all, of the colony, with devastating effects on the British economy and national pride.²⁹

Beyond this alarming potential for violence lay British administrators’ concerns that offending their Indian Muslim allies could push them either into a

²⁸ *Proclamation by the Queen in Council to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India* (published by the Governor-General at Allahabad, November 1st, 1858), reprinted in *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1857 to 1947: Select Documents*, ed. by C. H. Philips, H. L. Singh, and B. N. Pandey (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 10–11.

²⁹ On the interdependence of the British and Indian economies at the end of the nineteenth century, see P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London: Longman, 1993), especially pp. 316–50, and B. R. Tomlinson, ‘Economics and Empire: The Periphery and the Imperial Economy’, in *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Andrew Porter, *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 53–74.

closer relationship with the recently formed pro-independence Congress Party or into an independence movement of their own. Peter Hardy has noted that over the course of the 1870s and 1880s, the British began to treat Indian Muslims as ‘a distinct political interest’ and their opinions as ‘one of the balls to be kept in the air in the jugglery of world-policy’.³⁰ By 1890, Hardy asserts, ‘British statesmen and officials were prepared to see in the Muslims a great and separate political community and, what is more important, many Muslims were only too willing, for their own reasons, to see themselves likewise’.³¹ In October, an Indian newspaper reported that an English journal had expressed surprise ‘that any Mahomedan society in India should have been so watchful and zealous as to have thought of protesting [a play] to be enacted at the other end of the world’. Such a protest, the journal observed, ‘would have seemed startling a very few years ago, but the institution of a society, regularly organised and apparently well supported, to watch and guard Moslem interests, is still more curious’.³² In this the Indian Muslims were assisted by a burgeoning print media culture which, as Julie Codell has observed, ‘not only permitted the proliferation of British ideas and domination’ but also ‘opened opportunities for colonised writers to express themselves to global audiences’.³³ Through their sophisticated use of national newspapers in Britain and of English- and native-language newspapers in India, those opposed to the Lyceum *Mahomet* were able to marshal international support for their effort to have the play suppressed. Colonial borders became largely irrelevant in this pan-Islamic effort to explain to non-Muslims why the physical embodiment by an actor of their revered prophet was an unacceptable and outrageous offense against their faith.

³⁰ Peter Hardy, *The Muslims in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 125, p. 118.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³² *The Indian Mirror*, 15 October 1890, quoting an unidentified English journal. The writer is referring to Luteef’s Mohammedan Literary Society.

³³ Codell, ‘Introduction’, in *Imperial Co-Histories*, p. 20. On the role of the press in shaping British public opinion and government policy during the nineteenth century, see Paul Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865–1980* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 51–59.

In fact, the political agency exercised by Muslims in India over *Mahomet* was also being tested by Muslims at home. ‘Perhaps the last place in the world where we should expect to find Mohammedanism is England’, wrote John J. Pool in his consideration of Islam, ‘and yet it is a fact that this religion has been established in our land of late years, and, strange to say, by an Englishman’.³⁴ The same year that Caine began work on *Mahomet*, the first two English mosques were founded, giving rise to a new sense of Muslim identity. One was established by the charismatic William Henry Quilliam (Pool’s ‘Englishman’), who, like Caine, was of Manx descent and raised in Liverpool. He qualified as a solicitor in 1878 and established a thriving legal practice in that city. His interest in Islam was inspired by a visit to Morocco; on his return to England he converted, taking the name Abdullah. By 1887, he was giving lectures and leading prayer services on the premises of the local temperance league. Within two years, finding a permanent home for his growing Muslim community had become a pressing issue. In December 1889, the Liverpool Moslem Institute opened at 8 Brougham Terrace, a large Georgian house that included a small outbuilding converted into use as a mosque. As noted above, it was the vice president of this organisation who initially waded into the controversy over the Lyceum *Mahomet*, with a letter to *The Times* on 26 September 1890. Quilliam was soon to contribute to the discussion himself: in a letter published by the *Liverpool Mercury* on 10 October 1890, he attempted to explain why the Lyceum production — or any theatrical representation of Muhammad — was bound to be offensive to Muslims. ‘We admit Mahomet was only a man, although he was an inspired prophet of God; but is this any reason why his actions should be travestied and burlesqued?’ he asked. He wryly suggested that Caine consider writing a play on the subject of David and Bathsheba. ‘What a splendid character the

³⁴ John J. Pool, *Studies in Mohammedanism, Historical and Doctrinal, with a Chapter on Islam in England* (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892), p. 394. Pool noted that in 1892 the Liverpool Moslem Institute had 52 members, 14 of whom were women. Openly hostile to the religion, Pool ended his book by declaring that ‘the movement which Mr. Quilliam has inaugurated is a forlorn hope. Islam in England may drag on for some years a feeble existence, but then it will probably die a sudden death. Islam, indeed, the world over, is a lost cause!’ (p. 404).

husband of the adulteress would be! What powerful scope there is for an actor to recite the denunciation that would fall from the lips of the prophet Nathan, and with what force could the penitence and agony of David on fully realising the depths of his crime be portrayed, and subsequently the sweet consciousness of the forgiveness of the Almighty; and the play could end with the marriage of David and Bathsheba, who would, of course, as they always do in novels and plays, live happy ever afterwards'. Quilliam then asked: 'Would such a play as this be licensed by the Lord Chamberlain? I think not'.³⁵ A few months after Quilliam established the Liverpool Moslem Institute, the Hungarian-born orientalist Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner commissioned the first purpose-built mosque in England, which he named the Shah Jahan in honour of his patron, the Begum of the Indian princely state of Bhopal. This formed part of his Oriental Institute in Woking, which occupied a large building that had once housed the Royal Dramatic College.³⁶

Quilliam and Leitner were building on the efforts of the London-based Anjuman-i-Islamia, which had been promoting Muslim interests in Britain and abroad since 1886. During the *Mahomet* controversy, its members were in touch with individuals leading protests in Bombay and elsewhere in India. Such assertiveness made itself felt in Whitehall. It was an experience that the emerging British Muslim community would build on in the future as it learned to mobilise the expertise of its members and leverage the international reach of the media to its advantage on other issues.

³⁵ *Liverpool Mercury*, 10 October 1890. Although meant to be an exaggeration, the plot of the play facetiously sketched by Quilliam sounds like an amalgamation of the plots of several of Caine's actual novels and plays. Caine acknowledged the dramatic potential of biblical characters, including David and Bathsheba, in his testimony before the Joint Select Committee in 1909 (see Chapter 3 below).

³⁶ On the early history of Islam in Britain, see Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain Since 1800* (London: C. Hurst, 2004); Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Diane Robinson-Dunn, *The Harem, Slavery, and British Imperial Culture: Anglo-Muslim Relations in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). The only full-length biography of Quilliam to date is Ron Geaves's *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Markfield: Kube Publishing, 2010). On the establishment in 1862 and closure in 1877 of the Royal Dramatic College, which included a retirement home and cemetery for destitute actors, see Richard Foulkes, 'The Royal Dramatic College', *Nineteenth-Century Theatre Research*, 13 (1985), 63–85.



Illustration 7: William Henry (Abdullah) Quilliam in an undated photograph (author's collection).

Both letters, Ahmad's and Quilliam's, generated responses from a number of people claiming to have specific knowledge of the matter. Sir George Birdwood, a special assistant in the Revenue and Statistical Department of the India Office with long experience as a medical officer and administrator in Bombay, argued in a letter to *The Times* that Irving's production would have benefited the cause of Islam in England: 'The more a knowledge of the Prophet Mahomed is popularized in Europe the wider and deeper will be the appreciation of his character and work; and there is no way of popularizing historical knowledge so attractive and effectual as through the agency of the stage'. In his opinion, 'a six months' run of *Mahomet* on the boards of the Lyceum would have done more to remove the crass British prejudice against the Prophet Mahomed and the religion of Islam than all that has been written on these subjects [...] For the masses in England the stage is, indeed, the only source of culture and the most potent centre of national unity'.³⁷

As had been the case in the public discussion of Bornier's *Mahomet*, the depiction of Muhammad in Shiite *ta'ziyeh* plays was used to argue that Islam was not fundamentally opposed to the theatrical representation of the prophet. Birdwood offered his expert opinion on this as the writer of the introduction to Arthur N. Wollaston's revision of Sir Lewis Pelly's English translation of *Hasan and Husain*, a drama Birdwood claimed was performed throughout India and Persia during the annual Muharram commemorations of the martyrdom of Muhammad's grandson, Husayn ibn Ali, at the Battle of Karbala. He noted that Muhammad, angels, and even Allah himself were among its characters, and were treated 'with a familiarity quite shocking to those accustomed to the habitually dignified representation of great historical characters on the French and English dramatic stage'.³⁸ Rafiüddin Ahmad responded by questioning the authenticity of Pelly's version of the play and denying

³⁷ *The Times*, 9 October 1890.

³⁸ Ibid. See *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain, Collected from Oral Tradition by Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly, revised with explanatory notes by Arthur N. Wollaston [with a sketch of the origin of the Shiah schism and of the manner of the performance of the play in the East by Sir George C. M. Birdwood]* (London: W. H. Allen and Company, 1879).

that *Hasan and Husain* was performed anywhere in India as Birdwood described it. ‘The representation of any revealed prophets is diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Holy Koran’, he stated. ‘The truth is that all religious teachers and the famous incidents connected with their lives are, in the eyes of their respective followers, encircled with an amount of holiness, mystery, and sanctity which are almost inseparable. If you imitate them you remove the cloth of holiness with which they are covered, and the entire nakedness of them becomes abhorrent to all religious eyes’.³⁹ Wollaston himself joined the debate, noting that the *ta’ziyeh* was a Shia (Persian) practice, not a Sunni (Indian or Ottoman) one, with roots in the violent and contentious history between the two sects, and Ahmad’s denunciation of it was understandable in that context. He supported the suppression of the Lyceum *Mahomet* on the grounds that it would wound religious sensibilities ‘entitled to the deepest and most unqualified respect’ — especially since ‘it is almost impossible for a European to determine without bias the position to be assigned to Mahomet, who is well-nigh sure to be depicted either, on the one hand, as the “false prophet of Arabia”, or, on the other, as little less than a Messiah’.⁴⁰ A few days later, however, the secretary of the Persian legation to Britain supported Ahmad’s view of the matter by contesting Wollaston’s assertion that *Hasan and Husain* was a recognised Persian drama and stating flatly that no Persian play had ever included a representation of Allah or Muhammad: ‘No true Mahomedan would, under any circumstances,

³⁹ *The Times*, 13 October 1890. Birdwood replied to Ahmad in a second letter published on 17 October 1890; he acknowledged Ahmad’s greater familiarity with *Hasan and Husain* as performed in India but confirmed the accuracy of Pelly’s text. On the *ta’ziyeh* tradition, see Mahnia A. Nematollahi Mahani, *The Holy Drama: Persian Passion Play in Modern Iran* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2013); *Eternal Performance: Ta’ziyeh and Other Shiite Rituals*, ed. by Peter J. Chelkowski (Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2010); the essays collected by Chelkowski in ‘From Karbala to New York City: Ta’ziyeh on the Move’, a special issue of *The Drama Review*, 49 (Winter 2005), and Seyed Mostafa Mokhtabad, ‘The Concept of Tashbih (Imitation) in Ta’ziyeh Among Shiite Theologians’, *International Journal of Humanities*, 8 (Fall 2001), 33–36. Matthew Arnold brought *ta’ziyeh* to the attention of the Victorian public with ‘A Persian Passion Play’ in his *Essays in Criticism*, rev. edn. (London: Macmillan, 1875), pp. 259–307.

⁴⁰ *The Times*, 21 October 1890. Another letter published on this date, from Amú Ul A’Lá Fáris, emphasised the differences between a theatrical play (‘a work of art given for the entertainment of the public [and] solely amenable to the canons of aesthetics’) and a passion play (‘a histrionic illustration of the sacred legends [...] a religious ceremony designed to impress pious minds more vividly than the recitation of the Scriptures by ministers of the faith’).

tolerate the personating of the Deity or of the Prophet Mahomet upon any stage', he insisted.⁴¹

This discussion soon jumped from the pages of *The Times* into those of *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, a journal published by Leitner's Oriental Institute in Woking. Leitner himself refuted Birdwood's *Times* letters point by point and was especially concerned to show that the Muharram *ta'ziyeh* was not a play but a commemorative religious elegy in verse with some elements that appeared to outsiders to be performative because spoken by a *maulvi*, or cleric. He described the 'exasperation' that Muslims felt at 'the advocacy of the blasphemy of representing holy things by unholy men or women for the sake of money or amusement'. He demanded that Birdwood retract his statements. Shah Naimuddin Ahmad explained that a miniature model of Husayn's tomb was sometimes carried through the streets as part of the commemoration, 'but no person is produced on the stage, nor is there any stage at all!' Mirza Muhammad Ali Khan, the Persian Shah's ambassador to Britain, contributed an overview of the Muharram celebration, and Nawwab A'bdurrashid Khan a much longer essay that dissected the positions of Birdwood and Wollaston. Khan pointed out the highhanded presumption of their efforts to explain Muslim traditions to Muslims ('the whole thing is an instance of the exploitation of the East by the West') and suggested that the Indian agitation over the Lyceum *Mahomet* had already subsided when Birdwood's 'mischievous' letters appeared in *The Times* and gave it new life.⁴²

During the earlier controversy over Bornier's play, Indian Muslims had looked to Constantinople for guidance, and now they sought the assistance of the Sublime Porte again. Abdülhamid II was simultaneously sultan (head of state) and caliph (spiritual leader) of all Sunni Muslims, and his intervention in the Lyceum *Mahomet* contretemps in July 1890 was welcomed by Luteef and other Indian

⁴¹ *The Times*, 27 October 1890.

⁴² *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 1 (January 1891), p. 296, p. 208, p. 193, p. 195.



Illustration 8: Sultan Abdülhamid II in an undated photograph (author's collection).

Muslim leaders. Through Rustem Paşa, the Turkish ambassador to Britain, Abdülhamid expressed his deep concern to Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, who was then prime minister. Unlike the French ministers Goblet and Lockroy, who scoffed at the idea that such a trivial matter should engage the time and attention of the sultan, Salisbury took Abdülhamid's concerns seriously. He was aware that Britain's delicate alliance with the Ottoman Empire, which had been forged during the Crimean War campaign against Russia and the Eastern Crisis of 1877–78 but weakened by the animosity of successive administrations of Prime Minister William Gladstone, must be preserved at a time of growing rivalry with Germany.⁴³ Compared with such an overwhelming geopolitical imperative, the loss of a stage play seemed an insignificant matter.

The pragmatic Lathom — inundated with India Office dispatches, the appeals of the country's nascent Muslim communities, the demands of a prime minister wishing to placate an Ottoman sultan, and perhaps even the request of a concerned queen — recognised the political exigencies involved and wrote to Irving, requesting that further work on *Mahomet* be halted and informing him that the play would not be licensed. He told the actor that Britain was obliged to consider the religious sensibilities of India's fifty million Muslims and the tens of millions located elsewhere in the Empire. Despite the example of what had happened to Bornier's play in France, Irving seemed genuinely surprised at this development. 'The Lord Chamberlain represented to me that it would be an injudicious thing to press the proposal, and gave me his reasons why such a play [...] had better not be performed, and it was not performed', Irving said two years later in testimony before a parliamentary committee investigating theatre licensing.⁴⁴ Stoker noted that 'the

⁴³ On Britain's relationship with the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, see William Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935), David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1989), and Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans, and Britain, 1877-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁴⁴ *Report from the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index* (London: HMSO, 1892),

Lord Chamberlain's department does its spiriting very gently; all that those in contact with it are made aware of is the velvet glove. But the steel hand works all the same — perhaps better than if stark. It is an understood thing that the Lord Chamberlain's request is a command in matters under his jurisdiction'.⁴⁵ Irving complied at once with the Lord Chamberlain's wishes and then sent a telegraph to Caine apprising him of the situation. Caine recalled that it was a 'deep disappointment' to Irving, 'for the dusky son of the desert was a part that might have suited him to the ground, and to me it looked like an almost overwhelming disaster, slamming the door on the efforts of years'.⁴⁶ Irving offered to compensate Caine for his labour, but Caine refused to accept any payment.

Nearly twenty years later Stoker told another parliamentary committee that 'there was absolutely nothing in the play at all to give offence; it was a romantic play and a very fine play, but the representation of Mahomet at all on the stage under any form would have been offensive to Mahometans, and as there were so many millions of them it might have been a very grave public evil'. He told the committee members that he thought the decision to suppress the play was taken either by the queen or the prime minister and then communicated to Irving through the Lord Chamberlain.⁴⁷ That Lathom had inserted himself into this matter was unusual and reflected the high degree of concern the play had caused in the highest echelons of the British government. In general, the Examiner read every play submitted for

p. 71. Lathom's letter to Irving does not survive; its date is unknown but it must have been sent between 28 September 1890, when Pigott wrote to Ponsonby-Fane, and 3 October 1890, when Caine responded to the suppression of the play in an article published in *The Speaker*.

⁴⁵ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, pp. 120–21.

⁴⁶ Caine, *My Story*, pp. 351–52. Irving might have regretted the loss of *Mahomet*, but, like most actor-managers of the period, he supported the system of play licensing administered by the Lord Chamberlain's Office because it was a form of insurance: producing a play involved significant investments in labour and material and having a script approved by the Examiner of Plays prior to performance meant the production could not be shut down for violating the Theatres Act. During his testimony to the select committee, Irving asserted that dramatic censorship was 'wise', 'necessary', and 'reasonable'. See *Report from the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment* (1892), p. 71.

⁴⁷ *Report from the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the Stage Plays* (1909), p. 163.

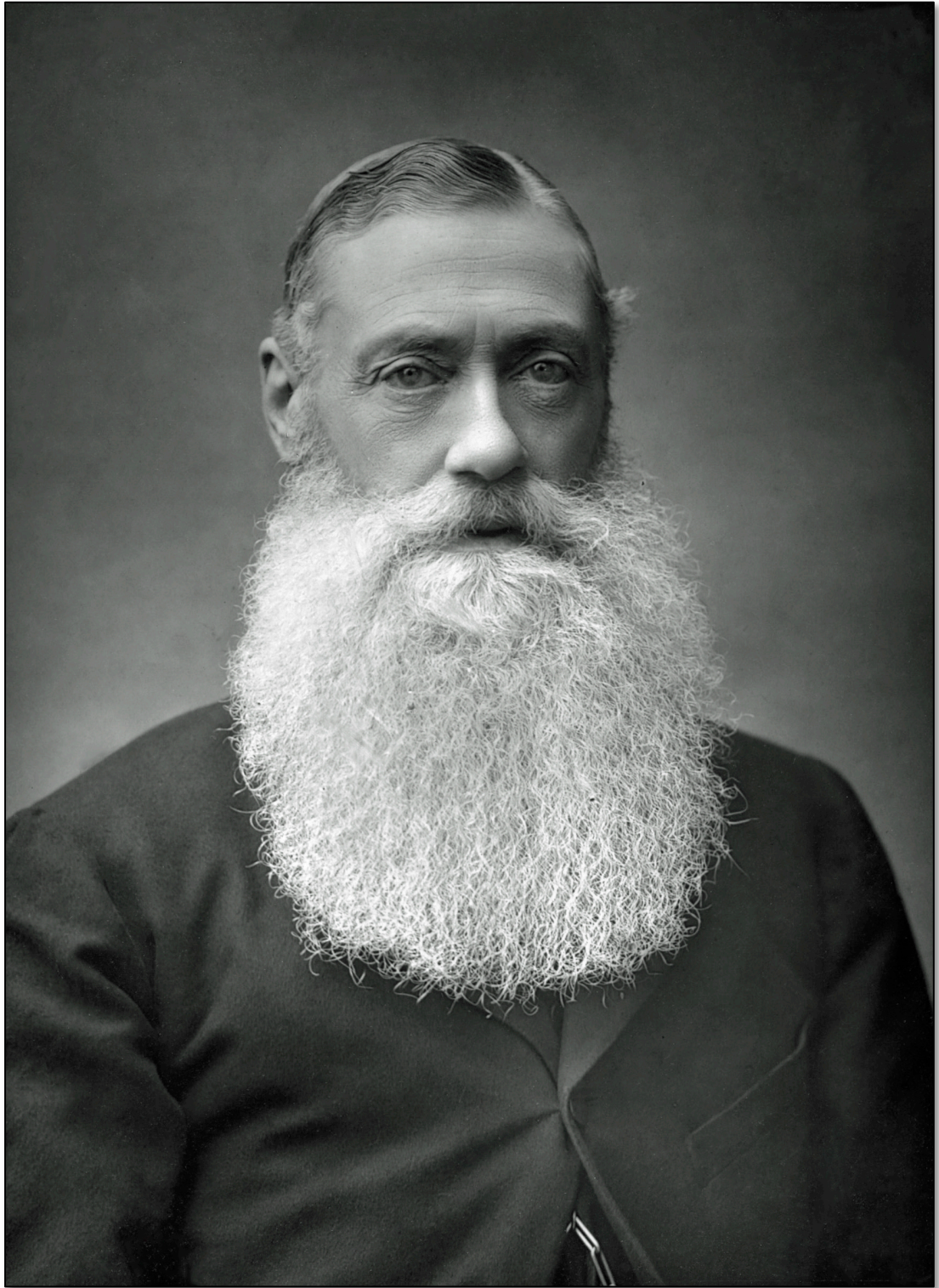


Illustration 9: Edward Bootle-Wilbraham, 1st Earl of Lathom, 1890, by Herbert Rose Barraud, published by Eglington & Co. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

approval, consulted with the comptroller in questionable cases, decided whether it could be licensed, and then shared his decision with the theatre manager. There was no appeal from this decision and only in exceptional cases would the Examiner involve the Lord Chamberlain. Furthermore, it is unclear if Pigott, much less Ponsonby-Fane or Lathom, ever saw the manuscript of *Mahomet*, which was only half finished when it was suppressed — a fact that makes this particular application of the Theatres Act an especially striking one in the history of British dramatic censorship.⁴⁸

Word that the production had been stopped made its way to India. In November, Ponsonby-Fane asked the India Office whether the Lord Chamberlain should issue an ‘official contradiction’ to the report that *Mahomet* would be produced in London, as his office was continuing to receive letters from India and elsewhere on the matter. Cross decided that this would not be necessary: the viceroy had been informed that a license for the play would not be granted and newspaper coverage of the controversy seemed to be dying down. Such a statement, Cross felt, would only fan the flames further.⁴⁹ In December, the secretary of the Home Office of the Government of India in Calcutta sent a large batch of native newspapers to London. In a cover letter to Arthur Godley, the permanent under-secretary of state for India, C. J. Lyall drily suggested that ‘it may have been noticed in the India Office that the press in this country has contained numerous references to expressions of Mussalman opinion’ on the Lyceum *Mahomet*.⁵⁰

Although there is no evidence she participated in any of her government’s deliberations about the play, Queen Victoria received at least some of the credit for the production’s cancellation. On 17 November 1890, the Urdu-language *Rafi-ul-*

⁴⁸ On the day-to-day operation of the Lord Chamberlain’s Office and the work of the Examiner of Plays, see Dominic Shellard and Steve Nicholson with Miriam Handley, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets...* (London: The British Library, 2004), pp. 1–22, and Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama*, pp. 3–9.

⁴⁹ See Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane to W. J. Maitland [private secretary to Viscount Richard Assheton Cross, India Office], 2 November 1890, and W. J. Maitland to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, 8 November 1890, LC1/547, National Archives.

⁵⁰ C. J. Lyall to J. A. Godley, 9 December 1890, L/P&J/6/291: 2237 (1890), India Office Records, British Library.

Akhbār (Benares) reported that the Queen had intervened at the request of the Muslim community in England.⁵¹ In February 1891, she acknowledged a telegram from Mohammad Hussain, a Muslim cleric and president of the Anjuman-i-Rifah-i-Islam in Allahabad, who wrote to express his gratitude for her attention to the matter.⁵² It was assumed she would step in again if necessary to protect her Muslim subjects from further insult and indeed the Government of India continued to receive communications on this subject. In March 1891, Lansdowne forwarded to the India Office in London three memorials from Muslim organisations in Bombay, who requested that measures be taken to prevent ‘any future attempts to produce an impersonation of the Prophet on the stage in England’. They stated that the controversy had created ‘a great sensation’ and ‘considerable excitement’ that had ‘shocked and wounded’ their religious feelings; if a similar play were ever to be allowed, it would be considered ‘an outrage’ and the reaction ‘better imagined than described’.⁵³ Reassurances were forthcoming: Salisbury, for example, promised Abdülhamid II that the Lord Chamberlain would, in future, alert the Foreign Office to any plans by a theatre manager to produce a play on similar themes.⁵⁴

In the eye of this maelstrom were Irving and Caine, both of whom were convinced that *Mahomet* was a respectful and accurate portrayal of the prophet’s life and character. They were supported by some in England who counselled against a rush to judgement: one of these, writing to the *Graphic* under the pseudonym ‘One Who Has Read the Play’, asserted that ‘in the opinion of competent judges, [*Mahomet*] is in entire sympathy with Islam and it wounds the Moslem in no single

⁵¹ *Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Central Provinces, and Rajputana*, No. 47 of 1890 (p. 759), L/R/5/67, India Office Records, British Library.

⁵² Viscount Cross to Marquess of Lansdowne, 5 February 1891, LC1/564, National Archives.

⁵³ Marquess of Lansdowne to Viscount Cross, 11 March 1891, forwarded to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane by the India Office on 7 April 1891, LC1/564, National Archives.

⁵⁴ See Philip Currie [Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs] to Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, 28 October 1893, LC1/601, National Archives. This letter, recounting the Turkish involvement in the 1890 controversy, was occasioned by a new rumour that another play about Muhammad was being contemplated by a different London actor-manager. In his reply on 31 October, Ponsonby-Fane quashed this quickly: he told Currie to ‘assure the Turkish ambassador there is “no fear”’ (LC1/601, National Archives).

point'. It was a pity, the writer continued, that Indian Muslims had succeeded in stopping, unacted and unheard, 'a serious play by a serious writer'.⁵⁵ But a major blind spot had doomed the Lyceum *Mahomet* from the start: both Irving and Caine had failed to appreciate the wider religious and political implications of their decision to mine Muhammad's life story for its dramatic potential. The government's greater understanding of these implications meant that it was only too willing to subordinate freedom of expression at home to imperial priorities around the world. Realpolitik had triumphed in the end.

⁵⁵ *Daily Graphic*, 3 October 1890, reprinted in the *Indian Daily News*, 4 November 1890.

Chapter 3 – Consequences

Following the Lord Chamberlain's suppression of *Mahomet*, life at the Lyceum went on. Irving and Terry opened their thirteenth season on 20 September with *Ravenswood*. Caine, however, found it difficult to get over the loss. The experience had been 'a great disappointment', he conceded to an interviewer, 'and I had little heart for much work in 1890'.¹ Six months later, in a letter to the novelist Benjamin Farjeon, Caine complained of poor health and said his work 'has for some time been at a stand'.² Caine's despondency cannot be explained by supposing that he thought his plays could only be properly mounted at a theatre with the extensive resources of the Lyceum. Wilson Barrett at the Princess's, and later Herbert Beerbohm Tree at His Majesty's and Arthur Collins at Drury Lane, could (and did) mount Caine's plays with as much spectacle, and financial success, as Irving could have done at the Lyceum. Rather, what Caine had sought from a collaboration with Irving was the opportunity to develop his skill in writing for the stage with the period's leading actor-manager — Stoker was right when he declared that Irving would have taught Caine much in terms of stagecraft (that is, 'acting needs and development').³ The partnership would have been the best possible confirmation of Caine's potential as a serious dramatist. It would also have fulfilled his simple desire to work with an old friend: he and Irving had known each other for nearly twenty years when the actor began to think about a Lyceum *Mahomet*.

This chapter includes some material by the author published in an earlier version as 'The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine's *Mahomet*' in *Henry Irving: A Re-evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager*, ed. by Richard Foulkes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 49–63.

¹ Sherard, 'Hall Caine', p. 92. It was around this time that Caine began a monumental *Life of Christ* intended 'to show Jesus as a real man in his historical setting'. Unfinished at his death in 1931, the manuscript of nearly three million words was edited and published by his sons in 1938. See Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 416, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, pp. 742–43.

² Hall Caine to Benjamin Farjeon, 15 June 1891, Add MS 88962/2/10, British Library.

³ Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences*, II, p. 118.

In October Caine wrote an article for *The Speaker* that allowed him, he later said, to relieve his feelings ‘by spitting on my antagonists’.⁴ What Caine most resented was the Lord Chamberlain’s interference with his prerogative as an artist to depict a subject of his own choosing. ‘I claim the right [...] to protest in the name of literary liberty against the blind bigotry and silly superstition that would cry “Hands off!” whenever a sacred subject comes within the province of imaginative art’, he wrote. ‘I hold that the only right a man wants to touch any subject, however sacred, in any art, no matter what, is the right of an honest intention to do it well. If then he runs amuck at religious sentiments, so much the worse for him if they are true and he has outraged them, so much the worse for them if they are silly and he has brushed them out of his way’. In unmeasured terms coloured by his deep disappointment at the loss of the play, which he called a ‘wreck of wasted labour’, he declared that if Muslims claimed for ‘the mere human incidents of [Muhammad’s] flight and return a sanctity that no dramatist may violate, they are not to be pampered in their religious sensibility, but to be reasoned out of it’.⁵ He took offense at the suggestion that he was ignorant of the basic tenets of Islam, telling his opponents he had never suggested that ‘strict Moslems may paint pictures of their Prophet, or buy them, or take pleasure in them, or even recognise them when painted’.⁶ Non-Muslims, along with Muslims who were less strict, were free to do so, however, and performed an important educational service when they created such images in any medium, including the theatre. This argument rested in part on Muhammad’s non-divine status: Caine could not accept a restriction on freedom of expression based on what he felt were the specious grounds of ‘religious sensibility’ when the figure in question was not ‘divine’ — a view he also took of figures from the Christian scriptures.⁷ In 1909 he told the Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays that biblical

⁴ Sherard, ‘Hall Caine’, p. 92.

⁵ Caine, ‘A Literary Causerie’, pp. 384–86. Quilliam’s letter to the *Liverpool Mercury* of 10 October 1890 was reprinted in *The Speaker* on 25 October 1890.

⁶ Hall Caine, ‘Letter to the Editor’, *The Speaker*, 25 October 1890.

⁷ Frustration with the Lord Chamberlain’s continued prohibition on biblical material grew after the 1892 banning of Oscar Wilde’s *Salome*. See Katherine Brown Downey, *Perverse Midrash: Oscar*

characters ‘about whom no divinity attaches’ ought to be allowed. ‘Any order which forbids them is reducing the possible material of the stage enormously [...] The stories of David and Bathsheba, of Eli and his sons, of Joseph and his brethren, and the Apostles of our Lord, which are all forbidden to us on the stage, are among the finest material which the dramatist has at his hand’.⁸

Many in Caine’s circle of literary friends, who had read *Mahomet* in manuscript, protested a system that seemed to favour trivial plays at the expense of works that explored important moral, political, and religious questions. They also believed the play would be useful in reforming negative opinions of Islam. ‘So far from doing any possible wrong to the faith of Mohammedans [...] the play is calculated to be of the greatest service’, Robert Leighton wrote in a letter to the editor of *The Speaker*. He thought the play’s critics were overlooking ‘the powerful effect that such a play might have in rectifying and elevating the generally accepted opinion of the prophet and of Islamism’ in Britain. ‘What is the popular notion of Mahomet?’ he asked. ‘The mass of English people still believe him to have been an impostor. Some educating influence is surely needed to remove this belief. Such an influence, I believe, Mr. Caine’s play would inevitably exercise [...] No dishonour is done by it to the character of Mahomet. He is treated throughout with the utmost insight and sympathy’. Leighton felt no one could read the play or see it performed

Wilde, *André Gide, and Censorship of Biblical Drama* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 64–92; Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Faber, 1968), pp. 225–32; and John R. Elliott, *Playing God: Medieval Mysteries on the Modern Stage* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 43–70.

⁸ *Report from the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the Stage Plays* (1909), p. 309. Caine’s testimony was persuasive. In its final report, the committee recommended that a play featuring ‘characters drawn from the Scriptures’ should be licensed unless it did ‘violence to the sentiment of religious reverence’. The committee did, however, preserve the prohibition against the depiction of ‘persons held to be divine’ (see p. xiii and p. xi). In 1913, Herbert Beerbohm Tree produced Louis Napoleon Parker’s *Joseph and His Brethren*, which was widely publicised as the first play based on a biblical subject to be licensed for performance since the sixteenth century. For a description of the production, see Jeffrey Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage*, pp. 217–21. On the loosening of the ban on religious plays and the Lord Chamberlain’s use of location-specific licenses to control them, see Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama* (Vol I), pp. 98–101, and Roston, *Biblical Drama in England*, especially pp. 233–321. The central role played by the Joint Select Committee in this process has not been fully appreciated.

‘without rising from it with higher thoughts of the purity and greatness of Mahomet, and a richer sympathy with the Mahommedan faith’.⁹

Muslim leaders repeated that such justifications were beside the point. In response to Caine’s article in *The Speaker*, Jahan Kader Mirza observed that ‘the real objection of my co-religionists was based not on the particular tone and language of the play, but upon the repugnance which they feel to any human beings personating the character of the Holy Prophet and revered members of his family, and their being dragged down into a spectacle for public amusement’. Such ‘sacrilegious acts’ he continued, were ‘entirely opposed to the tenets of our religion’.¹⁰ William Henry Quilliam, in his own response to Caine’s article, argued that until the censor allowed portrayals of Abraham, Moses, or David, it would be idle to suggest that Muslims could ‘sit calmly down and allow, without a protest, a play to be produced upon the English stage in which their Prophet is represented’. Quilliam regretted having to take sides against Caine, a fellow Manxman whose novels he admired and in whose ‘rising fame in the literary world’ he felt ‘a justifiable pride’.¹¹

In December 1890, just over a year after he began work on *Mahomet*, a still-dejected Caine wrote to Irving. ‘I return at last the nine volumes of Burton’s *Arabian Nights* which you were so good as to lend me when we were considering the *Mahomet* which began so hopefully and ended so disastrously’, he said. ‘I am going to publish the thing, so many of my literary friends have urged me to do so after reading it, but there is no great public for printed plays’.¹² Heinemann announced it would issue *Mahomet* to give the public ‘an opportunity of judging the propriety of a

⁹ Robert Leighton, Letter to the Editor, *The Speaker*, 1 November 1890.

¹⁰ Jahan Kader Mirza, Letter to the Editor, *The Globe*, written on 27 October 1890 and reprinted in the *Indian Mirror*, 3 January 1891.

¹¹ William Henry Quilliam, *The Speaker*, 25 October 1890. In November, members of the Liverpool Moslem Institute sent a letter of thanks to Abdülhamid II for his intervention. On 7 December they received a reply in which the sultan congratulated the organisation on its success in fostering a better understanding of Islam within Britain. See Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain*, p. 71.

¹² Hall Caine to Henry Irving, 23 December 1890, Laurence Irving Collection. Burton had died in October.

work upon this subject being presented on the stage'.¹³ These plans were later cancelled without explanation, however, and the play was never published.

The suppression of *Mahomet* had an immediate chilling effect on other dramatists. George Bernard Shaw, for example, abandoned his own version of Muhammad's life at the prospect of 'a protest from the Turkish ambassador — or the fear of it — causing the Lord Chamberlain to refuse to license such a play'. Such a 'restriction of the historical drama' was an 'unmixed evil', he declared. 'Great religious leaders are more interesting and more important subjects for the dramatist than great conquerors. It is a misfortune that public opinion would not tolerate a dramatisation of Mahomet in Constantinople. But to prohibit it here, where public opinion *would* tolerate it, is an absurdity'.¹⁴

*

The French and English *Mahomets* had very different afterlives. In the case of Bornier's play, the controversy was so thoroughly forgotten by 1896 that seven scenes from it were staged that year at the Paris Opéra by Mounet-Sully without the slightest protest.¹⁵ Disclaiming any hard feelings, Bornier said he was glad that Mounet-Sully's intelligent interpretation of the title role and Maréchal's music could

¹³ *The Academy*, 6 December 1890. Heinemann was still advertising the imminent publication of the play as a 'small 4to' the following spring, but the volume never materialized. See, for example, *The Publishers' Circular and Booksellers Record of British and Foreign Literature*, 7 March 1891.

¹⁴ George Bernard Shaw, *Statement of the Evidence in Chief of George Bernard Shaw Before the Joint Committee on Stage Plays, Censorship and Theatre Licensing* (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1909), pp. 26–27. Shaw tried, but failed, to have this statement included in the printed record of the Joint Committee's proceedings; it was later incorporated into the preface of *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet*, a one-act 'religious tract in dramatic form' written for Herbert Beerbohm Tree but banned by the Lord Chamberlain (it was eventually performed in Dublin, outside of the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction). See 'The Blanco Posnet Controversy', *Bulletin of the Shaw Society of America* (January 1955), 1–9, and Lucy McDiarmid, 'Augusta Gregory, Bernard Shaw, and the Shewing-Up of Dublin Castle', *PMLA*, 109 (January 1994), 26–44. On the portrayal of Islam in Shaw's plays, see Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín (Universidad de Extremadura, Spain), 'Shaw and Islam (I)', *The Bernard Shaw Quotations Page* (blog), 2 June 2015, <http://shawquotations.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/shaw-and-islam.html>.

¹⁵ On the 1896 staging of excerpts from Bornier's *Mahomet*, 'en arrangement spécial', see Stewart, *La vie et l'oeuvre d'Henri de Bornier*, pp. 202–03. One of the scenes presented was Mahomet's long soliloquy in the abandoned convent. In a speech on the occasion of Bornier's induction into the Académie Française, the critic Paul-Gabriel d'Haussonville declared that the playwright had never been told the real reason his play had been suppressed and that this would remain a mystery until the related documents were made public by the French government in fifty years' time. Jules Claretie was one of Bornier's two sponsors for membership of the Académie Française.

be appreciated at last. The public's lingering sympathy for Bornier over his treatment by the French government had been a contributing factor to his election to the Académie Française in 1893; with Mahomet finally treading the boards of a Paris theatre, his vindication was complete.

The Lyceum *Mahomet*, on the other hand, would never be staged in its original form. By the time Caine's article appeared in *The Speaker*, he had finished the play and sold it to the actor E. S. Willard for production outside Britain (Willard apparently never produced it).¹⁶ A master of adapting and re-purposing his work for new or alternate markets, Caine also transformed the play from a historical drama based on the life of the prophet Muhammad into a short novel set in Morocco that tells the fictional story of another Muhammad, Mohammad Abd-er-Rahman, who styles himself 'mahdi' (the 'guided one'). Mohammed's goals are both political (to liberate his country from oppressive colonial rule) and religious (to restore the purity of Islam). Fez replaces Mecca; Medina becomes Tadla. *The Mahdi; or, Love and Race: A Drama in Story* is divided into four parts roughly analogous to the four acts of *Mahomet* and uses a version of the discarded prologue of the play, in which Rachel's father, Isaac Laredo, is murdered by Omar in a manner that seems to implicate Mohammed. The rest of the story tracks the plot of *Mahomet* exactly: Mohammed seeks inspiration for his mission in a cave on a mountain near Fez, he returns to the city on a market day to preach his new message but is greeted by the jeers of the people, Rachel rescues him from the anger of the crowd by taking him into her house, he survives an assassination attempt orchestrated by Rachel and Omar, he flees to Tadla at the invitation of that city's leaders. Rachel follows him there, awaiting an opportunity to avenge the death of her father. Mohammed's leadership transforms Tadla into a rich and prosperous settlement. He marries Rachel, who is in love with Omar. Rachel learns of Mohammed's plans to march on

¹⁶ Sherard, 'Hall Caine', p. 92. In 1893 the Liverpool *Mercury* reported that Willard was about to produce the play in Chicago or New York. The story was reprinted without comment in *The Crescent*, the weekly newspaper published by Quilliam's Liverpool Moslem Institute, on 9 September 1893.

Fez and, seeing her chance for revenge, persuades him to march at the head of his army into the city. She then warns the city's leaders by sending them a letter concealed in the hair of her slave. Omar confronts Rachel, accusing her of putting the Mahdi's life at risk. She explains why she has done so; Omar reveals that he himself had accidentally killed her father and that Mohammed is innocent. Mohammed speaks to his followers at the Tadla mosque. Omar is chosen to replace Mohammed at the head of the army and Rachel collapses after being forced to dress him in the disguise of a pilgrim. Omar is captured in Fez. Rachel confesses her treachery to Mohammed after her slave is threatened with torture. Mohammed believes Rachel has committed adultery with Omar. In return for two members of his family and one thousand men, Mohammed secures Omar's temporary release from his captors. Hearing that she is to be part of the ransom, Fatima, Mohammed's sister, faints. Rachel secretly steps into her place, taking Fatima's son Hosein with her. Mohammed accuses Omar but Omar explains the circumstances to Mohammed's satisfaction. Mohammed captures Fez with the help of Othman, a suitor of Rachel's friend Asma and Asma's Berber father, Otba. All are safe, including Rachel and Hosein. Mohammed offers amnesty to those who had persecuted him. Rachel realises she has loved Mohammed all along; they are reconciled and Omar leaves the country. Much of the dialogue in the play becomes dialogue in the story and is transferred between the two works with few changes.

The Mahdi was published on 1 December 1894 by James Clarke & Co. in a private edition of one hundred copies and in the Christmas issue of *The Christian World*, a religious penny paper. In a prefatory note, Caine connected the novel's theme with his concern for the self-determination of the people of Morocco. 'While Spain, France, and (it must be confessed) England stand at guard over a country which all desire and none can suffer another to possess, the most wicked indifference is shown towards the efforts of the people themselves to be masters in their own land', he wrote. 'But, if right is right, Morocco is for the Moors, and not for Spaniards or Frenchmen or Englishmen'. In a retrospective rationalisation,

considering that its source was a play having nothing to do with Africa, Caine claimed the story had been written ‘as a romance and perhaps also as a prophecy’ to ‘describe the efforts of an oppressed people seeking to be free’ whose leaders were ‘struggling to shake off a cruel yoke’.¹⁷ If *Mahomet* had been intended as a call for the Ottomans to withdraw from the Hejaz, *The Mahdi* was a much more explicit demand for Arab self-rule in Morocco with the European colonial powers as its target.

A three-act play based on the novel was given a copyright performance at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on 3 December.¹⁸ Although Caine told William Heinemann it was ‘entirely new [...] not the *Mohammed* [sic] at all, but a modern Moorish play’, it is nearly identical to the suppressed *Mahomet*; in fact, a close examination of the manuscript of the earlier play reveals that Caine used it as the basis of the new play: in some versions of some acts the name ‘Mahomet’ is simply crossed out and replaced with ‘Mahdi’.¹⁹ In front of a score of spectators, including Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who had offered Caine the use of his theatre for the afternoon, several of Caine’s friends went through the motion of ‘performing’ the play by reading aloud from copies of the script. The participants included Caine’s friends Robert Leighton and his wife, Marie Connor Leighton, who read the parts of

¹⁷ Hall Caine, *The Mahdi; or, Love and Race: A Drama in Story* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1894), n.p.

¹⁸ A ‘copyright performance’ of a play was one ‘conducted for the sole purpose of securing a playwright’s British performing rights in a work’. Novelists like Caine used the practice to prevent unauthorised dramatic adaptations of their work; their property rights were protected provided that a ‘performance’ of some version of the novel took place before its publication. These performances usually featured unrehearsed amateur actors or friends of the author reading their parts from hastily composed scripts in a theatre rented or borrowed for the occasion. There was no attempt to create an appropriate mise-en-scène. To limit the size of the audience, the performances were minimally advertised and tickets often prohibitively expensive (Caine charged one guinea for admission to the reading of *The Mahdi*.) Copyright performances arose in the late 1870s in response to confusion over what constituted legal ‘publication’ of a dramatic work and flourished until 1911, when the Imperial Copyright Act clarified the law and rendered them unnecessary. See Derek Miller, ‘Performative Performances: A History and Theory of the Copyright Performance’, *Theatre Journal*, 64 (2012), 161–77 (p. 161).

¹⁹ Hall Caine to William Heinemann, [1894], bMS Eng 1335 (1), Folder 4, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Manx National Heritage holds the original manuscript of *The Mahdi*, and, because the play was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for approval prior to its copyright performance, the British Library holds a copy of the final version (Add MS 53562 P).

the Mahdi and Rachel. Israel Zangwill, who ‘evidently found it difficult to take the thing seriously’, read the part of the Jewish usurer Isaac Laredo to the great amusement of the audience.²⁰ Heinemann had been scheduled to participate but was delayed out of town; his partner, Sydney Pawling, took part, as did the theatrical agent Addison Bright. Clement Scott called the performance a ‘curious farce’ required by the ‘absurd laws’ of dramatic copyright.²¹ ‘No attempt was made by anybody at acting beyond an occasional gesture or movement’, reported the *Morning Post*. ‘The speakers wore ordinary English costume, though the characters they represented are Moorish, and the only scenic background was that which had just been used by Mr. Tree for a rehearsal of *The Red Lamp*’, representing a drawing room in Brixton.²² They read ‘out of books at a tremendous pace’.²³ Meanwhile, Caine stalked around the stage ‘in ample cloak of unbaked pie-crust hue and huge sombrero to match’, appearing to be a ‘somewhat unconcerned spectator’ of the proceedings. He stopped the reading after the second act, announcing that ‘he thought his obliging friends had now done quite enough by way of compliance with an unjust and ridiculous law’.²⁴ Even this brief view of the play, however, convinced one critic watching from the wings that it possessed ‘the germ of a drama of unusual force and intensity’. Arthur Waugh (father of Alec and Evelyn) noted that a gas-man and laundress standing next to him had listened spellbound and that ‘it would have been really interesting if Mr. Caine had had the time to get the piece rehearsed and played with some serious attempt at effect’.²⁵ Clement Scott thought the story ‘full of vivid pictures of human struggle and emotion’.²⁶ None of those present seemed

²⁰ *Daily News*, 4 December 1890.

²¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 4 December 1890.

²² *The Morning Post*, 4 December 1894.

²³ *Daily Telegraph*, 4 December 1894.

²⁴ *Daily News*, 4 December 1894. The *Era* took issue with Caine’s assessment. ‘It is to us extremely doubtful if what took place on the Haymarket stage last Monday was of any practical effect as a defence of Mr Hall Caine’s work’, it argued. ‘How can a huddled-up, hole-in-the-corner reading in modern dress on a stage of two acts of a play, interspersed with jocular interruptions, be called a “performance?”’ See *The Era*, 8 December 1894.

²⁵ Arthur Waugh, ‘London Letter’, *The Critic*, 22 December 1894.

²⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 4 December 1894.

aware that *The Mahdi* was the banned *Mahomet* lightly disguised and originally intended for Irving. Caine told Heinemann he would send the play to the actress Elizabeth Robins for her consideration, but plans to produce *The Mahdi* at a London theatre in the spring of 1895 fell through.²⁷

Fifteen years later, Caine recycled material from *Mahomet* and *The Mahdi* in his novel *The White Prophet*, set in Egypt during the first decade of the twentieth century, twenty years into the British occupation of the country.²⁸ To prepare, Caine travelled to North Africa during the first five months of 1908.²⁹ He visited Alexandria and Cairo before working his way down the Nile valley. In Khartoum, he dined with Reginald Wingate, governor-general of the Sudan. Wingate had written an account of the rise and fall of Muhammad Ahmad, the self-proclaimed Mahdi whose followers had assassinated Major-General Charles George Gordon in 1885 before being defeated in 1898 at Omdurman and finally crushed in 1899 at Umm Diwaykarat. Caine later said his motivation for visiting Khartoum had been ‘not reverence for Gordon, deeply as his memory touched me’, but ‘the desire to know more about the amazing man who in ten short years swept away ten millions of people from their allegiance to the Caliph, the man who so inspired them with a belief in his divinity that they gladly went to their deaths in defence of him. That seemed to me one of the great phenomena of modern history’.³⁰ From Khartoum

²⁷ Hall Caine to William Heinemann, [1894], bMS Eng 1335 (1), Folder 4, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Robins had produced and starred in a series of plays by Henrik Ibsen the year before. See Joanne E. Gates, *Elizabeth Robins, 1862-1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1994), pp. 67–69.

²⁸ Hall Caine, *The White Prophet*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1909), serialised in *The Strand Magazine*, December 1908–November 1909. The title, Caine tells readers in a prefatory note to the first edition, comes from the Arab belief that ‘a Redeemer will come to unite the faiths of the world into one faith, and the peoples of the world into one people. This Redeemer is sometimes known as the Mahdi, sometimes as Mohammed, sometimes as Jesus, but generally as the White Prophet of Peace, meaning the Christ’. Caine had intended to call the novel *The White Christ* but was dissuaded from doing so by Heinemann and Stoker, although not before the American serialisation got under way using this more pointed title.

²⁹ This was Caine’s second visit to Egypt. His first (March–May 1907) had included a tour of Palestine, then still an Ottoman territory. See Allen, *Hall Caine*, pp. 317–19.

³⁰ Hall Caine, ‘Christ in Egypt’, *The British Weekly*, 12 August 1909. On Wingate’s career in Africa, see Roy Pugh, *Wingate Pasha: The Life of General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate, 1861–1953* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011).

Caine went to Philae, Aswan, and Wadi Halfa. He visited the palaces of Muslim sheiks and the estates of Coptic farmers, spent time with the Grand Cadi (chief judge) of Egypt, met with students at Al-Azhar University, interviewed village elders who remembered General Gordon, attended Friday prayers in a mosque, observed the trance-inducing dances known as *zikk* during a celebration of Muhammad's birthday, and witnessed the outpouring of grief at the funeral of Mustafa Kamil, founder of the nationalist Watani party.

The White Prophet shares the tenor of Caine's other late works, reflecting both a more profound personal commitment and a more outspoken public engagement with political issues touching on questions of faith. It criticised the occupation of Egypt through the character of John Lord, Lord Nuneham, the elderly and increasingly paranoid consul-general, widely believed to be based on Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, the real consul-general.³¹ Nuneham's rule is challenged by Ishmael Ameer, the Muslim 'white prophet' of the title, who shares characteristics with both Caine's Mahomet and his Mahdi. He is described as 'a simple Arab in turban and caftan' with a reputation 'rising over the dome of the mosque within whose sacred precincts neither the Consul-General nor his officials could intrude'.³² Nuneham believes Ameer is a dangerous revolutionary inciting the Egyptian people to rebellion. He orders his son, Colonel Charles Gordon Lord, to find and deliver him to British forces in Cairo. Gordon, who has been raised in Egypt, loves the

³¹ Caine had written to Cromer during his visit to Egypt the previous year, urging him to grant the Egyptians' wish 'for a speedy fulfilment of England's promise to get out of Egypt as soon as it was safe to do so' and to 'yield to legitimate claims to national independence' (quoted in Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 319). A reference is made in the novel to an incident that occurred on 13 June 1906, in which a pigeon shooting party turned into a confrontation between the British army and the residents of Dinshawai, a village in the Nile delta. When one soldier died, the British retaliated by hanging four residents, flogging eight, and imposing lengthy prison sentences on several others. The incident sparked widespread opposition to the occupation and was a factor in Cromer's resignation the following year. See Caine, *The White Prophet*, I, p. 29. See also Roger Owen, *Lord Cromer: Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 335–41. Caine's friend Wilfrid Scawen Blunt had been the first to bring the full story of Dinshawai to the attention of the British public with his pamphlet *Atrocities of Justice under British Rule in Egypt* (1907). On the wider context of opposition to the British occupation of Egypt, see Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa, 1895–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1962), especially Chapter 3, 'Liberals and the Empire', pp. 56–94.

³² Caine, *The White Prophet*, I, p. 34.

Egyptians. He was nursed by an Egyptian woman, spoke Arabic before he could speak English, and was ‘half a Mohammedan’ with ‘the spirit of the Nile and of the desert’ in his blood.³³ He investigates Ameer and discovers he is ‘a regenerator, a reformer, a redeemer of Islam’ who believes slavery, the seclusion of women, and polygamy are wrong. Ameer does, however, warn his followers ‘against a civilisation which comes to the East with religion in one hand and violence and avarice in the other’, telling them that ‘what is known to the world as Christian civilisation is little better than an organised hypocrisy, a lust of empire in nations and a greed of gold in men, destroying liberty, morality, and truth’ — a view Gordon shares and which is diametrically opposed to the philosophy underlying the draconian policies of his father.³⁴ Gordon refuses to arrest Ameer and disobeys a direct order to close Al-Azhar University in Cairo, which is believed to be a central source of anti-British sentiment.

Several of the novel’s plot developments are transposed directly from *Mahomet* and *The Mahdi*. Gordon is in love with Helena Graves, the daughter of his immediate superior, the bellicose General Graves. Helena is partly Jewish, the granddaughter of a Jewish merchant of Madras (cf. the emphasis on Rachel’s Jewishness in *Mahomet*). An argument between Gordon and General Graves over the latter’s plan to attack Ameer’s camp near Khartoum leads to a fight, during which the general collapses and dies. Fleeing Cairo, Gordon travels to Ameer’s camp disguised as a Bedouin named Omar Benani (cf. Rachel’s lover ‘Omar Benani’ in *Mahomet*). Nuneham concludes that his son has abandoned his military duties. Circumstances lead Helena to believe, falsely, that Ameer has murdered her father (cf. *Mahomet*’s lost prologue, in which Rachel’s lover Omar accidentally kills her father, an act for which she mistakenly believes Mahomet responsible). Vowing to avenge her father’s death, she goes to Ameer’s camp disguised as a ‘Muslemah (Mohammedan lady) from India, the sister of a reigning prince of the Punjab’³⁵, and

³³ Ibid., p. 45.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 60, p. 59.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 322.

marries him (cf. Act II of *Mahomet*, in which Rachel follows Mahomet to Medina to await an opportunity for revenge, ‘converts’ to Islam, and marries Mahomet). Ameer, increasingly radicalised, tells his followers he has had a vision of the imminent arrival of the ‘Expected One’ — the ‘divinely appointed guide who was to redeem the world from sorrow and sin, to deliver believers from the hated bondage of the foreigner, and to re-establish the universal Caliphate’.³⁶ He announces a pilgrimage to Cairo. Helena sees her opportunity for revenge. At her suggestion, Ameer decides he will go to Cairo ahead of his followers to persuade the Egyptian army to lay down their arms and enable his followers to enter the city peacefully. To avoid being arrested by the British, he will disguise himself as a Bedouin. Helena alerts Lord Nuneham to Ameer’s plan in a letter delivered by her servant (cf. Rachel’s persuading of Mahomet to march to Mecca in disguise at the head of an advance party and Rachel’s betrayal of his plans to the leaders of Mecca by means of a letter delivered by her slave.) Helena and Gordon discover each other in Ameer’s camp. Gordon knows Ameer’s march on Cairo will be seen as a provocation by the British. When Helena tells Gordon she has revealed Ameer’s plans to his father, Gordon accuses her of sending Ameer to his death. She explains that she acted to avenge the murder of her father; Gordon tells her that he himself was responsible for the general’s death. To prevent a bloody clash with British troops, Gordon, as Omar, convinces Ameer to let him go first into Cairo (cf. Omar’s revelation that he killed Rachel’s father in *The Mahdi*, as well as his volunteering to lead the advance party into Mecca in *Mahomet* and Fez in *The Mahdi*). Helena realises her plot has backfired. Ameer addresses his followers at the mosque in Khartoum. As Helena dresses Omar/Gordon in the Bedouin disguise, she faints (cf. Mahomet’s speech in the mosque in Medina on the eve of the attack on Mecca and Rachel’s collapse after being forced to dress Omar in *Mahomet*.) After Omar/Gordon departs, Ameer tells his followers to watch for a light on the minaret of the mosque of Mohammed Ali in the Mokattam Hills: this will be the signal it is safe to enter Cairo (cf. Othman’s

³⁶ Ibid., p. 356.

instructions to Asma to watch for a light on the wall of Mecca in *Mahomet*.) The authorities in Cairo arrest Omar/Gordon on his arrival there. When this news reaches Ameer, it is discovered that Helena's servant delivered a letter to Lord Nuneham from someone in the camp. When the servant refuses to reveal who sent him to Cairo, Helena confesses. She tells Ameer the letter was sent not out of hatred of Omar/Gordon, but out of hatred of himself (cf. Omar's capture, the questioning of the slave Murabak, and Rachel's confession in *Mahomet*.) Ameer believes Helena has been unfaithful to him; she cannot explain her actions without implicating Gordon in her father's death. The denouement of the novel then veers away from its sources. Helena goes to Cairo and tells Lord Nuneham everything; Nuneham realises he has judged his son too hastily but has already handed him over to the military for court-martial. Helena arranges for a light to shine from the mosque's minaret. Ameer and his followers enter without incident. Gordon is found guilty of desertion and sentenced to death. On appeal to the War Office in London, he receives not only the king's pardon but also promotion to the command of the British forces in Egypt, replacing his father, who retires to England with full military honours and an earldom. Gordon tells Ameer he is 'Omar' and that he had taken Ameer's place at the head of the advance party to prevent Ameer's death. Ameer's hatred of Omar becomes respect for Gordon (cf. Omar's explanation to Mahomet in *Mahomet* and Mohammed in *The Mahdi*, after which Omar is forgiven). Ameer announces he will retreat to the desert to pray (cf. the prophet's exit at the end of *Mahomet*.) Before he does so, however, he divorces Helena so that she and Gordon can be married. Helena and Gordon embrace as a muezzin recites the call to prayer (cf. the reunion of Rachel and Omar, with Mahomet's blessing, at the end of *Mahomet*).

The novel created an uproar when it was serialised and again when it was published in two volumes in August 1909. 'A violent party-pamphlet', said *The Bookman*. 'A political tract in the guise of a novel [...] Mr. Hall Caine makes no secret of his sympathy with Egyptian Nationalist tendencies', said the *Manchester*

Courier.³⁷ ‘With impartial zeal Mr. Hall Caine blackens the fame of British soldiers and Civil servants, Cabinet Ministers and Governor-Generals’, *The Spectator* complained, calling it a ‘bad work of art as well as a most mischievous and odious travesty of our policy in Egypt’.³⁸ The clamour prompted Caine to add a note to foreign editions of the novel denying that any of its characters or incidents were based on real persons or events.³⁹ No one believed this and the criticism continued unabated. In his review of the novel for *The Athenaeum*, the orientalist scholar Marmaduke Pickthall noted *The White Prophet* had already been translated into Arabic and was being ‘hailed with paeans by a section of the native press, thus attaining an importance, in regard to Egypt, which seems to us beyond its merits’.⁴⁰ In fact, it was the positive reception of *The White Prophet* in the pro-independence Egyptian press that most alarmed the British establishment. The Arabic translation was serialised in the Cairo-based nationalist newspaper *al-Minbar* in both daily and weekly parts⁴¹ and had, according to Caine’s friend B. L. Mosely, ‘set the Nile on fire’.⁴²

³⁷ *The Bookman*, September 1909; *The Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 12 August 1909.

³⁸ *The Spectator*, 14 August 1909.

³⁹ See, for example, the ‘Author’s Note’ in the first American edition, published in New York by D. Appleton and Company, 1909.

⁴⁰ *The Athenaeum*, 28 August 1909.

⁴¹ The editor of *al-Minbar*, Ahmad Hafiz Awad, was a moderate nationalist who argued for the full implementation of the constitutional reforms promulgated by Lord Dufferin, then the British ambassador to Constantinople, in 1882–83. Awad claimed this would satisfy Egyptians’ reasonable demand for more involvement in the running of their own country. Caine had sold the Egyptian serialisation rights of *The White Prophet* to Awad during his visit to Cairo in 1908, an act that clearly indicates where his sympathies lay.

⁴² B. L. Mosely to Hall Caine, MS 09542, Box 49, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage. The Anglo-Jewish barrister Benjamin Lewis Mosely moved to Cairo in 1898 to become a judge in the Egyptian courts. A friend of the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi II, Mosely worked tirelessly to have questions on the administration of Egypt raised in Parliament. Mosely met Caine during the latter’s visit to Egypt in 1908. When Caine became ill shortly after his arrival, Mosely offered to help with his research for *The White Prophet* and gave him a copy of Syed Ameer Ali’s *The Spirit of Islam* (1891). ‘There is no reason why you should not become the redeemer of Egypt’, he told Caine. ‘I mean in the moral and political sense of the term, for you have accurately appreciated Egypt’s needs and aspirations and you will be listened to at home’ (B. L. Mosely to Hall Caine, MS 09542, Box 49, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage). In July 1908, Mosely informed the Khedive of Caine’s progress on the novel, which both men thought would advance the cause of the Egyptian nationalists. See *The Last Khedive of Egypt: Memoirs of Abbas Hilmi II*, trans. and ed. by Amira Sonbol (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1998), p. 296. In 1911, Mosely helped organise the first Universal Races Congress in London, which aimed to encourage ‘a fuller understanding, the most friendly feelings, and a

Caine responded to his critics in a lecture to the Jewish Literary Society of Liverpool that was later issued as a pamphlet called *Why I Wrote 'The White Prophet'*.⁴³ He defended his novel against the 'volume of almost unanimously condemnatory criticism' and himself from the 'grave charges of personal misconduct — of defaming one's country, inflaming sedition, outraging the sanctities of religion, and pandering to the appetite for indecency'.⁴⁴ His aim, he explained, had been to illustrate 'the corroding and demoralising effect upon character of absolute power' and had for that purpose 'chosen two characters out of entirely different walks of life, a statesman [Lord Nuneham] and a religious leader [Ishmael Ameer], and tried to show that one-man power brought both of them to destruction, the statesman to his downfall as a political force, the prophet to his collapse as a spiritual power, and both to utter misery as human beings'.⁴⁵ To the accusation he had based Lord Nuneham on Lord Cromer, he was evasive, saying only that he had wanted to depict the 'conflict of the generations' in the form of 'a father — a great English statesman — who stood for the principle that the way to rule alien races is to repress by force their attempts to rule themselves and of a son who stood for the principle of duty—the duty to guide, to counsel, and to protect'. He thought this 'struggle of the ages' would make for 'a great clash of emotion, an infinitely moving conflict of feeling'.⁴⁶ Thus we see Caine layering one of his favourite themes, the contentious relationship between fathers and (prodigal) sons, onto the framework provided by *Mahomet* and *The Mahdi*.

heartier cooperation' between 'the peoples of the West and those of the East' — a cause that was also close to Caine's heart. See Gustav Spiller, ed., *Papers on Inter-Racial Problems Communicated to the First Universal Races Congress* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1911), p. xiii; for a biography of Mosely, see David Cormack, 'Of Earls and Egypt: Founders of the First London Wagner Societies', *The Musical Times* 150, no. 1907 (Summer 2009): 27–42.

⁴³ Hall Caine, *Why I Wrote 'The White Prophet'* (London: Collier and Co., 1909). The lecture, on 17 October 1909, was delivered by a rabbi in Caine's absence due to illness.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, prefatory 'Note'.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24, p. 25.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13, p. 14.

Caine believed he had been charged with sedition because of his conviction that 'Great Britain is always in danger of repeating the situation of Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas when it takes possession of a foreign territory as Rome took possession of Judea', especially when that territory comprises 'peoples of alien race and faith'.⁴⁷ He declared that Britain's imperial administrators, concerned only with preserving law and order as well as their own dominance over those they ruled, 'are led to listen to stories of sedition, of widespread conspiracy, of political outrage, and thus to play the part of Pontius Pilate over again after an interval of two thousand years'.⁴⁸

Caine had some defenders, including George Bernard Shaw. At the end of August 1909, Shaw wrote to his friend Gilbert Murray, the classicist:

I think H. C. should be backed up. Egypt is a leading case on which we shall have to fight the whole question of coercive Imperialism versus federated commonwealths [...] I have read half through *The White Prophet* and seen some of the 'Aspects of the East' articles in the *Daily Telegraph*; and I have no doubt that H. C. is in earnest and on the right tack. I hear Heinemann is getting up some sort of testimonial preface or manifesto as a counterblast to the Imperialist attacks on the book and to the snobbish shame that prevents the men who privately sympathise with H. C. from letting him use their names. I am quite game to contribute (much good that will do him, I fear!)⁴⁹

Shaw did in fact write a response intended to serve as a preface to a second edition of the novel but this was ultimately published by Heinemann as a short pamphlet instead. In *The Critics of 'The White Prophet'*, Shaw endorses the political viewpoint of the novel while using the controversy it generated to advance his own views of British foreign policy. Calling Caine's book 'a stroke of important public work',⁵⁰ he counters the argument that the character of Lord Nuneham defamed Lord Cromer by pointing out that Caine had written nothing that had not already appeared

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 31, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁹ George Bernard Shaw to Gilbert Murray, 29 August 1909, reprinted in Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters, 1898-1901*, ed. by Dan H. Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1972), pp. 864-66. 'Aspects of the East' was a series of eight articles Caine published in the *Daily Telegraph* between 4 and 20 August 1909. These were timed to promote the publication of *The White Prophet* on 12 August and dealt with such topics as the role of women in Muslim societies and university education in Cairo. Each reflected Caine's support of the nationalistic ambitions of those under British control.

⁵⁰ George Bernard Shaw, *The Critics of 'The White Prophet'* (London: Heinemann, 1909), p. 10.

in official documents. ‘It is true that the figure he draws is a character in a romance; but are the innumerable newspaper articles that told the tale of the conspiracy of Islam, and the strong, stern Englishmen who stamped it out by hanging and flogging helpless, unarmed, unorganised peasants, any the less romances, and vile and silly romances, too?’ he asks, referring acidly to Cromer’s response to the Dinshawai incident.⁵¹ Shaw dismisses the idea that the novel had ‘inflamed sedition and provoked riot and insurrection’ and praises Caine for ‘bravely and disinterestedly’ telling a truth that the governing class was unwilling to acknowledge.⁵² He concludes with the hope that his countrymen ‘will have the political sagacity to appreciate [Caine’s] public spirit as a citizen [and] have imagination enough to come under his spell as a romancer, as they have done so often before when his books concerned them far less vitally than *The White Prophet*’.⁵³ The British public did neither and the book flopped, failing even to sell out its initial print run.⁵⁴

It has not been previously observed that the plot and characters of *The Mahdi* and *The White Prophet* anticipated — by least a decade — the key elements of the ‘desert romance’ genre that became popular in the 1920s, first in fiction and then in film. Caine’s Mohammad Abd-er-Rahman is the prototype of the charismatic Arab protagonist that would be taken up by E. M. Hull in *The Sheik* (1919), the basis of the George Melford film of the same name starring Rudolph Valentino (1921); by Joan Conquest in *Desert Love* (1920); and by Kathlyn Rhodes in *The Relentless*

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 11. Shaw had previously written on Dinshawai in a ‘Preface for Politicians’ that was added to editions of *John Bull’s Other Island* (1904) after 1906. He saw disturbing similarities in the British administration of Ireland and Egypt, both of which had been ‘denied Home Rule’ and subjected to ‘military coercion’. See George Bernard Shaw, *John Bull’s Other Island and Major Barbara: also How He Lied to Her Husband* (London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1907), pp. v–lix (p. xlv).

⁵² Shaw, *The Critics of ‘The White Prophet’*, p. 13, p. 16.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 16. Shaw told Arthur Wing Pinero that one of the reasons he agreed to write a defence of the novel was the guilt he felt for his ‘shocking attack’ on the Caine/Barrett production of *The Manxman* in 1895, which had caused him ‘great shame and grief’. He was ‘jolly glad’, he told Pinero, ‘to make amends [...] by writing a preface for [Caine] when everybody attacked him for standing up for the Egyptians’. Shaw and Pinero were discussing whether Caine should be admitted to the Dramatists’ Club, which had been founded in 1909 to present a united front in the campaign to abolish dramatic censorship (Pinero was its first president). Caine had already been rejected for membership once, much to the chagrin of Shaw, who believed he had been blackballed by those jealous of his commercial success. See George Bernard Shaw to Arthur W. Pinero, 21 March 1910, reprinted in Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters, 1898–1901*, pp. 911–13.

⁵⁴ Allen, *Hall Caine*, p. 340.

Desert (1920). In many of these later stories (and their equally successful sequels), a non-Arab woman, usually but not always European, falls in love with a Arab chieftain or *sheik*, often after being abducted, raped or threatened with rape, and enslaved in his 'harem'.⁵⁵ In contrast to the Rachel of *Mahomet* or the Helena of *The White Prophet*, both of whom return to more 'acceptable' lovers, the Rachel of *The Mahdi* decides to stay with Mohammed (the 'sheik' figure) after learning the truth about how her father died. In all three of these stories, the female protagonists are pressured into marrying the desert outlaw, but significantly, he soon regrets this and apologises for his actions; none are abducted or held against their will. In *The White Prophet*, it is made clear that the marriage between Helena and Ishmael Ameer is never consummated, although on one occasion she must fight off his advances, after which he begs her forgiveness. These subtleties, which would be dropped by later writers as they reworked Caine's narrative model along more violent and sexually explicit lines, owe much to his progressive personal belief in the autonomy of women. The Jewish heroines of *Mahomet*, *The Mahdi*, and *The White Prophet* are independent, if sometimes misguided, New Woman adventuresses who stand on an equal footing with men. Under their influence, the Byronic Arab heroes abandon their arrogant sense of entitlement and retreat a bit wiser back into their own world with a renewed commitment to their religious missions (*Mahomet*, *The White Prophet*) or forge a new relationship of mutual respect (*The Mahdi*).

As he had for *The Mahdi*, Caine sketched out a dramatisation of *The White Prophet* and arranged for a copyright performance. This took place on 27 November 1908 at the Garrick Theatre, London. Participants included the actors Eric Mayne, who was then portraying Philip Christian in the Lyceum production of *Pete*; Frederick Ross, who was portraying Caesar Cregeen in the same production; Ruby

⁵⁵ Billie Melman provides a comprehensive overview of the 'desert romance' in *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: Flappers and Nymphs* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988), pp. 91–101. Hsu-Ming Teo explores how the word *sheik*, which originally meant 'Muslim religious leader or an elder of a community or family', acquired 'new connotations of irresistible, ruthless, masterful, and over-sexualised masculinity' in *Desert Passions: Orientalism and Romance Novels* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2012), p. 1.

Miller, who had appeared the year before in the Lyceum production of Caine's *The Christian*; and Caine's son Derwent. Herbert Beerbohm Tree had agreed to produce the play in the autumn of 1909 at His Majesty's Theatre and in January of that year travelled to Egypt to gather ideas for settings, costumes, and music. He was met in Cairo by Louis Napoleon Parker, who had collaborated with Caine on the writing of *Pete* and who was prepared to assist with *The White Prophet*. Caine had provided Tree with a number of introductions; among those the pair met shortly after their arrival was B. L. Mosely. Tree and Parker travelled to Luxor, Karnak, and the Valley of the Kings but spent most of their time in Cairo. 'We wandered from one fashionable hotel to another, lunching, dining, tea-ing, and supping, with exactly the same people one met at the Carlton or the Savoy', Parker recalled in his autobiography. 'Altogether we had a gorgeous time, hobnobbing with Egyptian princesses, the very interesting Cairene Society, and the extraordinary procession from all parts of the world which passes through Shepheard's'.⁵⁶

However, they were soon beset on all sides by those who objected to the way Caine had depicted the British administration of the country in his novel, warning that a stage production of the story in London would only increase Egyptian resentment and the likelihood of open rebellion. They threatened to lobby the Lord Chamberlain against the play's license, and Tree's commitment to the project began to waver. The depth of his 'very considerable misgiving' is revealed in a draft of a letter preserved in a notebook kept during his travels. In this letter he told Caine that 'Modern Egypt is a theme which must appeal above all others at this time, and the whole atmosphere of the life here is so absorbingly interesting that I should be disappointed indeed if I were denied the chance of putting such a play on the boards of His Majesty's'. However, he continued, 'it seems that there is a very strong similarity between the character of the agent general [in *The White Prophet*] and that

⁵⁶ Louis N. Parker, *Several of My Lives* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1928), pp. 219–20. The local colour gathered by the pair proved useful during their collaboration on *Joseph and His Brethren*, produced at His Majesty's in 1913. The legendary Shepheard's Hotel was a celebrated meeting point for international visitors to Egypt, and, especially, a popular hub of the English community in Cairo.

of Lord Cromer himself who is regarded here with veneration'. This similarity had created 'a very strong feeling [...] among the English section of society that the impression created [by a stage production] might be of a painful nature'.⁵⁷ Mosely, aware of Tree's growing concerns, urged Caine to come to Cairo to save his play, but Caine, vacationing at St. Moritz, hesitated. By the time he arrived in Egypt several weeks later, it was too late. On his return to London, Tree informed Caine's agent, R. Golding Bright, that he would not produce the play. In late May, the *Manchester Daily Dispatch* reported that Tree had dropped the play at the insistence of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, which it said had received a communication from Lord Cromer indicating that 'the state of the Nationalist agitation in Egypt made a dramatic representation of some of its features injudicious'.⁵⁸ No document confirming Cromer's involvement has been discovered, although Caine certainly believed Tree withdrew because he feared the play would be rejected by George Redford, the Examiner of Plays. In September Caine told the Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays that Tree had concluded 'objection might conceivably be taken to it, and so on account of the mere shadow of the Censor the play was not produced'.⁵⁹ He denied that any character in the play represented a 'living person', a category prohibited by longstanding practice if not the letter of the Theatres Act. In principle, however, he did not see why living statesmen should not be portrayed on stage, since they were regularly pilloried in the press, caricatured in satirical journals, disparaged on the lecture platform, and criticised from the pulpit. He explained that prior to the copyright performance of *The White Prophet* he had submitted 'a rough skeleton of the play' containing 'every element that could be objected to' and that Redford had 'licensed' this; a 'frightened' Tree, however, had declined to submit the final acting

⁵⁷ Herbert Beerbohm Tree to Hall Caine, 13 January 1909, HBT/000268/14, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁵⁸ *Daily Dispatch* (Manchester), n.d., quoted in a number of provincial newspapers, including the *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star* (2 June 1909), the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* (2 June 1909), and the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* (2 June 1909).

⁵⁹ *Report from the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the Stage Plays* (1909), p. 313.

version to the Examiner's office for approval.⁶⁰ Tree seemed to contradict this in his own testimony when he stated he had never declined a play for the sole reason he thought it might be censored. 'I think I should always have a try', he told the committee.⁶¹ The *New York Dramatic Mirror* reported that Tree had decided to replace Caine's play with 'another Egyptian play not so political in tone'. This was *False Gods*, a translation of Eugene Brieux's *La Foi*, which is set in ancient Egypt.⁶² In May 1910, the *New York Times* reported that George C. Tyler had arranged to produce *The White Prophet* in America.⁶³ Nothing came of this, however, nor was the story ever filmed. *Mahomet* had finally come to the end of its long and winding road, destined to be unproduced as homage to a prophet, Moroccan desert romance, or Egyptian political polemic.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 315. This explains why the play is not among the Lord Chamberlain's Collection at the British Library even though it had been given a copyright performance.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 156.

⁶² *New York Dramatic Mirror*, 19 June 1909. *False Gods* opened on 14 September 1909. For a description of the production, see Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage*, pp. 212–17.

⁶³ *New York Times*, 17 May 1910.

Conclusion

In his autobiography, Hall Caine tells his readers about his many attempts at playwriting. ‘That is a noble and beautiful art’, he says, ‘but it is not one which ought to be practised, as I fear I have practised it — with the left hand while the right hand has been otherwise engaged. It asks all a man’s time and more than all his energy if it is to yield the best results’.¹ But the enormous success of his plays, perfectly pitched as they were to the popular (if not critical) taste of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, belies Caine’s concern that writing fiction depleted his ability to write effectively for the stage: for the man of letters who did both, these were simply alternate forms of storytelling that served the same end. Four years after the suppression of *Mahomet*, Caine declared that ‘the place of [both] the great novelist [and] the great dramatist [...] is that of a temporal Providence — to answer the craving of the human soul for compensation, to show us that success may be the worst failure, and failure the best success; that poverty may be better than riches, that “Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen and his swine, / Here and there a cotter’s babe is royal-born by right divine”’. When the novelist and dramatist ‘gather together the scattered parts of life’, he concluded, ‘he shows “the axis on which the frame of things turns” [...] and speaks to the world’s want. It is what art is for at its highest and I count him the greatest artist who does it best’.² Of course, the ‘temporal Providence’ that responds to ‘the craving of the human soul for compensation’ is the world of melodrama in which Caine (and Irving) excelled, with its quest for moral clarity and divine or poetic justice. Traditional definitions of the genre may need to be refined as we learn more about how Caine combined romance and realism to achieve a form that accommodated his desire to show this ‘temporal Providence’ in action in ways that both entertained and educated his different audiences.

¹ Caine, *My Story*, p. 352.

² Caine, *Moral Responsibility in the Novel and the Drama*, pp. 34-35. Caine is quoting Tennyson’s ‘Locksley Hall Sixty Years After’ (1886) and Ralph Waldo Emerson’s ‘Goethe; or, The Writer’ in *Representative Men* (1850).

By mapping the contours of Caine's work as a melodramatist and demonstrating his engagement with the political and social concerns of the wider society in which he lived and worked, this thesis makes an original contribution to theatre history and cultural studies. It has demonstrated how new insights into the Victorian and Edwardian worldviews can be gained by close attention to the popular theatre of these periods. What is needed now are additional 'thick descriptions' of individual productions of Caine's plays and a new biography that links his literary output with a much-expanded consideration of his life, drawing on the extensive archival material available but still largely unexplored. The contemporary critical reception of his works must, of course, be considered, but should not be given undue weight in such a reassessment; its preoccupations and prejudices have coloured modern perceptions of Caine and it is necessary to look beyond the 'boomster' label to identify and evaluate his actual and lasting contribution. Such a reweighing of the evidence will, I believe, restore a major representative figure of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary and theatrical worlds to his rightful position in modern scholarship.

This thesis has also recovered an important lost play and revealed the details of the international controversy that surrounded its planned production. I have argued that *Mahomet* was not a thoughtless act of orientalist appropriation: far from disparaging or mocking Islam or its founder, it would have presented a largely sympathetic portrait of the religion. Caine rejected Muslim concerns about the play, believing that its positive moral and educational purpose outweighed religious sensibilities centring on a non-divine figure. The story of the play's suppression will need to be taken into account in future considerations of dramatic censorship during the late-Victorian period. My thesis has discussed how this system of surveillance was applied to a rumoured collaboration between the leader of the *de facto* national theatre and one of the period's bestselling novelists, and has shown how specific geopolitical interests requiring respect for religious difference trumped the rights of authors and artists. It was a system often capriciously and unevenly applied; as

Caine himself observed, he had been permitted to put both a pope and a prostitute on stage, despite ostensible prohibitions on both. *Mahomet* changed this, at least with regard to plays likely to ruffle the feathers of colonial subjects and imperial allies. After 1890, such plays received a great deal more scrutiny from the Lord Chamberlain's Office, along with referral to the Foreign Office. Thus Caine's unperformed play had an impact on government policy until 1968, when dramatic censorship was finally abolished in Britain.

Furthermore, the controversy over *Mahomet* is a reminder that today's conflicts between freedom of expression and the protection of religious sensibilities have a longer history than is usually acknowledged. Its modern relevance is clear: used variously by those involved to advance personal liberty, to exercise a newfound political agency, and to promote specific national interests, the debate over *Mahomet* was a forerunner of the challenges we face as we balance similar competing values in the early twenty-first century.

As the record of a creative partnership between two of the most famous men in England, the *Mahomet* saga has few equals. 'Henry Irving was a great actor', said the literary critic George Sampson, who vividly recalled attending performances at the Lyceum as a young man. 'Unless it is understood that Irving was great there can be no comprehension of his life and art [...] Just as Gladstone was the great man of politics, and W. G. [William Gilbert Grace] the great man of cricket, so Irving was the great man of the theatre'.³ Caine, of course, concurred in this view but his personal friendship with the actor permitted him a finer degree of insight, as did his natural sympathy with Irving's aims and methods. Those who study Irving today owe much to Caine, who from his earliest acquaintance with the actor was one of his most perceptive observers. In describing the *Mahomet* episode in his autobiography, Caine provides a shrewd assessment of Irving's temperament:

³ Sampson, 'Henry Irving', pp. 158–59.

The truth is that, great actor as Irving was, the dominating element of his personality was for many years a hampering difficulty. When in my boyhood I knew him first, he was about thirty, very bright, very joyous, not very studious, not very intellectual, full of animal vigour, never resting, never pausing, always rushing about, and hardly ever seen to go upstairs at less than three steps at a time. At the end of his life he was a grave and rather sad old man, very solemn, distinctly intellectual, and with a never-failing sense of personal dignity. Between his earlier and his later days he had done something which I have never known to be done by anybody else — he had created a character and assumed it for himself [...] It was a character of singular nobility and distinction, but a difficult character, too, not easy to put on, and having little in common with the outstanding traits of his original self — a silent, reposeful, rather subtle, slightly humorous, detached, and almost isolated personality, with a sharp tongue but a sunny smile and certain gleams of the deepest tenderness [...] There was nothing artificial or theatrical in Irving's assumption of this character, which grew on him and became his own and gave value to every act of his later life; but all the same it stood in the way of his success in a profession wherein the first necessity is that the actor should be able to sink his own individuality and get into the skin of somebody else [...] Towards the end of his life, with the ever-increasing domination of his own character and the limitation of choice which always comes with advancing years, it was only possible for him to play parts that contained something of himself.⁴

It is hardly surprising then, that the 52-year-old Irving had been intrigued by the opportunity to add a portrait of the grand charismatic figure of Muhammad — one of Carlyle's 'Great Men' — to his gallery of characters, and that he chose Hall Caine to create the part for him.

⁴ Caine, *My Story*, pp. 349–51.

Appendix

Hall Caine's Plays: A Handlist

This appendix is the first comprehensive list of Caine's plays and provides essential context for understanding the composition of Mahomet in 1890. 'Produced' plays are listed by date of first major production. Because most of these are unpublished, I have indicated where extant manuscripts can be found. I have included locations of promptbooks where known. The list of 'Unproduced' plays, which includes plays that were given only a copyright performance or plays that exist only in scenario form, is presented by date of composition.

Produced Plays

Ben-my-Chree (Princess's Theatre, London, 17 May 1888)

Co-author: Wilson Barrett

Adapted from *The Deemster: A Romance* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1887)

Manuscript: British Library, Add MS 53404 A

Promptbook: University of Bristol Theatre Collection, EJE/000503

The Good Old Times (Princess's Theatre, London, 12 February 1889; Pavilion Theatre, London, 27 October 1890)

Co-author: Wilson Barrett

Manuscript: British Library, Add MS 53422 H

The Bondman (copyright performance: Theatre Royal, Bolton, 19 November 1892)

Adapted from *The Bondman: A New Saga* (London: Heinemann, 1890); originally serialised in *The Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser*, June–November 1889

Manuscript: British Library, Add MS 53511 D

The Manxman (the 'Pete' version, Grand Theatre, Leeds, 22 August 1894; Lyric Theatre, London, 16 November 1896; Lyceum Theatre, London, 25 November 1899; Adelphi Theatre, London, 14 January 1903)

Co-author: Wilson Barrett

Adapted from *The Manxman* (London: Heinemann, 1894); originally serialised in *The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle*, January–July 1894

Manuscript: British Library, Add MS 53555 F

Promptbook: University of Bristol Theatre Collection, EJE/000668; Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, Playscripts and Promptbooks Collection, Box 1, Folder 5 (scene, property, music and light plots)

The Manxman (the 'Philip' version; Shaftesbury Theatre, London, 18 November 1895)

Co-author: Wilson Barrett

Adapted from *The Manxman* (London: Heinemann, 1894); originally serialised in *The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle*, January–July 1894

Manuscript: British Library, Add MS 53587

The Christian (copyright performance: Grand Theatre, Douglas, Isle of Man, 7 August 1897; New Empire Theatre, Albany, New York, 23 September 1898; National Theatre, Washington D.C., 26 September 1898; Knickerbocker Theatre, New York City, 10 October 1898; Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool, 9 October 1899; Duke of York's Theatre, London, 16 October 1899)

Adapted from *The Christian* (London: Heinemann, 1897); originally serialised in Britain in *The Windsor Magazine*, December 1896–November 1897, and in the United States in *Munsey's Magazine*, November 1896–January 1898
Manuscript: British Library, Add MS 53691 B. I.

The Eternal City (copyright performance: Gaiety Theatre, Douglas, Isle of Man, 17 August 1901; His Majesty's Theatre, London, 2 October 1902; Victoria Theatre, New York City, 17 November 1902; Grand Theatre, Douglas, Isle of Man, 10 August 1903; Hippodrome, Crouch End, London, 23 March 1908, trial scene only)

Adapted from the novel *The Eternal City* (London: Heinemann, 1901); originally serialised in Britain in *The Lady's Magazine*, 1901, and in the United States in *Collier's Weekly*, February–August 1901

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1901/26 (first four acts only)

Promptbook and production papers: University of Bristol Theatre Collection, HBT/000139, HBT/000157/1-54, HBT/000158/1-46, HBT 000161

The Prodigal Son (copyright performance: Grand Theatre, Douglas, Isle of Man, 2 November 1904; New National Theatre, Washington, D. C., 28 August 1905; New Amsterdam Theatre, New York City, 4 September 1905; Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, 7 September 1905; Adelphi Theatre, London, 25 February 1907)

Adapted from the novel *The Prodigal Son* (London: Heinemann, 1904)

Published as *The Prodigal Son: A Drama in Four Acts* (London: Heinemann, 1905); 'printed for private circulation and the use of the actors only'

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1904/25

Promptbook: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, Playscripts and Promptbooks Collection, Box 17, Folder 2–3

The Bondman (a new version; Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, 20 September 1906; Adelphi Theatre, London, 5 January 1907)

Adapted from *The Bondman: A New Saga* (London: Heinemann, 1890); originally serialised in *The Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser*, June–November 1889

Published as *The Bondman* (London: Daily Mail, 1906)

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1906/27 M

Promptbook: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Add. MS 110, for 239

The Christian (a new version; Lyceum Theatre, London, 31 August 1907; transferred to the Shaftesbury Theatre, 12 December 1907)

Adapted from *The Christian* (London: Heinemann, 1897); originally serialised in Britain in *The Windsor Magazine*, December 1896–November 1897, and in the United States in *Munsey's Magazine*, November 1896–January 1898

Published as *The Christian, A Drama in Four Acts* (London: Collier, 1907) and in *The Grand Magazine*, January 1908

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1907/20

Pete (a new version of *The Manxman*; Lyceum Theatre, London, 29 August 1908)

Co-author: Louis N. Parker

Adapted from *The Manxman* (London: Heinemann, 1894); originally serialised in *The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle*, January–July 1894

Published as *Pete: A Drama in Four Acts* (London: Collier, 1908)

Manuscript: British Library: LCP 1908/18

Promptbook: University of Bristol Theatre Collection, EJE/000670

The Bishop's Son (a new version of *Ben-my-Chree*; copyright performance: Grand Theatre, Douglas, Isle of Man, 15 August 1910; Garrick Theatre, London, 28 September 1910)

Adapted from *The Deemster: A Romance* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1887)

Published as *The Bishop's Son: A New Drama in Four Acts* (London: Ballantyne, 1910); 'printed for private circulation'

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1910/20

Promptbook: University of Bristol Theatre Collection, EJE/000459

The Eternal Question: A New Dramatization of 'The Eternal City' (a new version of *The Eternal City*; Garrick Theatre, London, 27 August 1910)

Adapted from the novel *The Eternal City* (London: Heinemann, 1901); originally serialised in Britain in *The Lady's Magazine*, 1901, and in the United States in *Collier's Weekly*, February–August 1901

Published as *The Eternal Question: A New Dramatisation of "The Eternal City"* (London: Ballantyne, 1910); 'printed for private circulation'

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1910/19

The Quality of Mercy, also known as **The Unwritten Law** (a new version of the unproduced *Jan the Iclander; or Home, Sweet Home*; Theatre Royal, Manchester, 4 September 1911)

Adapted from *Yan, the Iclander; Home, Sweet Home: A Lecture-Story* (Greeba Castle, Isle of Man: Hall Caine, 1896), printed in a private edition of 100 ('this story has been written from delivery on the lecture platform, and is hereby protected from reproduction and dramatization according to Copyright Law'); also published as the short story 'Jan, the Iclander' in *The Golden Penny*, October–November 1900

Manuscript: MS 09542, Box 23, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage

The Iron Hand, also known as **The Call of the King** (London Coliseum, 21 February 1916)

Published as *The Iron Hand: A New One-Act War Drama* in the *Daily Telegraph*, 21 February 1916

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1916/2

The Woman Thou Gavest Me (Shubert Theatre, Boston, USA, 13 April 1917; unproduced in the UK)

Adapted from *The Woman Thou Gavest Me* (London: Heinemann, 1913); originally serialised in Britain in *Nash's Magazine*, October 1912–November 1913, and in the United States in *Hearst's Magazine*, October 1912–October 1913

Manuscript: unknown

The Prime Minister (license granted on 18 February 1916, copyright performance, Globe Theatre, London, March 1916; Royalty Theatre, London, 30 March 1918)

Published as *The Prime Minister: A Drama* (London, William Heinemann, 1918); 'printed for use in the theatre, not for circulation; private until after first performance'

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1916/3, LCP 1918/2

Performed as **Margaret Schiller** at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York City, USA, 31 January 1916 (transferred to the Empire Theatre on 13 March 1916)

Unproduced Plays

The following plays were unproduced, given only a copyright performance, or exist only in scenario form.

Mahomet (unproduced, 1890)

Manuscript: Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers, Ref. No. 09542, Box 21,
Manx National Heritage, Douglas

The Prophet (scenario only, c. 1891)

Adapted from the unproduced *Mahomet* (1890); follows the plot of *Mahomet* until Act IV (the play ends with the reconciliation of the prophet and Rachel as his army approaches Mecca)

Manuscript: Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers, Ref. No. 09542, Box 4,
Manx National Heritage, Douglas

The Mahdi (copyright performance: Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, 3 December 1894)

Adapted from the unproduced *Mahomet* (1890) and from *The Mahdi; or, Love and Race: A Drama in Story* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1894), printed in a private edition of 100; also published in *The Christian World* (Christmas Number, 1894, 3–22)

Manuscript: British Library, Add MS 53562 P

Jan, the Icelander; or, Home, Sweet Home (copyright performance: Grand Theatre, West Hartlepool, 24 November 1900; revised and produced as *The Quality of Mercy*, 1911)

Adapted from *Jan, the Icelander; Home, Sweet Home: A Lecture-Story* (Greeba Castle, Isle of Man: Hall Caine, 1896), printed in a private edition of 100 ('this story has been written from delivery on the lecture platform, and is hereby protected from reproduction and dramatization according to Copyright Law'); also published as the short story 'Jan, the Icelander', in *The Golden Penny*, October–November 1900

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1900/24

The Isle of Boy (copyright performance: Theatre Royal, Bolton, 15 April 1903)

Published as *The Isle of Boy: A Comedy* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903)

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1903/10 (first two acts only)

The Fatal Error (copyright performance: Queens Theatre, Poplar, 21 September 1908)

Manuscript: unknown

The White Prophet (copyright performance: Garrick Theatre, London, 27 November 1908)

Adapted from *The White Prophet* (London: Heinemann, 1909), originally serialised in *The Strand Magazine*, December 1908–November 1909, drawing on material used in *Mahomet* (play), *The Prophet* (scenario), *The Mahdi; or, Love and Race: A Drama in Story* (short story), and *The Mahdi* (play)

Manuscript: unknown

Related papers: University of Bristol Theatre Collection, HBT/000268/14

The Red Shirt, Suggested by an Incident in the Early Life of Garibaldi (copyright performance: Queens Theatre, London, 29 March 1910)

Adapted from *The Eternal City* (London: Heinemann, 1901); originally serialised in Britain in *The Lady's Magazine*, 1901, and in the United States in *Collier's Weekly*, February–August 1901

Manuscript: British Library, LCP 1910/9

The Charter (c. 1872)

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 32.

The Demon Lover (c. 1894)

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 32

The Heart of Ireland (date unknown)

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 32

His English Wife, also known as ***The House Divided*** (scenario only, date unknown)

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 31 ('First rough scenario of a play')

His Partner's Wife (date unknown)

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 32

The Martyr Nurse (scenario only, date unknown)

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 25 ('First rough notes towards a scenario for a cinema film or
for a play based partly on the incident of Nurse [Edith] Cavell's death, but quite
independent of it')

The Old Home, also known as ***Old England*** and ***God's Providence*** (date unknown)

A revision of *The Quality of Mercy*

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 31

Old Ireland (scenario only, date unknown)

Manuscript: Manx National Heritage, Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers,
Ref. No. 09542, Box 31

N.B. Another play, *Love and the Law*, is mentioned by Vivien Allen in *Hall Caine: Portrait of a Victorian Romancer*, p. 311, but is not otherwise known; it may be an early or alternate title for one of the plays listed above.

Plays based on Hall Caine's novels written by others

The Penitent

By Lawrence Marston

Based on *The Son of Hagar* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1887)

Park Theatre, Boston, 9 September 1901

The Land of the Midnight Sun

By Edwin Barbour

Based on *The Bondman: A New Saga* (London: Heinemann, 1890)

14th Street Theatre, New York City, 19 February 1894

Promptbook: New York Public Library, Performing Arts Research Collections,
NCOF+ (Barbour, E. Land of the midnight sun)

Play in which Hall Caine is a character

His Wild Oat

Adapted by Sydney Blow and Douglas Hoare from *Dis Que C'est Toi* by Jacques Bousquet and Henri Falk
Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, 29 November 1926
Hall Caine and George Bernard Shaw are portrayed in a short scene rewritten by Shaw; includes the line, spoken by 'Shaw' to 'Caine', 'There are no two men living who admire themselves and each other more sincerely than you and I'.
Manuscript: British Library, Lord Chamberlain's Collection; see *New York Times*, 26 December 1926

Films based on Hall Caine's novels and plays

The information below has been collated from the following sources: The Internet Movie Database (IMDb.com), the American Film Institute (USA), the British Film Institute (UK), and the National Film and Sound Archive (Australia).

The Christian: 1911 (Australia, West's Pictures, dir. Franklyn Barrett, wr. Hall Caine, silent/bw); 1914 (USA, Vitagraph Company of America, dir. Frederick A. Thomson, wr. Hall Caine, Eugene Mullin, silent/bw); 1915 (UK, London Film Productions, dir. George Loane Tucker, wr. Hall Caine, silent/bw); 1923 (USA, Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, dir. Maurice Tourneur, wr. Hall Caine, Paul Bern, silent/bw)

The Eternal City: 1915 (USA, Famous Players Film Company, dir. Hugh Ford and Edwin S. Porter, wr. Hall Caine, silent/bw); 1923 (USA, Samuel Goldwyn Company, dir. George Fitzmaurice, wr. Hall Caine, Ouida Bergère, silent/bw)

The Manxman: 1916 (UK, London Film Productions, dir. George Loane Tucker, wr. Hall Caine, Kenelm Foss, silent/bw); 1929 (UK, British International Pictures, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, wr. Hall Caine and Eliot Stannard, silent/bw)

The Bondman: 1916 (USA, Fox Film Corporation, dir. Edgar Lewis, wr. Hall Caine, Edgar Lewis, silent/bw); 1929 (UK, British & Dominions Film Corporation, dir. Herbert Wilcox, wr. Hall Caine, silent/bw)

The Deemster: 1917 (USA, Arrow Film Corporation, dir. Howell Hansel, wr. Hall Caine, Edfrid A. Bingham, Charles A. Taylor, silent/bw)

The Red Samson: 1917 (Hungary, Phönix Film, dir. Michael Curtiz as Mihály Kertész, wr. Hall Caine, Ladislao Vajda, silent/bw)

The Woman Thou Gavest Me: 1919 (USA, Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, dir. Hugh Ford, wr. Hall Caine, Beulah Marie Dix, silent/bw)

The Prodigal Son: 1923 (UK, Stoll Picture Productions, dir. A. E. Coleby, wr. Hall Caine, A. E. Coleby, silent/bw)

Name the Man: 1924 (USA, Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, dir. Victor Sjöström as Victor Seastrom, wr. Hall Caine and Paul Bern, silent/bw, based on Caine's *The Master of Man*)

Barbed Wire: 1927 (USA, Paramount Pictures, dir. Rowland V. Lee, Mauritz Stiller, wr. Hall Caine, Rowland V. Lee, Jules Furthman, silent/bw, based on Caine's *The Woman of Knockaloe*)

Other films

Victory and Peace: 1918 (UK, National War Aims Committee, dir. Herbert Brenon, wr. Hall Caine, silent/bw)

Darby and Joan: 1919 (UK, Master Films, dir. Percy Nash, wr. Hall Caine, silent, b/w)

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

ARCHIVES

Bibliothèque-Musée de la Comédie-Française
Bibliothèque Nationale de France
 Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; Département des Arts du Spectacle
British Library
 Lord Chamberlain's Plays; India Office Records, L/P&J/6/291: 2237 (1890);
 Indian Newspaper Reports, L/R/5/1–208
Cambridge University
Claremont Colleges – Honnold/Mudd Library
Columbia University
 Louis Napoleon Parker Papers
Folger Shakespeare Library
Garrick Club
 Percy Fitzgerald Collection
Georgetown University
 Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers
Harvard University – Houghton Library
 Theatre Collection; Modern Books & Manuscripts Collection,
 Caine/Heinemann Correspondence
Huntington Library
 Edward Smyth Pigott Papers
Liverpool Record Office
Manx National Heritage Library and Archives
 Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine Papers
National Archives
 Lord Chamberlain's Department: Correspondence, LC1/547 and LC1/601
National Library of Australia
 Bland Holt Collection
National Library of India
National Library of Scotland
New York Public Library
 Berg Collection
 Library for the Performing Arts
 William Appleton Collection of Theatrical Correspondence and Ephemera
Oxford University – Bodleian Library
Rice University – Fondren Library
 Sir Hall Caine Papers
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust – Shakespeare Centre Library & Archive
 Bram Stoker Collection
Smallhythe Place, Tenterden, Kent (National Trust)
State Library of Victoria (Australia)
 Coppin Collection
Trinity College Dublin

University of Bristol
Theatre Collection, Department of Drama
University of British Columbia
Angeli-Dennis Collection
University of Leeds – Brotherton Library
University of Rochester – Rush Rhees Library
University of Texas – Harry Ransom Center
Victoria & Albert Museum
Laurence Irving Collection, Department of Theatre and Performance
(formerly the Theatre Museum Archive)

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Great Britain

The Academy
The Athenaeum
Birmingham Daily Mail
The Bookman
The Bookseller
Bradford Daily Mail
Birmingham Daily Post
Bristol Mercury
The British Weekly
Catholic Times and Catholic Opinion
The Colonies and India
Contemporary Review
The Crescent
The Critic
Daily Chronicle
Daily Express
Daily Graphic
Daily Mail
Daily News
Daily Post
Daily Telegraph
Dramatic Notes
Dramatic Review
Dublin Evening Mail
Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature
The Empire Review
The English Illustrated Magazine
The Era
The Evening Telegraph
Flight
The Fortnightly Review
Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser
The Globe
The Homiletic Review

The Illustrated London News
The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review
The Independent
The Indian Magazine and Review
The Islamic Review
The Islamic World
Isle of Man Examiner
Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser
Jewish Chronicle
Literary World
Liverpool Argus
Liverpool Courier
Liverpool Mercury
Liverpool Review
Lyceum: A Monthly Magazine and Review
Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser
Manchester Daily Dispatch
Manchester Guardian
Morning Advertiser
Morning Post
The Musical Times
The National Review
The New Review
The New Statesman
The Nineteenth Century
The Observer
Pall Mall Gazette
Peel City Guardian
Penny Illustrated Paper
The Play Pictorial
Press
Publishers' Circular & Booksellers Record of British and Foreign Literature
The Quarterly Review
The Referee
The Review of Reviews
The Saturday Review
Sheffield Evening Telegraph and Star
The Sketch
The Speaker
The Spectator
The Stage
The Standard
The Strand Magazine
The Tablet
The Theatre
The Times
The Times Literary Supplement
Treasure Trove
The Universalist Quarterly and General Review
The Westminster Gazette

The Westminster Review
The Windsor Magazine
Wit and Wisdom
The World

France

Le Correspondant
Le Figaro
Le Gaulois
Le Journal des Débats
Le Journal Officiel
La Justice
La Presse
La Revue Bleue
La Revue Contemporaine
La Revue d'Art Dramatique
La Revue des Deux Mondes
Le Siècle
Le Temps
La Vie Parisienne
Le Voltaire

India

Allahabad Review
Anglo-Indian Review
Bombay Gazette
Bombay Gazette Overland Summary
Calcutta Review
The Friend of India and Statesman
The Homeward Mail
Indian Daily News
Indian Mirror
Indian National Magazine
Madras Mail
Madras Times
The Mahomedan Observer
Muslim Chronicle of India
The Overland Mail
Reis and Rayyet
The Times of India

United States

The Critic
The Literary World
McClure's Magazine
New York Dramatic Mirror
New York Times
New York Herald
North American Review

Australia

Adelaide Advertiser

The Dominion

‘MAHOMET’ PLAYS, 1600-1900 (in chronological order)

Percy, William. *Mahomet and His Heaven*. 1601. Published in Matthew Dimmock, ed., *William Percy's 'Mahomet and His Heaven': A Critical Edition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Voltaire, *Le Fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète*. 1742. Published in Christopher Todd and Ahmad Gunny, eds., ‘*Le Fanatisme, ou Mahomet le prophète*’, and ‘*De l’Alcoran et de Mahomet*’, Vol 20B in Nicholas Cronk, ed., *The Complete Works of Voltaire/Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2002)

Voltaire, *Mahomet the Impostor. A Tragedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. By His Majesties Servants*, adapted by James Miller and James Hoadly (London: J. Watts and B. Dod, 1744)

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *Mahomet: Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzüge*. 1800.

Günderröde, Karoline von. *Mahomed, der Prophet von Mekka*. 1805. Published in Walter Morgenthaler, ed., *Sämtliche Werke und ausgewählte Studien* (Basel and Frankfurt a.M.: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1990)

Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph von. *Mohammed oder die Eroberung von Mekka*. 1823.

Miles, George H. *Mohammed, the Arabian Prophet, a Tragedy in Five Acts* (Boston: Phillips, Samson, & Co., 1850)

Buchanan, McKean. *Mohammed, a Drama in Two Acts*. 1853. Add MS 52939 E, Lord Chamberlain’s Collection, British Library

Bornier, Henri de. *Mahomet, drame en cinq actes, en vers* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1890); first published in *Le Correspondant*, 10 April 1889

Bornier, Henri de. *Mahomet*. English translation by Florence Stoker, 1888–89. MS 09542, Box 21, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage

Caine, Hall. *Mahomet*. Typewritten manuscript and annotated drafts of individual acts, 1890. MS 09542, Box 21, Hall Caine Papers, Manx National Heritage

Pfordten, Otto von der. *Mohammed, dramatisches Gedicht in fünf Aufzügen*. 1898.

PUBLISHED SOURCES

Adams, W. Davenport, *A Dictionary of the Drama: A Guide to the Plays, Playwrights, Players, and Playhouses of the United Kingdom and America, from the Earliest Times to the Present* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904)

A Quarter Century of the Mahomedan Literary Society of Calcutta: A Résumé of its Work from 1863 to 1889, [with an account of] the Jubilee of the Twenty-Fifth Year [and an account of] An Ordinary Meeting (Calcutta: Mahomedan Literary Society, 1889)

Archer, William, *Henry Irving, Actor and Manager: A Critical Study* (London: Field and Tuer, 1883)

———. *The Theatrical 'World' for 1893* (London: Walter Scott, n.d.)

Aria, Mrs. [Eliza Davis], *My Sentimental Self* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1922)

Arnold, Matthew, 'A Persian Passion Play', in *Essays in Criticism*, rev. edn (London: Macmillan, 1875), pp. 259–307

Aveling, Thomas W, *Outside the Fold: The External Relationships of Congregational Churches, The Address Delivered at the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union, Bradford, October 10th, 1876* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876)

Beaumarchais, Pierre, *The Marriage of Figaro*, trans. by David Coward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Beerbohm, Max, 'Dandies and Dandies', in *The Works of Max Beerbohm with a Bibliography by John Lane* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1896), pp. 3–29

———, *Herbert Beerbohm Tree: Some Memories of Him and of His Art* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1920)

———, *Mainly on the Air* (London: Heinemann, 1957)

Brereton, Austin, *The Life of Henry Irving*, 2 vols (London: Longmans & Co., 1908)

Broadbent, R. J., *Annals of the Liverpool Stage* (Liverpool: Edward Howell, 1908)

Burton, Richard Francis, *The Book of The Thousand Nights and a Night: A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, 10 vols (London and Benares: Kama Shastra Society, 1885) [six-volume sequel published 1886–88]

———, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1857)

Caine, Hall, *The Bondman: A New Saga* (London: Heinemann, 1890)

- , *Capt'n Davy's Honeymoon, The Last Confession, The Blind Mother* (London: Heinemann, 1893)
- , *The Christian* (London: Heinemann, 1897)
- , *The Deemster: A Romance* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1887)
- , *The Eternal City* (London: Heinemann, 1901)
- , *The Mahdi; or, Love and Race: A Drama in Story* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1894)
- , *The Manxman* (London: Heinemann, 1894)
- , *The Master of Man: The Story of a Sin* (London: Heinemann, 1921)
- , *Moral Responsibility in the Novel and the Drama, Mr. Hall Caine's address, to be delivered on opening the session of the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1894* (London: Horace Cox, 1894)
- , *My Story* (London: Heinemann, 1908)
- , 'The New Watchwords of Fiction', *Contemporary Review*, 57 (April 1890), 479–88
- , *Politics and Art: A Lecture Delivered at the Royal Institution, Liverpool* (Liverpool: The Secretary, Notes and Queries Society, Royal Institution, 1880)
- , *The Prodigal Son* (London: Heinemann, 1904)
- , *Richard III and Macbeth: The Spirit of Romantic Play in Relationship to the Principles of Greek and of Gothic Art, and to the Picturesque Interpretations of Mr. Henry Irving: A Dramatic Study* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1877)
- , *The Scapegoat: A Romance* (London: Heinemann, 1891)
- , *The Shadow of a Crime: A Cumbrian Romance* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1885)
- , *A Son of Hagar: A Romance of Our Time* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1886)
- , *The White Prophet* (London: Heinemann, 1909)
- , *Why I Wrote 'The White Prophet'* (London: Collier and Co., 1909)
- , *The Woman of Knockaloe: A Parable* (London: Cassell & Co., 1923)
- , *The Woman Thou Gavest Me* (London: Heinemann, 1913)

Campbell, Mrs. Patrick, *My Life and Some Letters* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1922)

Carlyle, Thomas, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: James Fraser, 1841)

Catalogue of the Working Library of Ellen Terry at Smallhythe Place (Tenterden, Kent: National Trust, 1977)

Chouhan, Anjna, and Denis Salter, eds., *Lives of Shakespearian Actors, Part V, Vol 2: Henry Irving* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012)

Cockin, Katherine, ed., *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry: Vol 1, 1865–1888, and Vol 2, 1889–1893* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010–11)

Collins, Horace, *My Best Riches: Story of a Stone Rolling Round the World and the Stage* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1941)

Craig, Edward Gordon, *Henry Irving* (London: J. M. Dent, 1930)

Filon, Augustin, *The English Stage: Being an Account of the Victorian Drama*, trans. by Frederic Whyte (London: John Milne, 1897)

Fitzgerald, Percy, *Henry Irving: A Record of Twenty Years at the Lyceum* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1893)

—————, *Sir Henry Irving* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906)

Flower, Newman, *Just as it Happened* (London: Cassell, 1950)

—————, ed., *The Journals of Arnold Bennett: Vol 1, 1896–1910; Vol 2, 1911–1920; and Vol 3: 1921–1928* (London: Cassell, 1932–33)

G. M. G., *The Stage Censor: An Historical Sketch: 1544–1907* (London: Sampson Low & Company, 1908)

Goethes Werke (Weimarer Ausgabe), Abt. 4, Bd. 15, 1800-01 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1894)

Great Britain, Parliament, Lords and Commons, *Report from the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the Stage Plays (Censorship); together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices* (London: HMSO, 1909)

Great Britain, Parliament, Commons, *Report from the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, and Index* (London: HMSO, 1892)

- Hali, Altaf Husayn, 'Poet's Call for Resurgence and Progress under the British Rule', in Aziz Ahmad and G. E. von Grunebaum, eds., *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan, 1857–1968* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970), pp. 97–99
- Harker, Joseph, *Studio and Stage* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1924)
- Harris, Walter, *The Land of an African Sultan: Travels in Morocco 1887, 1888, and 1889* (London: Sampson Low & Co., 1889)
- Hichens, Robert, *Yesterday* (London: Cassell, 1947)
- The India Office List for 1891, containing an Account of the Services of Officers in the Indian Service and Other Information* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1891)
- Irving, Henry, 'The Art of Acting', in *The Drama: Addresses by Henry Irving*. (London: Heinemann, 1893; repr. 1989), pp. 35–82
- , 'The Stage as It Is' in *The Drama: Addresses by Henry Irving* (London: Heinemann, 1893; repr. 1989), pp. 1–34
- Irving, Washington, *Life of Mahomet* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850)
- Jerome, Jerome K., *My Life and Times* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926)
- Jones, Henry Arthur, *The Shadow of Henry Irving* (London: Richards, 1931)
- Joseph, Michael, *The Commercial Side of Literature* (London: Hutchinson, 1925)
- Kenyon, C. Fred, *Hall Caine: The Man and the Novelist* (London: Greening and Co., 1901)
- Knight, Joseph, *Theatrical Notes* (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1893)
- Lane-Poole, Stanley, *The Speeches and Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammad* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1882)
- , *Studies in a Mosque* (London: Allen & Co., 1883)
- Lemaître, Jules, *Impressions de Théâtre* (Paris: Lecène, Oudin et Cie, 1891)
- MacCarthy, Desmond, *Portraits* (London and New York: Putnam, 1931)
- Mackenzie, Compton, *My Life and Times: Octave Four, 1907-1915* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965)
- Marbury, Elisabeth, *My Crystal Ball: Reminiscences* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1924)
- Mascagni, Pietro, *The Eternal City [Incidental music to the play by Hall Caine]* (London: Metzler & Co., 1902)

Memoirs of John Howard Payne, the American Roscius (London: John Miller, 1815)

The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain, Collected from Oral Tradition by Colonel Sir Lewis Pelly, revised with explanatory notes by Arthur N. Wollaston [with a sketch of the origin of the Shiah schism and of the manner of the performance of the play in the East by Sir George C. M. Birdwood] (London: W. H. Allen and Company, 1879)

Mounet-Sully, Jean, *Souvenirs d'un tragedian* (Paris: Pierre Lafitte, 1917)

Muir, William, *The Life of Mahomet and History of Islam to the Era of the Hegira*, 4 vols (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858–61)

—————, *Mahomet and Islam: A Sketch of the Prophet's Life from Original Sources* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1884)

Norris, Samuel, *Two Men of Manxland: Hall Caine, Novelist, T. E. Brown, Poet* (Douglas, Isle of Man: Norris Modern Press, 1947)

Parker, Louis N., *Several of My Lives* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1928)

Pool, John J., *Studies in Mohammedanism, Historical and Doctrinal, with a Chapter on Islam in England* (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892)

Pond, James Burton, *Eccentricities of Genius: Memories of Famous Men and Women of the Platform and Stage* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1901)

‘Proclamation by the Queen in Council to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India (published by the Governor-General at Allahabad, November 1st, 1858)’, in C. H.

Philips, H. L. Singh, and B. N. Pandey, eds., *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1857 to 1947: Select Documents* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 10–11

Quilliam, William Henry [Abdullah Quilliam], *The Faith of Islam, an Explanatory Sketch of the ... Tenets of the Moslem Religion* (Liverpool: T. Dobb & Co., 1889)

Rees, James, *The Life of Edwin Forrest with Reminiscences and Personal Recollections* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Brothers, 1874)

Rossetti, William Michael, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters with a Memoir* (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895)

Saintsbury, H. A., and Cecil Palmer, eds., *We Saw Him Act: A Symposium on the Art of Henry Irving* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939)

Sampson, George, ‘Henry Irving’, in *Seven Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), pp. 158–98

Scott, Clement, *Ellen Terry* (New York: Stokes, 1900)

—————, *From 'The Bells' to 'King Arthur': A Critical Record of the First-Night Productions at the Lyceum Theatre from 1871 to 1895* (London: John MacQueen, 1897)

Shaw, George Bernard, *The Critics of 'The White Prophet'* (London: Heinemann, 1909)

—————, *Collected Letters, 1898-1901*, ed. by Dan H. Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1972)

—————, *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet: with Preface on the Censorship* (London: Constable, 1913)

—————, *Statement of the Evidence in Chief of George Bernard Shaw Before the Joint Committee on Stage Plays [Censorship and Theatre Licensing]* (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1909)

Smith, Reginald Bosworth, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism* (London: Smith & Elder, 1874)

Stoker, Bram, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1906)

Terry, Ellen, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs, with a Preface, Notes, and Additional Biographical Chapters by Edith Craig and Christopher St. John* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933)

—————, *The Story of My Life* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1908)

Tilley, Vesta [Lady de Frece], *Recollections of Vesta Tilley* (London: Hutchinson, 1934)

Tree, Maud, 'Herbert and I', in Max Beerbohm, ed., *Herbert Beerbohm Tree: Some Memories of Him and of His Art* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1920), pp. 1–170

Walkley, A. B., *Playhouse Impressions* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892)

Wilde, Oscar, 'The Decay of Lying: A Dialogue', in *Intentions* (London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., 1891), pp. 1–55

Williams, Bransby, *An Actor's Story* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1909)

—————, *Bransby Williams, By Himself* (London: Hutchinson, 1954)

SECONDARY SOURCES

Ahmad, Aziz, and G. E. von Grunebaum, eds., *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan, 1857–1968* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970)

Al-Amr, Saleh Muhammad, *The Hijaz under Ottoman Rule, 1869-1914: Ottoman Vali, the Sharif of Mecca, and the Growth of British Influence* (Riyadh: Riyadh University Publications, 1978)

Ali, Kecia, *The Lives of Muhammad* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014)

Ali, Md. Mohar, ed., *Autobiography and Other Writings of Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur* (Chittagong: The Mehrub Publications, 1968)

Ali, Muhsin Jassim, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1981)

Allen, Terry, 'Aniconism and Figural Representation in Islamic Art', in *Five Essays on Islamic Art* (Sebastopol, California: Solipsist Press, 1988), pp. 17–37

Allen, Vivien, *Dear Mr. Rossetti: The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Hall Caine, 1878-1881* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000)

—————, 'Hall Caine: Prince of Romantic Novelists', *Million: The Magazine about Popular Fiction*, 8 (March–April 1992), 41–45

—————, *Hall Caine: Portrait of a Victorian Romancer* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997)

Almond, Philip C., *Heretic and Hero: Muhammad and the Victorians*, *Studies in Oriental Religious Studies*, 18 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989)

—————, 'Western Images of Islam, 1700–1900', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 49 (2003), 412–24

Altick, Richard D., *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1957)

—————, 'Nineteenth-Century English Best-Sellers: A Further List', *Studies in Bibliography*, 22 (1969), 197–206

—————, 'Nineteenth-Century English Best-Sellers: A Third List', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), 235–241

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991)

Ansari, Humayun, *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain Since 1800* (London: C. Hurst, 2004)

Arafat, Walid N., 'New Light on the Story of Banu Qurayza and the Jews of Medina', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 (1976), 100–07

Armstrong, Karen, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (London: Gollancz, 1995)

Auerbach, Nina, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987)

Aziz, K. K., *Britain and Muslim India: A Study of British Public Opinion vis-à-vis the Development of Muslim Nationalism in India, 1857–1947* (London: Heinemann, 1963)

Bagwell, Philip S., *Outcast London, A Christian Response: The West London Mission of the Methodist Church, 1887–1987* (London: Epworth Press, 1987)

Baker, David Erskine, Isaac Reed, and Stephen Jones, *Biographia Dramatica; or, A Companion to the Playhouse*, 3 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, 1812)

Baker, Randall, *King Husain and the Kingdom of Hejaz* (Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1979)

Ballaster, Ros, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1662–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Balme, Christopher B., *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Barbour, Richmond, *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Barish, Jonas A., *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981)

Bar-Yosef, Eitan, *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799–1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005)

Bar-Yosef, Eitan, and Nadia Valman, 'The Jew' in *Late Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Bassett, Troy J., 'The Production of Three-Volume Novels in Britain, 1863–97', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 102 (2008), 61–75

Bassett, Troy J., and Christina M. Walter, 'Booksellers and Bestsellers: British Book Sales as Documented by *The Bookman*, 1891–1906', *Book History* 4 (2001), 205–236

Bayly, C. A., *The Raj: India and the British, 1600–1947* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1990)

Beckerlegge, Gwilym, 'Followers of "Mohammed, Kalee, and Dada Nanuk": The Presence of Islam and South Asian Religions in Victorian Britain', in John Wolfe, ed., *Religion in Victorian Britain*, Vol 5 of *Culture and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 221–67

Beer, Gillian, *The Romance* (London: Methuen, 1970)

Bell, Robert, 'Dramatic Anxieties: William Bodham Donne, Censorship, and the Victorian Theatre, 1849–1874' (unpublished doctoral thesis, McMaster University, 2005)

Bennett, Clinton, *Victorian Images of Islam* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1992)

Besançon, Alain, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, trans. by Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

Bhatia, Nandi, *Acts of Authority/Acts of Resistance: Theater and Politics in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004)

Bierman, Joseph S., 'The Genesis and Dating of *Dracula* from Bram Stoker's Working Notes', in Margaret L. Carter, ed., *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), pp. 51–55

Bingham, Madeleine, *The Great Lover: The Life and Art of Herbert Beerbohm Tree* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978)

—————, *Henry Irving and the Victorian Theatre* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1978)

Birchwood, Matthew, 'Dramatic Representations of Islam in England, 1640–85' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2002)

Bloom, Clive, *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction Since 1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003)

Boespflug, François, *Caricaturer dieu? Pouvoirs et dangers de l'image* (Paris: Bayard, 2006)

Booth, Michael R., 'The Acting of Henry Irving', *Theatre Notebook*, 59 (2005), 122–142

—————, *English Melodrama* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965)

—————, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

—————, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850–1910* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981)

Bosworth, C. E., 'A Dramatisation of the Prophet Muhammad's Life: Henri de Bornier's *Mahomet*', *Numen*, 17 (August 1970), 105–117

Boyle, Nicholas, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000)

Brantlinger, Patrick, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988)

—————, *Victorian Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009)

Bratton, Jacky, ed., *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790–1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991)

—————, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Brockopp, Jonathan E., ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Brooks, Peter, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976)

Brownlow, Kevin, *Behind the Mask of Innocence: Sex, Violence, Prejudice, Crime – Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era* (New York: Knopf, 1990)

Bruce, Harold L., 'Period of Greatest Popularity of Voltaire's Plays on the English Stage', *Modern Language Notes*, 33 (January 1918), 20–23

Burke, Helen M., *Riotous Performances: The Struggle for Hegemony in the Irish Theatre, 1712–1784* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003)

Burton, Antoinette, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)

Cabantous, Alain, *Blasphemy: Impious Speech in the West from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)

Cain, P. J., and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London: Longman, 1993)

Cannadine, David, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Canning, Charlotte M. and Thomas Postlewait, eds., *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010)

Caracciolo, Peter L., ed., *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of 'The Thousand and One Nights' into British Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988)

Carlson, Marvin, *The French Stage in the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1972)

Carnegie, Dale, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937)

Carruthers, Neil, 'Theatrical Censorship in Paris from 1850 to 1905', *New Zealand Journal of French Studies*, 3 (1982), 21–41

Cassidy, John A., 'Robert Buchanan and the Fleshly Controversy', *PMLA*, 67 (March 1952), 65–93

Chakravarty, Gautam, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Chelkowski, Peter J., ed., *Eternal Performance: Ta'ziyeh and Other Shiite Rituals* (Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2010)

—————, 'From Karbala to New York City: Ta'ziyeh on the Move', *The Drama Review* (special issue), 49 (Winter 2005)

Cheyette, Bryan, *Constructions of 'The Jew' in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Cheyette, Bryan, and Nadia Valman, eds., *The Image of the Jew in European Liberal Culture, 1789–1914* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004)

Clément, Jean-François, 'L'image dans le monde arabe: interdits et possibilités', in Gilbert Beaugé and Jean-François Clément, eds., *L'image dans le monde arabe* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 1995), pp. 11–42

Codell, Julie F., *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identities and the British and Colonial Press* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003)

Codell, Julie F., and Dianne Sachko Macleod, eds., *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998)

Cohn, Bernard, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 165–209

Conolly, L. W., *The Censorship of English Drama, 1737–1824* (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1976)

Dallmayr, Fred, *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996)

Daly, Nicholas, *Modernism, Romance, and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Danahay, Martin, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art, and Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)

Daniel, Norman, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960)

—————, *Islam, Europe, and Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966)

Darnton, Robert, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (London: The British Library, 2014)

Davis, Jim, and Victor Emeljanow. *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840–1880* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001)

Davis, Tracy C., *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

De Gaury, Gerald. *Rulers of Mecca* (London: George C. Harrap & Co., 1951)

De Jongh, Nicholas, *Politics, Prudery, and Perversions: The Censoring of the English Stage, 1901–1968* (London: Methuen, 2000)

Dentith, Simon, *Epic and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Dey, Amit, *The Image of the Prophet in Bengali Muslim Piety, 1850–1947* (Kolkata: Readers Services, 2005)

Dimmock, Matthew, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

—————, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)

—————, *William Percy's 'Mahomet and His Heaven': A Critical Edition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Donovan, Robert A., 'Carlyle and the Climate of Hero-Worship', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 42 (Winter 1973), 122–41

Downey, Katherine Brown, *Perverse Midrash: Oscar Wilde, André Gide, and Censorship of Biblical Drama* (New York: Continuum, 2004)

Drew, John, *India and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Dutton, Richard, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (London: Macmillan, 1991)

Eighteen-Bisang, Robert, and Elizabeth Miller, *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula: A Facsimile Edition* (London: McFarland & Company, 2008)

Einboden, Jeffrey, *Islam and Romanticism: Muslim Currents from Goethe to Emerson* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014)

Elias, Jamal J., *Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012)

Eliot, Simon, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800-1919* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1994)

Elliott, John R., *Playing God: Medieval Mysteries on the Modern Stage* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1989)

Federico, Annette, *Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and Late-Victorian Literary Culture* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 2000)

Feldman, David, 'Jews in London, 1880–1914'. In Raphael Samuel, ed., *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 207–29.

Feltes, N. N., *Literary Capital and the Late Victorian Novel* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993)

Fichtner, Paula Sutter, 'Print vs. Speech: Censoring the Stage in Eighteenth-Century Vienna', in Elizabeth Powers, ed., *Freedom of Speech: The History of an Idea* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), pp. 81-101

Findlater, Richard. *Banned! A Review of Theatrical Censorship in Britain* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967)

Finestein, Israel, *Jewish Society in Victorian England: Collected Essays* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993)

Finkel, Caroline, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1923* (London: John Murray, 2006)

Fischer-Lichte, Erika, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (London: Routledge, 2008)

Fitzpatrick, Coeli, and Adam Hani Walker, eds. *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2014)

Florance, John A., 'Theatrical Censorship in Britain 1901–1968' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, 1980)

Foulkes, Richard, *Church and Stage in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

—————, 'The French Play in London: The Comédie-Française at the Gaiety Theatre, 1879', *Theatre Notebook*, 56 (2002), 125–31

—————, *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

—————, 'The Royal Dramatic College', *Nineteenth-Century Theatre Research*, 13 (1985), 63–85

—————, ed., *Henry Irving: A Re-Evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)

Fowell, Frank, and Frank Palmer, *Censorship in England* (London: Frank Palmer, 1913)

Fowler, H. W., *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926; repr. 2010)

Fraser, W. Hamish, *The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1981)

Freedberg, David, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989)

Freshwater, Helen, *Theatre Censorship in Britain: Silencing, Censure, and Suppression* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Fromkin, David, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1989)

Frye, Northrup, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976)

Gainor, J. Ellen, ed., *Imperialism and Theatre: Essays on World Theatre, Drama, and Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995)

Geaves, Ron, *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Markfield, Leicestershire: Kube Publishing, 2010)

Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973)

Gilham, Jamie, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Gilliat-Ray, Sophie, *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Glubb, John Bagot, *The Life and Times of Muhammad* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970)

Goldstein, Robert J., ed., *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship of the Theater in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009)

Gopal, Ram. *Indian Muslims: A Political History, 1858–1947* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1959)

Gould, Marty, *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and the Imperial Encounter* (New York: Routledge, 2011)

Grabar, Oleg, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987)

Grenville, John Ashley Soames, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Athlone Press, 1964)

Grewal, Indepol, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1996)

Griffin, Ben, *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain: Masculinity, Political Culture, and the Struggle for Women's Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Gross, John, *Shylock: Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992)

Gunny, Ahmad, *The Prophet Muhammad in French and English Literature, 1650 to the Present* (Markfield: The Islamic Foundation, 2010)

Gutmann, Joseph, *No Graven Images: Studies in Art and the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971)

Hadley, Elaine, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800-1885* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995)

Halbertal, Moshe, and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992)

Hall, Lesley A., *Sex, Gender, and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000)

Hall, N. John, *Max Beerbohm Caricatures* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997)

Hammond, Mary, 'Hall Caine and the Melodrama on Page, Stage, and Screen', *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*, 31 (June 2004), 39–57

—————, 'Hitchcock and *The Manxman*: A Victorian Bestseller on the Silent Screen', in R. Barton Palmer and David Boyd, eds., *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adapter* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2011), pp. 47–66

—————, *Reading, Publishing, and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Haque, Enamul, *Nawad Bahadur Abdul Latif: His Writings and Related Documents* (Dacca: Samudra Prokashani, 1968)

Hardy, Peter, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972)

Harris, Max, *Theatre and Incarnation* (London: Macmillan, 1990)

Hays, Michael, 'Representing Empire: Class, Culture, and the Popular Theatre in the Nineteenth Century', in J. Ellen Gainor, *Imperialism and Theatre: Essays on World Theatre, Drama, and Performance, 1795–1995* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 132–147

Hays, Michael, and Anastasia Nikolopoulou, eds., *Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996)

Hemmings, F. W. J., *Theatre and State in France, 1760–1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Hilger, Stephanie M., 'Staging Islam: Karoline von Günderrode's *Mahomed, der Prophet von Mekka*', in *Women Write Back: Strategies of Response and the Dynamics of European Literary Culture, 1790–1805* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 91–117

Hodgson, Marshall G. S., *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilisation*, 3 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974)

Holder, Heidi, 'Melodrama, Realism, and Empire on the British Stage', in J. S. Bratton, ed., *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire on Stage, 1790–1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 129–49

Holmes, Colin, *Antisemitism in British Society, 1876–1939* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979)

Holmes, Rachel, *Eleanor Marx: A Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)

Holroyd, Michael, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving, and Their Remarkable Families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008)

Holt, P. M., Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, *The Indian Subcontinent, South-East Asia, Africa, and the Muslim West*, Vol 2 of *The Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970)

Hourani, Albert, *Europe and the Middle East* (London: Macmillan, 1980)

—————, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Hughes, Alan, 'Henry Irving's Artistic Use of Stage Lighting', *Theatre Notebook*, 33 (1979), 100–09

—————, 'Henry Irving's Finances: The Lyceum Accounts, 1878-1899', *Nineteenth Century Theatre Research*, 1 (Autumn 1973), 79-87

—————, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

—————, 'The Lyceum Staff: A Victorian Theatrical Organisation', *Theatre Notebook*, 28 (1974), 11–17

Hull, Gary, *Muhammad: The "Banned" Images* (Gilbert, Arizona: Voltaire Press, 2009)

Hume, Robert D., *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Hyam, Ronald, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914* (New York: Palgrave, 2002)

Hynes, Samuel, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968)

Inalcik, Halil, ed., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Irving, Laurence, *Henry Irving: The Actor and His World* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951)

Irwin, Robert, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2005)

—————, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents* (New York: Overlook Press, 2006)

James, Lawrence, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997)

Johnston, John, *The Lord Chamberlain's Blue Pencil* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990)

- Jones, T. Hughie, 'William Bodham Donne: Portrait in a Landscape' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 2002)
- Kabbani, Rana, *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient* (London: Pandora, 1994)
- Kaul, Chandrika, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c. 1880-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)
- Kennedy, Paul, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865–1980* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981)
- Kenyon, C. Fred, *Hall Caine: The Man and the Novelist* (London: Greening & Co., 1901)
- Khalidi, Tarif, *Images of Muhammad: The Evolution of Portrayals of the Prophet in Islam Across the Centuries* (New York: Doubleday Religion, 2009)
- Khattak, Shahin Kuli Khan, *Islam and the Victorians: Nineteenth Century Perceptions of Muslim Practices and Beliefs* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007)
- Kidwai, A. R., *Literary Orientalism: A Companion* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2009)
- King, G. R. D., 'Islam, Iconoclasm, and the Declaration of Doctrine', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 48 (1985), 267–277
- Klausen, Jytte, *The Cartoons That Shook the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)
- Knight, Mark, and Thomas Woodman, *Biblical Religion and the Novel, 1700–2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)
- Krakovitch, Odile, *Hugo Censuré: La Liberté au Théâtre au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1985)
- Laisram, Pallavi Pandit, *Viewing the Islamic Orient: British Travel Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2006)
- Landa, M. J., *The Jew in Drama* (London: P. S. King, 1926)
- Landow, George P., *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art, and Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980)
- Langer, William, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902* (New York: Knopf, 1935)
- , *European Alliances and Alignments: 1871–1890* (New York: Knopf, 1931)
- The Last Khedive of Egypt: Memoirs of Abbas Hilmi II*, trans. and ed. by Amira Sonbol (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1998)

- Law, Graham, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000)
- Leavis, Q. D., *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1939)
- Ledger, Sally, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)
- Lewis, Bernard, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)
- , *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)
- Lewis, Reina, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- Lings, Martin, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: George Allen & Unwin and The Islamic Text Society, 1983)
- Litvak, Joseph, *Caught in the Act: Theatricality in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)
- Long, Andrew C., *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication, 1880–1930* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014)
- Longino, Michèle, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Lovell, Mary S., *A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton* (London: Little, Brown, 1998)
- MacKenzie, John M., *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)
- , *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)
- , ed. *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992)
- MacWilliams, David C., 'The Novelistic Melodramas of Hall Caine: Seventy Years On', *English Literature in Transition*, 45 (2002), 426–439
- Mahani, Mahnia A. Nematollahi, *The Holy Drama: Persian Passion Play in Modern Iran* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2013)
- Malekpour, Jamshid, *The Islamic Drama* (London: Frank Cass, 2004)
- Manvell, Roger, *Ellen Terry* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968)

Marsh, Joss, *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)

Marshall, Gail, *Actresses on the Victorian Stage: Feminine Performance and the Galatea Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

—————, 'Eleanor Marx and Shakespeare', in John Stokes, ed., *Eleanor Marx: Life, Work, Contacts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 69–81

Martino, Pierre, 'L'interdiction du *Mahomet* de M. Henri de Bornier', in *Cinquantenaire de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger (1881–1931): Articles publiés par les professeurs de la faculté, par les soins de la Société historique algérienne* (Algiers: J. Carbonel, 1932), pp. 333–342

—————, 'L'interdiction du *Mahomet* de Voltaire et La Dédicace au Pape, 1742–1745', in *Mémorial Henri Basset: Nouvelles Etudes Nord-Africaines et Orientales, L'Institut des Hautes-Etudes Marocaine* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1928), pp. 89–103

—————, 'Mahomet en France au XVIIe et au XVIIIe Siècle', in *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Orientalistes, Alger 1905, Troisième Partie, Langues Musulmanes* (Paris, 1907; Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1968), pp. 206–241

Masani, Zareer, *Indian Tales of the Raj* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1987)

Mason, A. E. W., *Sir George Alexander and the St. James' Theatre* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1935)

Mason, Philip, *The Men Who Ruled India* (New York: Norton, 1985)

Matar, Nabil, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Mayer, David, 'Encountering Melodrama', in Kerry Powell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 145–63

—————, ed., *Henry Irving and The Bells: Irving's Personal Script of the Play by Leopold Lewis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980)

—————, ed., *Playing Out the Empire: Ben-Hur and Other Toga Plays and Films, 1883–1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

McAleer, Joseph, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914–1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992)

McDonald, Peter D., *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

- McGann, Jerome J., *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)
- McIntyre, Ian, *Garrick* (London: Allen Lane, 1999)
- McLean, Gerald, *The Rise of Oriental Travel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)
- Medlicott, W. N., 'Lord Salisbury and Turkey', *History*, 12 (October 1927), 244–247
- Meisel, Martin, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983)
- Melman, Billie, *The Culture of History: English Uses of the Past 1800–1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- , *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: Flappers and Nymphs* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988)
- , *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion, and Work* (London: Macmillan, 1992)
- Metcalf, Thomas R., *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Miles, Margaret, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985)
- Miller, Derek, 'Performative Performances: A History and Theory of the Copyright Performance', *Theatre Journal*, 64 (2012), 161–77
- Mitchell, Robert E., 'The Genesis, Sources, Composition, and Reception of Voltaire's *Mahomet*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Ohio State University, 1961)
- Mokhtabad, Seyed Mostafa, 'The Concept of Tashbih (Imitation) in Ta'ziyeh Among Shiite Theologians', *International Journal of Humanities*, 8 (Fall 2001), 33–36
- Mommsen, Katharina, *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*, trans. by Michael M. Metzger (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2014)
- Moore-Gilbert, Bart, *Postcolonial Theory, Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London and New York: Verso, 1997)
- Morash, Christopher, *A History of the Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Mukherjee, Sushil Kumar, *The Story of the Calcutta Theatres, 1753–1980* (Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi, 1982)

Murray, Christopher D., 'D. G. Rossetti, A. C. Swinburne, and R. W. Buchanan: The Fleshly School Revisited', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* (Autumn 1982), 206–234 and (Spring 1983), 176–207

Murray, Paul, *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004)

Musawi, Muhsin Jassim, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Washington, DC: Three Continents Press, 1981)

Nahshon, Edna, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005)

—————, 'Philosemitism on the London Stage: Sydney Grundy's *An Old Jew*', in Edna Nahshon, ed., *Jewish Theatre: A Global View* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 133–52

Nash, David, *Blasphemy in Modern Britain: 1789 to the Present* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999)

Nash, Geoffrey, *From Empire to Orient: Travellers to the Middle East, 1830–1926* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005)

Newby, Gordon Darnell, *A History of the Jews of Arabia: From Ancient Times to Their Eclipse Under Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988)

Newey, Katherine, and Jeffrey Richards, *John Ruskin and the Victorian Theatre* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

Nicholson, Steve, *The Censorship of British Drama, 1900–1968*, 4 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003–2011)

Nicoll, Allardyce, *English Drama, 1900–1930: The Beginnings of the Modern Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973)

—————, *A History of Late Nineteenth-Century Drama, 1850–1900*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946)

O'Brien, Paula Joan, 'The Life and Works of James Miller, 1704–1744, with Particular Reference to the Satiric Content of his Poetry and Plays' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1979)

Ochsenwald, William, *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz under Ottoman Control, 1840–1908* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1984)

- O'Connell, Michael, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Orel, Harold, *Popular Fiction in England, 1914–1918* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992)
- Owen, Roger, *Lord Cromer: Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Özcan, Azmi, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans, and Britain, 1877-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1997)
- Palmer, John, *The Censor and the Theatres* (New York: M. Kennerley, 1913)
- Pao, Angela C., *The Orient of the Boulevards: Exoticism, Empire, and Nineteenth-Century French Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998)
- Pari, Biswamoy, ed., *The 1857 Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Pearson, Hesketh, *Beerbohm Tree: His Life and Laughter* (London: Methuen, 1956)
- Peters, Margot, *Mrs Pat: The Life of Mrs Patrick Campbell* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985)
- Pick, Daniel, *Svengali's Web: The Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)
- Platt, D. C. M., *Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- Porter, Bernard, *Critics of Empire: British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa, 1895–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1968)
- Postlewait, Thomas, 'From Melodrama to Realism: The Suspect History of American Drama', in Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulou, eds., *Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 39–60
- Prideaux, Tom, *Love or Nothing: The Life and Times of Ellen Terry* (London: Millington Books, 1976)
- Pugh, Roy, *Wingate Pasha: The Life of General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate, 1861-1953* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011)
- Qureshi, M. Naeem, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918–1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1999)
- Qureshi, Sadiah, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011)

- Ragussis, Michael, *Figures of Conversion: 'The Jewish Question' and English National Identity* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995)
- Reetz, Dietrich, *Islam in the Public Sphere: Religious Groups in India 1900–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Reeves, Minou, *Muhammad in Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 2000)
- Richards, David B., *Goethe's Search for the Muse* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1979)
- Richards, Jeffrey, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- , *Hollywood's Ancient Worlds* (London: Continuum, 2008)
- , 'Irving and His Scenic Artists', in Richard Foulkes, ed., *Henry Irving: A Re-Evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 99–116
- , ed., *Sir Henry Irving: Theatre, Culture, and Society* (Keele, Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1994)
- , *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005)
- Robinson-Dunn, Diane, *The Harem, Slavery and British Imperial Culture: Anglo-Muslim Relations in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006)
- Rosenberg, Edgar, *From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960)
- Ross, Ellen, 'St. Francis in Soho: Emmeline Pethick, Mary Neal, the West London Wesleyan Mission, and the Allure of "Simple Living" in the 1890s', *Church History*, 83 (2014), 843–883
- Roston, Murray, *Biblical Drama in England from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Faber, 1968)
- Roth, Cecil, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978)
- Rowell, George, *Queen Victoria Goes to the Theatre* (London: Paul Elek, 1978)
- , *Theatre in the Age of Irving* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981)
- , *The Victorian Theatre, 1792–1914: A Survey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978)

- Said, Edward W., *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994)
- , *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979)
- Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985)
- Scheick, William J., *The Ethos of Romance at the Turn of the Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994)
- Schimmel, Annemarie, *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985)
- Schoch, Richard W., *Queen Victoria and the Theatre of Her Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004)
- Schochet, Jacob Immanuel, *Mashiach: The Principle of Mashiach and the Messianic Era in Jewish Law and Tradition* (New York: S.I.E., 1992)
- Schrader, Neil Hazen, 'The Life and Works of Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine (1853–1931)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Case Western Reserve University, 1954)
- Schramm, Jan-Melissa, *Atonement and Self-Sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- Shannon, Richard, *The Age of Salisbury, 1881–1902: Unionism and Empire* (London: Longman, 1996)
- Sharafuddin, Mohammed, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994)
- Sharpe, Lesley, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Shaw, Stanford L., and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)
- Sheldon, Esther Keck, *Thomas Sheridan of Smock Alley* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967)
- Shellard, Dominic, Steve Nicholson, and Miriam Handley, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets...: A History of British Theatre Censorship* (London: British Library, 2004)
- Shimmin, Nicholas L., 'Hall Caine', in G. A. Cevasco, ed., *The 1890s: An Encyclopedia of British Literature, Art, and Culture* (New York: Garland, 1993), pp. 96–97
- , 'The Making of a Manx Literature: Regional Identity in the Writings of Hall Caine and T. E Brown' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Lancaster, 1988)

Singer, Ben, 'Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism', in Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 72–99

Singleton, Brian, 'Narratives of Nostalgia: Oriental Evasions about the London Stage', in Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, eds., *Representing the Past* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2010), pp. 351–77

—————, *Oscar Asche, Orientalism, and British Musical Comedy* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004)

Smith, Byron Porter, *Islam in English Literature* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1977)

Smith, Colin L., *The Embassy of Sir William White at Constantinople, 1886–1891* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957)

Solbrig, Ingeborg H., 'Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall', in Donald G. Daviau, ed., *Major Figures of Nineteenth-Century Austrian Literature* (Riverside, California: Ariadne Press, 1998), pp. 278–308

—————, 'The Theater, Theory, and Politics: Voltaire's *Le Fanatisme ou Mahomet le prophète* and Goethe's *Mahomet* Adaptation', *Michigan Germanic Studies*, 16 (Spring 1990), 21–43

Sova, Dawn B., *Banned Plays: Censorship Histories of 126 Stage Dramas* (New York: Facts on File, 2004)

Starkey, Janet, and Okasha El Daly, eds., *Desert Travellers: From Herodotus to T. E. Lawrence* (Durham: Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East, 2000)

States, Bert O., *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of the Theatre* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985)

Steele, David, *Lord Salisbury: A Political Biography* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Steiner, George, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989)

Stephens, John Russell, *The Censorship of English Drama, 1824–1901* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

—————, *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre, 1800–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Stewart, Nancy, *La vie et l'oeuvre d'Henri de Bornier* (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1935)

St. John, John, *William Heinemann: A Century of Publishing, 1890–1990* (London: Heinemann, 1990)

Sutherland, John, 'Hall Caine', in *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction*, 2nd edn (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), pp. 95–97

Taylor, George, *Players and Performances in the Victorian Theatre* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989)

Taylor, Miles, 'Queen Victoria and India, 1837–61', *Victorian Studies*, 46 (Winter 2004), 264–274

Teo, Hsu-Ming, *Desert Passions: Orientalism and Romance Novels* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2012)

Tetens, Kristan, 'Commemorating the French Revolution on the Victorian Stage: Henry Irving's *The Dead Heart*', *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*, 32 (Winter 2005), 36–69

—————, '"A Grand Informal Durbar": Henry Irving and the Coronation of Edward VII', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 8 (Autumn 2003), 257–291

—————, 'The Lyceum and the Lord Chamberlain: The Case of Hall Caine's *Mahomet*' in Richard Foulkes, ed., *Henry Irving: A Re-evaluation of the Pre-Eminent Victorian Actor-Manager* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 49–63

Thomas, David, David Carlton, and Anne Etienne, *Theatre Censorship: From Walpole to Wilson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Thomas, Donald, *A Long Time Burning: The History of Literary Censorship in England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969)

Thomas, James, *The Art of the Actor-Manager: Wilson Barrett and the Victorian Theatre* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984)

—————, 'Wilson Barrett's *Hamlet*', *Theatre Journal*, 31 (December 1979), 479–500

Thompson, Andrew, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880-1932* (Harlow: Longman, 2000)

Thompson, Nicola Diane, *Reviewing Sex: Gender and the Reception of Victorian Novel* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996)

Thornton, Lynne, *The Orientalists: Painters – Travellers, 1828–1908* (Paris: ACR, 1983)

Tomlinson, B. R., 'Economics and Empire: The Periphery and the Imperial Economy', in Andrew Porter, ed., *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol 3 of *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 53–74

- Valman, Nadia, *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century British Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Vance, Norman, *Bible and Novel: Narrative Authority and the Death of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Van der Veer, Peter, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)
- Vaninskaya, Anna, *William Morris and the Idea of Community: Romance, History, and Propaganda, 1880-1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010)
- Vargish, Thomas, *The Providential Aesthetic in Victorian Fiction* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1985)
- Varisco, Daniel M., *Reading Orientalism* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2007)
- Vincent, David, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)
- Voskuil, Lynn, *Acting Naturally: Victorian Theatricality and Authenticity* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2004)
- Waller, Philip, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Waters, Hazel, *Racism on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Watt, W. Montgomery, 'Carlyle on Muhammad', *The Hibbert Journal*, 53 (1954–55): 247–254
- , *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953)
- , *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956)
- , *Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961)
- Wearing, J. P., *The London Stage, 1890–1899: A Calendar of Productions, Performers, and Personnel*, 2nd edn (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 2013)
- , *The London Stage, 1900–1909: A Calendar of Productions, Performers, and Personnel*, 2nd edn (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 2013)

—————. *The London Stage, 1910–1919: A Calendar of Productions, Performers, and Personnel*, 2nd edn (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 2013)

—————. *The London Stage, 1920–1929: A Calendar of Productions, Performers, and Personnel*, 2nd edn (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 2014)

—————. *The London Stage, 1930–1939: A Calendar of Productions, Performers, and Personnel*, 2nd edn (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 2014)

Weedon, Alexis, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836–1916* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003)

Whyte, Frederic, *William Heinemann: A Memoir* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Doran, 1929)

Wilshire, Bruce W., *Role Playing and Identity: The Limits of Theatre as a Metaphor* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982)

Wilson, A. E., *East End Entertainment* (London: Arthur Barker, 1954)

Zaidi, Syed, *Victorian Literary Orientalism* (New Delhi: APH, 2010)

Ziter, Edward, *The Orient on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)