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IMAGE OF AN IDEA:
DIDACTIC EXPRESSIONISM IN MEDIEVAL DRAMA
AND
ITS REFLECTION IN MODERN DRAMA

By

Olga Erickson

B. A. University of Montana, 1934

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1967

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Chairman, Board of Examiners


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"So that the Fault lies not in the Audience
desiring Absurdities, but in those who know not
how to give 'em anything else."

-Cervantes

Whenever drama is mutilated by the loss of its public dimension, and becomes an instrument for the amusement of private persons, that loss reflects a crisis in public conscience. For drama, from its religious origins and at its strongest, has been the "unlegislated" conscience of man. Its dialogue with the man of native or acquired "nobility" had stimulated and preserved a humanism which integrated the religious, the political and the esthetic aspects of his life: If a man were to lose his religious conscience, he would also lose his political conscience. To repeat the axiom that the freedom of man is still inseparably bound with his acceptance of such a Christohumanist heritage is hardly necessary. And whenever theater has transmitted this cultural heritage to literate and to non-literate man, it has been valid and vital theater.

But what happens to a drama whose modern audiences "recognize not classical or normative epochs, looking on itself as a new life superior to all previous forms and irreducible to them. . . . The most 'cultured' people

today are suffering from incredible ignorance of history. . . .a retrogression towards barbarism. . .of the man who has no past or who has forgotten it."¹ What Socratic dialogue can drama hold with an audience whose gods are Luxuria and Pragmatism? Knowing nothing of the alternative values which footed respect and opportunity for the individual, Mass Man is ridden by an Incubus more insidious and persistent than any medieval Vice--an overweening Delusion that, knowing nothing, he, the Modern Man knows all; that he is not deluded, that he has the perception to see the truth that there is no truth. In view of, or in reaction to the evident and proliferating tragedies still being birthed of Ira and Avaritia and Superbia, Man rationalizes away any responsibility and dances away in the train of Gula and Accidia.. The consequent Despair or Malaise or Blindness recoils upon the material self, is reflected in the self-pitying theater of the Absurd. Not understanding that his dissatisfactions derive from within, not knowing his own capacity to be more than a producer and user of things, untaught as to alternative values and moral choices, he escapes to the secure bondage of "huge political and social collectives", or to an anarchical, licentious

¹ Ortega y Gasset, Revolt of the Masses (New York, 1932), pp. 31, 66.

"freedom". "The trend toward mechanical materialism is continually balanced by the trend toward escape-at-any-price from the very conditions which are the product of narrow materialism. . ." ² As man celebrates venality as the only reality, Delusion frees him of conflict, will or responsibility except to busy self-gratification and to the System. One amorphous cell of conformity a-go-go, Modern Man denies the Christian-Platonic ethic of a contemplative and self-determinate entity.

Thomas Merton uses Camus' study of revolt to show how this kind of satanic and activist nihilism has in fact entered into the very essence of all the modern power structures that are now in conflict: the "free" Modern Man "now lives and works in order to stockpile the weapons that will destroy him, in an effort to serve a Power structure which he worships as an end in itself and which makes his life more and more meaningless and absurd. . . . Everywhere. . . we find the same contradictions and disorder--all symptomatic of one truth: Our seemingly well-ordered society is a nihilist city of pandemonium, built on hybris and destined for cataclysm." ³

² John Howard Lawson, Theory and Technique of Playwriting (New York, 1960), p. 99.

³ "Can We Survive Nihilism," Saturday Review, April 15, 1967, pp. 18-19.

There is a need for theater again to expose the delusion of the Emperor's clothes.

In an age when other communications media, including the schools, are increasingly subsidized by and subservient to a commercialism with a vested interest in selling concupiscence, there is a need for the theater to teach men where to search "the infinite delight . . . that which shines and is beyond corruption"; and to find wholeness by "placing in flesh and matter the least of values, for these are the things which hold death and must pass away."⁴ If the Christo-humanistic ethic is necessary to the survival of the autonomous individual, then theater is peculiarly and uniquely suited to the communication of that literature in which, according to Arthur Miller, it can be emotionally proved that without moral vision the people must truly perish."⁵ As man becomes increasingly non-verbal and unimaginative, it is the theater that can make perceptual the significance of the "I" that the poet sings. "It can teach the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere,

⁴ William Saroyan, preface to Time of Your Life.

⁵ "The Role of P.E.N.", Saturday Review, June 4, 1966.

tolerant and kind."⁶

It is the theater as "instrument of passion" that can excise and expose the fallibility and gullibility of all men, in larger-than-life "types", upon the boards, that "grabs the theater goer by the heart and brain and shakes, batters or bruises him into some new and preferably unsettling self-knowledge."⁷ Working on the empirically-proved formula that "What we feel is stronger than what we know", many modern playwrights are using medieval dramaturgy to reject superficiality that sees life half and questions nothing. They are writing drama of depth-morality that is not and that never has been a gentle teacher, echoing as it does, John Masefield's demand for violence in drama: "The heart of life can only be laid bare in the agony and exaltation of dreadful acts . . . The vision of agony, of spiritual contest, pushed beyond the limits of dying personality, is exalting and cleansing."⁸

Whether or not he wishes to accomplish such a tonic "rite" for the community, the playwright is using medieval expressionistic techniques (Brechtian though they may be

⁶ Percy Shelley, preface to The Cenci.

⁷ Director Peter Brook, quoted in "Sanity from an Asylum," Look, February 22, 1966.

⁸ as quoted in Lawson, p. 122.

called)! In asserting that man must use his will, the playwright-propagandist is following the didactic pattern of all great drama. To engage a collectivized audience which sees no need for either cleansing or exaltation, no penalty for letting the ids go free, no reward for integrity or for using the will, the playwright must assault them with heavy emotional charges sent through as many senses as possible, and with immediacy of presentational devices.

Whether this formula for anti-realistic "archetypal masque"⁹ is becoming popular because of technique or because of the hard-hitting accusations of hypocrisy and "sell-out" would be difficult to assess. "How can we tell the dancer from the dance?" The shape and action of the play depends upon the idea of the playwright.

It was a year ago that popular and critical success of seven of the top ten shows on Broadway seemed auspicious for the growth of a commercial theater of sensibility and morality; the seven plays from Europe swept like a freshening wind into the 1965-1966 season¹⁰, and whether the emergence of abstract and didactic theater indicated

⁹ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p. 290.

¹⁰ Henry Hewes, "Bests of the 1965-1966 Theater," Saturday Review, June 11, 1966, p. 35.

a rejection of realism on the part of the playwright, or boredom with irrelevant minutiae on the part of the audience, the mink-clad ladies applauded. It was not the fault of those audiences that the following season, 1966-1967, did not venture anything of aspiration or taste; Mr. Hewes of Saturday Review sums up: "The negative aspects of the past theater season are depressingly obvious. . . . None of the new musicals is as impressive as last season's Man of La Mancha. . . . The only serious plays available are the product of subsidized repertory companies . . . this season's output of serious American drama reached a new low. Only six such plays reached Broadway."¹¹ Time's theater critic, Ted Kalem, in 1962 had blamed not the playwrights and not the audience, for " . . . shoddy aims, low aspirations. Producers seem to be listening to an inner voice that says, 'Don't dare, don't try, don't risk, don't reach!' Among leading producers, the peak of audacity is to find a hit that has been running for two years in London and cart it back to the U. S."¹²

However, although producers are timid, and under-rate, under-value the audience, Walter Kerr, now drama-critic of

¹¹ Henry Hewes, "Bests of the 1966-1967 Theater", Saturday Review, June 10, 1967.

¹² "Letter from the Publisher", Time, March 9, 1962.

The New York Times, would proclaim "A Fox on Shocks"¹³.

The readiness of the American audience to escape materialist realism for the moral-metaphysical "thesis" drama is being tested in rapidly increasing numbers of community and repertory theaters in colleges; the university theaters which in some states are state-subsidized are bringing drama to small communities and to some secondary schools.¹⁴

¹³ January 15, 1967.

¹⁴ "Broadway Postscript", Saturday Review, February 5, 1966, by Henry Hewes explains one of these experiments:

"On the campus of the University of Indiana what may be a workable formula for the creating of state-supported theater is being tested. The distinguished head of the University's theater department, Richard Moody, has launched a professional company to perform here and to visit other colleges throughout the state. The box-office prices are kept low (a \$2 top) and the required subsidy to provide annual fellowships for the actors comes from within the university and thus indirectly from the state. Its current revival of Sheridan's The Rivals compares very favorably with the National Repertory Theatre production of the same play, now touring American cities, and is evidence that a popular state theater can be developed in this manner."

The University of Montana Drama Department takes a good play on state tour each season, giving students reduced prices.

The Community Players of Blue Earth, Minnesota (population 4,500), organized in 1964 by the Paulist Players of the Catholic Church, presented "Cup of Trembling" by Elizabeth Berryhill to overflow houses for three nights. Minneapolis Tribune reported (April 9, 1967) that this group was "one of many such groups throughout the Upper Midwest."

Twelve repertory theaters of national reputation are staging top-rate drama; Shakespeare, Moliere, Gogol, Jonson, Euripides, Sophocles, Miller, Shaw, Chekov, Giraudoux, and Anouilh.¹⁵ Last season's listing of national repertory in the same magazine listed four theaters showing Johan Strindberg's Dance of Death.

My thesis is that Everyman in the near-post-Christian world can use a drama which strips him of his pretensions, forces him to an honesty about his self-deception and vanity and complicity with evil; that necessary to this renewed function of the theater is a more universal audience than now exists in the United States.¹⁶

If one makes comparison to audiences in Europe, one finds larger, more conglomerate audiences receptive to bold

15 "Summer Repertory Schedule, 1967", Saturday Review, June 3, 1967.

16 Robert Bolt in the preface to A Man For All Seasons in The New Theater of Europe (Delta, 1962), p. 43, "Whatever he might have been, this Common Man, he was certainly not in the theatre . . . He was not in the stalls . . . But in the laughter this character drew down from the gallery, that laughter which is the most heartening sound our Theatre knows, I thought I heard once or twice a rueful note of recognition." Lillian Hellman, in an informal interview at Yale University, Hadley Hall, April, 1966, shared concern about ". . . this most . . . grave and distressing" problem of Broadway theater for the common man: unless it is hedonistic, it is not "popular" with the cash crowds, and the reduced-price gallery seats are either not taken or not available.

and serious questions; playwrights, encouraged by the audiences, by the patronage of state and private endowments in England, France, Russia and Germany, indict the very values upon which commercial theater feeds.¹⁷ One

¹⁷ Richard Gilman, in "Theatre: Kinky, Arrogant and Frankly Magnificent", Esquire, July, 1966, says that the appearance of Bertolt Brecht's Berliner Ensemble in London in 1956 reminded the Theatre Workshop of "splendors of cohesive group performing, able to animate texts with unerring skill and absolute control. Beyond that, it convinced some Englishmen of the necessity for a publicly endowed and publicly valued theatrical institution. These Englishmen determined to break . . . the responsiveness of the theatre to no insistences beyond commercial ones. In addition to the Royal Court, two such institutions did come into being, subsidized by public funds . . . the Royal Shakespeare Company . . . became the chief promulgator of new styles of directing and performance, influenced by the theories of Antonin Artaud . . . who had demanded that theatre be an unrelenting assault upon the senses of the spectators. 'The audience was to be subjected to shock as often as possible and to surprises the rest of the time.'" The second institution, "the National Theatre opened its doors in 1963 as the successor to the moribund Old Vic. Under the direction of Laurence Olivier . . . and with Kenneth Tynan as literary director, the National Theatre has produced a remarkable range of drama, in varying styles, from all periods . . . as well as European classics and contemporary works by Arden and Shaffer."

The Theatre Nationale Populaire of France had a vigorous Avignon season in the summer 1963, when, for four successive nights, the writer saw Jean Vilar's troupe command the rapt attention of 3,000 young and fairly young people; in the mornings, many hundreds of young people thronged the open-air lectures on the playwrights, their plays, their places in past and current thought--from Molière to Giraudoux, Anouilh and Robert Bolt.

might argue that this "manifestation" is but the venerated though dying European tradition of theater as culture, or one might attribute the more interested audiences to a more literate and humanistic education. But it is more to the point to realize that these European playwrights are using methods of didactic expressionism not just as a reaction to nineteenth century "realism", but in order to register more strongly a drama of social or metaphysical import.¹⁸

Is it the type of education that makes the difference between the audiences of Europe and America? Probably not, and probably not a matter that could be legislated to a parity . . . But the playwright as maker must attend to the tabula rasa of the low-brow, too. This the medieval

17 (continued)

Robert Corrigan, New Theatre of Europe (New York, 1962), p. 10, draws the tentative conclusion that "communion has been established with mass audiences" and "today . . . manifests itself with great intensity in the popular theatre movements of Europe".

Anna Irene Miller, The Independent Theatre in Europe (New York, 1931), as quoted in Lawson, p. 83: "The movement which includes the reform of the modern theatre and the revival of the drama in five European countries--and more recently in America--found its origin outside the established commercial playhouses."

18 John Gassner, in Masters of the Drama (New York, 1954), pp. 710 and 755, discusses the "rejection of materialism and positivism after 1945" by European playwrights in favor of affirmation.

dramaturgist did, with several levels of allegory, to attract the necessary universality of audience. If it is spectacle and symbol which attracts the audience, let the modern playwright give it in the idiom of the mass. Even if it is in the idiom of the new age of the barbarian, who, "in the absence of standards . . . is, in fact, a primitive who has slipped through the wings on to the age-old stage of civilization."¹⁹

Too primitive for modern tastes? The Homecoming, by Harold Pinter (judged the best play of the 1966-1967 season by thirteen points over the second choice, Edward Albee's A Delicate Balance) was listed by Time's drama critic (January 20, 1967) as "innately primitive, Oedipal and conjugal." It was this innately primitive quality, plus symbols that illuminated the universe that was the theater of Sophocles, the Passion plays, Shakespeare and Ibsen. It is the theater of Paul Claudel and T. S. Eliot and Ugo Betti.

Medieval monk and modern playwright have the same man for whom to write--the same raw materials of passions in conflict with reasoned order, the struggle against Pride and Despair, the open warfare between the Seeming and the Real. These playwrights were idealists who confronted

¹⁹ y Cassett, p. 82.

Confusion and Chaos with alternatives of social or metaphysical Good, which Man would choose if he but learned them. If these, too, were illusions, they were illusions that kept a society secure for the development of men noble in reason, in action like angels. Here, playwrights have built didactic drama to meet the desires of men who wished to be something above the animal or machine; its basic architecture includes:

1. Luminosity or enlightenment;²⁰ recognition of an order in the archetypal world of nature; some assurance of the absolutes; some hope of justice.
2. Some participation, "experience" in emotional tension, leading to understanding of the idea.
3. Faith in man's potentiality for some meaningful good; for ability to learn judgment in making choices.
4. Analogues, images, exemplums clearly drawn; understandability of idiom even if only on one of the levels. Familiarity with the story or character-myth.
5. Rapport with the actors, sense of communion with neighbors.
6. Spectacle and sound and action.

It is the position of this paper that allegorical dramaturgy was and can be a potent instrument for persuasion of a broad cross-section of people to a ^{more} selfless ideal. Rather

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John Gassner's class in Playwriting at Yale University was directed toward the tenet that, without meaning-- a statement or "enlightenment" of universal principle-- there was no play, no matter how much technique.

than a "last escape for romanticists", it could work to reverse the imbecilic shrug of nihilism: Playwrights are "makers" of the opinions of the audience.

The metaphysical questions raised by medieval drama and by three of the most popular, "best" dramas of the 1965-1966 Broadway season are strikingly similar:

Is it man's free choice of the wrong alternatives, or an outside world, demonic, that causes disorder? (Man of La Mancha by Dale Wasserman and Royal Hunt of the Sun by Peter Schaffer.)

Is the mutability of life the work of Fortune, or the expectation and also the responsibility of every man? (The Persecution and Assassination of Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis deSade by Peter Weiss.)

If it through physical pleasure or through suffering that man "extends the positive effects of his personality"? (Marat/deSade along with Man for All Seasons and The Lark.)

"To what extent is the society responsible for the individual and the individual for the society?" is asked by all.

Lastly, the question "Which is the real world?" is asked by the plays, Man of La Mancha and Marat/deSade. Although questioning presumes some concern and responsibility, these plays did more; they charged the bourgeois and collective animal with impersonality, selfishness, avarice, cruelty and stupidity. But they also revealed glimpses of another world, gentle and possible, if enough

men of good will exercised that will. Other modern plays clearly excise the moral choices; present pictures of a corrective order; exemplums of noblesse oblige as well as of malevolence.

The best of the modern playwrights are restoring a medieval metaphor for the whole man who accommodates his own dualisms and those of the outside world as best as he can. Man may not be altogether noble, but he is not all lechery and hatred and tyranny either--"That's not the whole truth and you know it"^u. (Thornton Wilder's Our Town, Act III) There remains the problem of presenting, in didactic drama, these whole men as convincing exemplums of absolutes. Although humanizing them, particularly in the garb of their historicity, the playwright must still present them with such broad strokes and such definite purpose that they become archetypes. Although George Bernard Shaw's St. Joan has the directness and the practicality, the humor and the simplicity of a peasant, she must be a constant affirmation of Faith and also the superior morality of the individual man over against that of the System. Henrik Ibsen's Helmer and Dr. Stockmann cannot change, if the playwright is to present problem drama. To intensify that projection of attributes besetting or ennobling man, in order to win recognition and conviction

from that common man whom he must court as audience and advocate and client, the allegorical writer may focus on the "too-muchness" of one "vicious mole of nature" in an Othello or a Lear or a Macbeth; or he may focus on a specific virtue, as embodied in a Noah, or a Thomas More, or a John Proctor. Faith finds humbler soil: Cushman in Christopher Fry's Boy With a Cart; instinctive Goodness is found in the lowliest in Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzuan, but it can inspire others to a sometime goodness to activate a kinder society: the Billy Budd character of Innocent Goodness is found again in Miller's View from the Bridge; Jean Anouilh's Becket expresses Spiritual Joy; Brecht's Galileo learns Hope through Persistence; the self-sacrifice of Mother Courage's mute daughter lights the play with idealism, as does the faith of Brigid in Paul Carroll's Shadow and Substance.²²

Types of Christ are found in today's plays as well as in the medieval: Violaine in Paul Claudel's L'Annonce Faite à Marie and the Inca God-King in Peter Schaffer's Royal

²² Expressionistic techniques, in turning the archetypes of men's minds out upon the stage, have in modern times, given names and characters of men, real or imaginary, to the intrinsic vices or virtues; whereas medieval drama had generalized the particular attributes within men by projecting and naming the Absolute Value, as an extrinsic character. The medieval writer generalized the particular, and the modern writer particularizes the general.

Hunt. Dark and bitter men of Cain dramatize the conflict: the Man, and Ham the pragmatist who carries the suggestion of the echo of that animalistic Man, from Andre Obey's Noah; Mara, from L'Annonce. The ambiguous Everyman is depicted in Richard Rich and the Common Man, opportunists both, in Robert Bolt's Man/Seasons; The Marquis de Sade as both a spectator and a participant is the ambiguous man who does not believe in idealists or causes or sacrifices;

I
Do not know myself . . .
I do not know whether I am hangman or victim . . .

Pizarro in Royal Hunt, like Par Lagerqvist's Barabbas, despises man's viciousness and yearns for a faith, but one which he can understand. The duplicity, the split, between the dream and the real, between the id and the super-ego is expressed by Luigi Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author, as it was expressed by doubling of characters in medieval times--with Tristan's Morholt; and Edgar's Edmund in the Renaissance Tempest. Masks, guises, doubles, mistaken identities, as visible devices of deception and self-deception and dreams and wishes, have always delighted the playgoer. Although some interpretations have made them a means of communion between the soul and the supranatural, outstanding dramatic examples have been in the genre of romantic comedy, or romance: Aristophanes'

The Birds; Jonson's Every Man in His Humour; the medieval bestiaries; the medieval guises of the vices; Shakespeare's comedies; and his late romances and King Lear; Molière's stereotypes carried to their ultimate non-human shapes in L'Avare, etc.; Calderon de Barca's Great Theatre of the World. Today the masks are not comic, perhaps because the modern man feels himself a dupe of outer pressures, or psychological guilt at his own pretenses: Eugene O'Neill's Lazarus Laughed, Strange Interlude, Great God Brown; Notis Peryalis' Masks of Angels; Giraudoux's Apollo of Bellac, The Enchanted and Madwoman of Chaillot. Pirandello has Henry speak in "Henry IV" (even the title suggests the guise-robe--reminiscent of the "robe" symbolism used so frequently in Macbeth): "But we all of us cling tight to our conceptions of ourselves, just as he who is growing old dyes his hair . . . you . . . only to cheat your own image a little before the looking-glass . . . But I assure you that you too, Madam, are in masquerade, though it be in all seriousness . . . None of us can estimate what we do when we do it from instinct . . . I feel the majesty of one who knows how to be what he ought to be!"

The characterizations are, in general, as boldly colored and stylized as the medieval cathedral windows, since the characters but subserve the theme-message: Man-kind is many men and one man is many men, and as such he

is culpable, and he may also be in complicity with the "sightless substances" of Evil, as well as an heir to the grace of Good. Perhaps the imperative preached is that once man can see what "he may be", he could better understand and practice the modestia, mesura and caritas urged by medieval religious drama.

Subject to mutability as Man and his fortunes may be, the spiral shape of the morality play demands that its masque-like characters serve in more than one capacity; they must take on allegorical significance on the historical and the moral and the metaphysical levels, as well as on the human and homely level, true to the life, to keep the interest of the groundlings on the problem-dilemma. The dilemma in both Man/Seasons and Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral must have More and Becket each remain (in most respects) the superior man who is also the representative of God, as opposed to the changeling common man and chorus. The Father Anne in L'Annonce, surrendering home and goods to join the Crusade, must be more than a type of Noah; he is the exemplum of a simple good man, humbly and steadfastly cooperating with Nature, and a type reflecting the Father-God.

The "simple" man may be the spiritual antagonist. In answer to the common man-jailer who excuses his inaction with the plaint: "I'm a simple, plain man and just want

to keep out of trouble", More cries out passionately:
"Oh, Sweet Jesus! These plain, simple men!" Mother
Courage sells her son's life so that she may drag behind
her her incubus wagon of materialism. Pipe for Fortune's
finger to play as she wishes, the common man too frequently
is in complicit commitment to "necessity", to "things as
they are", to "public service" rather than to the "right".
When he does "recognize" his condition, a sense of re-
demption or grace may not last long, and again the cycle
of the fall begins. For suffering is too hard for the
common man to bear patiently; and even as he scents the
martyr blood of John Proctor and the two Thomases, who have
principle enough to stand against his own tyranny, he urges
the slaughter on. Using the technique of "masks" or the
medieval "guises", Bolt's common man is jailer and exe-
cutioner as well as having been steward and publican.

To make allegory consistently graphic, the metaphor
is carried to objects and state props; the hammer is the
tool of Noah's "monumental patience"; a driverless cart-
tumbrel draws Science, Army, Church and Nouveaux Riches
into the midst of a deranged society of Marat/deSade; the
chameleon change of costume to suit the changes of occu-
pation and "sides" of Bolt's Common Man; the gold bricks
to which the sunburst of faith had been reduced, or the
brilliant blood-cloth rippling off the stage floor after

the ritualistic-stylistic killing of the priests in Royal Hunt; the dove in Noah; the vulnerable armor and fragile shield of Don Quixote against the Knight of the Mirrors in La Mancha also; the gigantic black staircase yawning ominously, down whose dragon-teeth steps tread the black-hooded Inquisitors; in Marat/deSade, the slat-drained bath-pits like abattoirs which centered the stage.

Symbolistic significance is under-scored by color, by stylized rhythms and movements and groupings until the allegory becomes truly the archetypal masque. Gothic grotesque? That, too. The brutal words and blood, the death dance, the ritual death sacrifice. The black soldiers against the golden splendor, the silver sword against the red feather of the Incas in Royal Hunt; in La Mancha, the red fires about which the life and sex orgies swirled ("Dulcinea"--the unwilling victim), contrasted with the blackness of the inquisitors, of night, of the Knight of the Mirrors. The overall gray in Marat/deSade further unified the affective ambience of delusionary cobwebs.

The stages of these modern plays (mentioned above) were thrust stages, two of them slightly canted toward the audience for closer "contact", and bare, save for one symbolic focus-piece, in order to allow the abstractions to assert their essence: the golden god-figure focused attention on allegorical meaning as well as providing spectacular visual

"dynamic", and facilitating fluidity of movement and "place". The elemental colors, stylistically used; the symbolic sets, music and dance; the allegorical characters suggest that the masque is a higher form of the musical, empirically effective with the masses. Here is all the panoply and noise and movement of parades, processions to alert the senses; but realistic time-space is edged away by the thrust of imagination to make room for the image of an idea.

In the plays so far mentioned, except for Man/Seasons, repetitive cadences of words and songs were amplified by stylistic movements of the "chorus" of beggars or inmates, or relatives or common men or soldiers, in order to evoke atavistic "memory" of the primitive "descent-death-ascent" ritual atonement.²³ With extended, accented prayers and complaints suggestive of Greek or medieval litanic chorus, the rhythms of verse dialogues and chants of Eliot, Brecht, Weiss are "alienated" from any definite time-pattern. Rather do they use a basic, archetypal pattern of rhythm, swinging abruptly from horror to pity to tenderness or concern. The medieval and the traditionally religious moved

²³ "Ritual death" was almost a cabalistic term, one of the common denominators of critical parlance, and a frequently-used ingredient in student plays given in Mr. Gassner's Playwriting 7 and 127 classes at Yale School of Drama 1965-1966.

this sequence one step further to religious ecstasy. Upon this principle the medieval dramatist set the mothers' "lullay" beside the soldiers' joking slaughter of their babies.²⁴ Today Paul Claudel places the angels' chorus and the miracle of the dead baby just before the murder of Violaine by her sister, Mara, the baby's mother. If Claudel uses violence of word and episode next to miracle and mercy, Weiss and Brecht and Schaffer and other moderns outdo him in presentation of violence, but charge the plea for mercy to the audience. The outrage and "crudity" of medieval "realism" pales beside the "squashed guts" and "quaking bog of corpses" in Marat/deSade, but the same objective is reached: attention is held.

Marat/deSade used all possible bizarre "instruments" to increase the tension load--the iron pipes of the stage walls, the wooden slats of the bath-pits, the sheets of tin reverberating hollowly. With a concerted craziness, the inmates appeared even in the boxes of the audience to accelerate a cacaphonic horror almost palpable. Brecht's musical continuity (in the two plays viewed by the writer) seemed an exuberant commentary on Man's buoyant nature, running lightly on the surface of violence. In Royal Hunt,

²⁴ Coventry Shearmen and Taylor's Play. E. E. T. S. Ludus Coventriae, No. 120, 1922.

songs and dances of the Incas became litany and continuity; but the slaughter of the priests took place in sinister silence. La Mancha had a demonic parody of celebration of the Sacrament, and of the courtoisie of the Grail legends.

If the allegorization of characters, the panoply of spectacle, stylization of movement and sound as well as of visual symbol suggest the masque, the violence of word and action suggest the anti-masque. But such empirically sound formula has sharpened the emotional attentiveness of audiences from the time of Oedipus and Medea. The shock value of violence not only works a catharsis, and not only recalls the Calibans within, but cuts through the layers of self-consciousness to the subconscious where man is seen the prisoner of his self-deception, ignorance and pride. ^RThe modern playwright must use more emotional impress than the medieval playwright, who had a generally illiterate, but a humbler, and perhaps more imaginative audience, more willing, under the tutelage of the Church, to suspend disbelief. Today's audience has a predominantly scientific "set" of mind which will not so readily or generally accept notions of idealistic or metaphysical morality which have no "use". Any relevance of space, timelessness and death to modern man's mortality must be communicated

by means other than words. Emotional shock can, in many instances, bring about recognition through experiencing the *speculum morala* on-stage.

Identification with the events, the allegorical actors on stage, is facilitated by a presentational device common to allegorical drama, medieval and modern. In Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral, the audience recognize themselves practising the same self-deceptions, as the knights--"reasonable" men, "plain" men, "men of action" (whom the audience knows as members of parliaments, legislatures and city councils) lean across the footlights to rationalize with the audience: This is the world; we have to live in it. So, we've got to get along. And this man is a troublemaker to those in power. Then the direct accusation of complicity: "We have been instrumental in bringing about the state of affairs that you approve . . . We have served your interest . . . and if there is any guilt in the matter, you must share it with us." In the same play, the Christmas sermon of Thomas is made directly to the audience. This homily of martyrdoms for all time gains excitement from the awareness of Thomas' own impending martyrdom by the audience: Thomas is the visible exemplum of the Christ-type, literally at the point of the Dart of Death.

Another medieval and modern means of drawing the

audience more intimately into the play is called in some modern critical parlance a "distancing" device--a bardic or choric commentator who presents, and, in some cases, interprets an already familiar story or event from the past: Cervantes in prison who "presents" the story of Don Quixote to his fellow prisoners; a captain of Pizarro's army who introduces, summarizes and explains action of the several episodes of the conquest of Peru from his memory of them; the Common Man; in Good Woman, Wong, the Water-Seller, is the binding element and the speaker of the Prologue, but the heroine, Shen Te, and also Mrs. Yang speak directly to the audience; the villagers in Caucasian Chalk Circle; the People of South England in Christopher Fry's Boy With a Cart; the Women of Canterbury in Murder in the Cathedral. And, in Marat/deSade, when the on-stage criticism of the "establishment" threatened to become intolerable:

And so they chained down the poor in their ignorance
so that they wouldn't stand up and fight their bosses
who ruled in the name of the lie of divine right

the Herald stepped to the "audience" of the king's officials:

If our performance causes aggravation
We hope you'll swallow down your indignation
and please remember that we show
only those things that happened long ago
Remember things were very different then
of course today we're all God-fearing men.

The Herald is the same Messenger, who, in mannered verse, introduced and interpreted the morality plays of the middle

ages; who, destroying the "fourth wall" restriction and reservation, invited the audience to a mutual consideration of the paradoxical behaviour that is man. Today, many plays bring the audience upon the stage by having one or more characters spill over from the stage into the audience or come from the audience; in three or more recent plays produced on Broadway the stages were raked toward the audience; as in medieval and Renaissance theater, there is no longer a footlight barrier.

Further community with on-stage life is achieved by the choruses of "average people" (supra) who voice the little fears and modest aims of the lower middle class or the higher lowest class. Not only does the honest Messenger and Chorus (who, with the audience, looks and feels and learns from the story) make his friends at home) comfortable and natural; but the very familiarity of the tale/character which is known to all and which recalls the common cultural heritage of those within the "circle" puts the audience at ease, creates receptivity for the lesson. But there are more functions for this distancing or "alienation" of the story in time and place: familiarity with the "story's" progress and outcome allows fuller concentration on the ideological conflict; anticipation and suspense are heightened by a partial knowledge of sequence; there is less personal involvement and commitment in an event not

contemporaneous, and therefore more objectivity: less self-consciousness obtains because "things were very different then" in the eleventh or in the fifteenth century, or in the antediluvian period of Thornton Wilder's Skin of Our Teeth, or in the Hell of Shaw's Don Juan (Man and Superman) where the "unreality" eases into the conscience an astringent social lecture; a final value of distancing to be discussed here is the cumulative effect achieved by a spiral ^{turn} inward for a repetitive analogue--a parable or a play within a play--whose return of the theme-situation permits a strong centripetal focusing on the central message.

The epic scope of these modern-medieval plays, the narrative style of episode-ballad genre suggests a linear development of events. But, when the morality bends the line to accommodate analogous repeats of the theme on different levels of understanding, there are levels of allegory for everyone; the literal or historic level; the allegorical level; the moral level; sometimes a metaphysical level (with Brecht, Pirandello, Betti, Fry, Claudel, Eliot and Anouilh); or a level of literary philosophical art--intellectual, which may compare with the anagogical one of the middle ages. There is the historical de Sade and Marat and Pizarro, and Cervantes and Saint Joan, and Thomas More and Thomas a Becket and Richard II and "Henry IV";

but there is also the inner play they present or act in on stage. which presents their moral views, a life of thrust and parry with ideas. These ideas are voiced in allusive language, largely Biblical, classical, mythical, and acted with symbolic properties to suggest richness in connotative parallels. Names alone may suggest allegory: *Mara*, *Don Juan and The Statue*, *the Smiths*, *Blanche*, *Godot*, and *Antrobus*.

The overlays of incidents and "types" and symbols suggest in some plays not only historical depth, but metaphysical outwardness--a third world, outside test of society and test of nature. Fry's *People*, in *Boy With a Cart*, are confident as the play begins.

We have felt the joint action of root and sky, of man
And God, when day first risks the hills . . .

The end of *The Crucible* has this stage direction:

(the new sun is pouring in upon her Elizabeth's
face, and the guns rattle like drums in the morning
air.)

and the end of *Saint Joan*:

(rays of light gather into a white radiance descend-
ing on Joan)

JOAN: O God that madest this beautiful earth, when
will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long,
O Lord, how long?

The Preface and tone of each of the plays are convincing of the authors' sincerity.

"Square?" But *The Crucible* in a recent British

University Drama Festival won the finals against John Arden's Live Like Pigs, Giraudoux's Judith, Friederich Duerrenmatt's The Visit ("which brought out values unrealized in the Lunt production . . . ") and Mr. Saunders' Next Time I'll Sing to You ("effects of dazzling brilliance, and were magnificently assured"). The London reporter sums: "But there is no doubt that The Crucible--the squarest of the plays presented--enthusiastically obtained the suffrages of the audience and the judges were well content, too."²⁵ Thomas More also delineates a spiritual world:

. . . but only God is love right through, Howard; and that's my self!" . . . "I will not give in because I oppose it--I do, not my pride, not my spleen, not any other of my appetites but I do--I! Is there no single sinew . . . that serves no appetite of Norfolks but is just Norfolk? There is! Give that some exercise! . . . Because as you stand, you'll go before your Maker in a very ill condition! . . . And he'll have to think that somewhere back along your pedigree--a bitch got over the wall!"

For the "whole" medieval man, the three worlds of society, nature and God were interlinked. So, also, for the more metaphysical of the modern playwrights. Even Mr. Bolt, who says that he often surprises himself thinking like a Christian,²⁶ does more than suggest the "eternal" view,

²⁵ "With Clanging Chains", Christian Science Monitor, January 9, 1965, p. P. 4.

²⁶ From an interview with Mr. Bolt in a brochure obtained at T. N. P. production of Thomas More at Avignon, France, summer of 1963.

as he explains in his preface to Man/Seasons: ". . . for the superhuman context I took the largest, most alien, least formulated thing I know, the sea and water." The river becomes an allegorical constant, upon which all characters move and which they touch in thought and conversation; the stage directions describe "the webbed reflections of moonlit water". From the Common-Man's:

The great thing's not to get out of your depth . . .
Oh, when I can't touch the bottom I'll go deaf, blind
and dumb . . .

to Henry's insistence that the "river is mine", the river serves as a running continuity which binds the three worlds of Henry and Thomas and the Common Man together, as well as Man's three worlds.

The love of nature as the simple man's fulfillment is a driving force through L'Annonce, and is felt consistently through Father-Farmer Anne. The love of God's work is the bonding element for the church architect, Pierre. Violaine in the Dalmatic suggests the Virgin Mary continuity: she takes upon herself the leprosy of Pierre with a kiss of forgiveness, as she performs one of the "Miracles of the Virgin" in giving life and her blue eyes to Mara's dead baby. A further analogy deepens the focus--the references to Joan of Arc, another virgin strong in her closeness to the earth. It is a sense of happy adjustment to two worlds that Claudel celebrates: the breath of God in

the night garden; the glistening ox in the sun, the great clouds winging toward Germany; time-space tied to the eternal. But a reminder of the evil that is also a constant in this beautiful world is the leprosy of sin, which like Camus' Plague threatens all in the community of men, the good and the bad.

It is we who damn ourselves, say Eliot and Claudel, Marlowe and Shakespeare, de Barca and Goethe, because we do not know how to live in all three worlds. To know only the material world through the senses is to know absurdity: in such case we are the gray-clad inmates of Charenton, victims of some crazy "organization" which ignores our real needs, subjects us to its uses and amusement; like mottled, mummy-wrapped Lazarus, we wait for deliverance from the keepers, but ignorant and erratic, ^{we} cannot respond to Roux' call:

When will you learn to see
 When will you learn to take sides
 When will you show them

In Mother Courage, Brecht contrasts the erratic human world with the pastoral community threatened by war-evil. Only Catherine's lonely and superhuman effort over the obstacle of her "muteness" warns that world, and she is betrayed by those whom she loved and whom her act would have helped. The unifying idea of the ever-recurring crucifixion of mankind at their own collective hands is reinforced by the

constant foreknowledge and the backward perspective which bind together all wars; by the use of Biblical tags, occurring as ragged edges of metaphysical meaning: "No room at the inn," "Christ at Golgotha".

Eliot binds the two disparate worlds of the chorus and of a Becket by vivid and warm imagery of the community comforts which they share: the "kissing-time below stairs", the "warm fires and shut doors"; the talk of cattle and the talk of laws and loyalties. Yet of the vernacular and ^{of} the intellectual, parallel tracks of speech, Eliot has made unity because of the strong focus of both toward the recognition-redemption heart of the play.

A rhythm of contrasts--in movements of ideas, in moods, in characters--is basic to dramatic rhythm. Eliot has created out of the contrapuntal speeches of the priests against the knights a classic balance; he has brought out of the raw elemental words, and jarring rhythms and out of the jingoistic singing and "naming" of the lowest corruptions, a strident, jolting emotional counterpoise to set against the Te Deum and the psalm-like, beautiful reaffirmation of faith by the chorus. In an exalting experience (if the cast is both sincere and talented), the audience can feel the paradox: "the darkness declares the glory of light", and can share the humble recognition:

Forgive us, O Lord, we acknowledge ourselves as type
of the common man,

Of the men and women who shut the door and sit by
the fire;

Who fear the blessing of God, the loneliness of the
night of God, the surrender required, the de-
privation inflicted;

.

We acknowledge our trespass, our weakness, our faults;
we acknowledge

That the sin of the world is upon our heads; that the
blood of the martyrs and the agony of the saints

Is upon our heads.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Murder in the Cathedral is the definitive modern morality
which marshals all the presentational, expressionistic
devices to gather the audience into the play itself. The
form of the play is as it functions. The winds of time-
lessness carry echoes of phrases from one mouth to another;
and the turn of Fortune's wheel intersects time with the
timeless.

Bind, thou, bind, Thomas.

Wind, thou, wind, Thomas.

The archaic words, the early alliterative style, the anal-
ogies and the wry contrasts also mirror the Gothic tech-
nique. The death dance, the blood ritual, and the litur-
gical rhythms and incantations of a Greek chorus take the
play out of any established time order.

But whether the recognition aimed for is ideological
or metaphysical, the prosody--the imagery and the verse--
of the modern didactic plays mirror the shape and the heart.

of the play. The words in the plays of Eliot, Bolt, Claudel, Frye, Shaw, and Anouilh breathe of space and time wider and more tranquil than ours. The imagery opens upon views of Nature's world as a reflection of God's world, very like the painting of the fifteenth century. But although one sees the community and nature and God's sky through a window, the subject in the foreground is man.

Vivid as the pageants, the processions and the royal entries, and as meticulously articulated as the masques of fifteenth and sixteenth century England, much of the new expressionism is similar to the old religious and the modern religious drama in other ways as well:

1. Allegorical, symbolic characters and situations--primal, moral, Biblical.
2. Didactive metaphor from word to world.
3. Stylistic presentation, reminiscent of ritual.
4. Heavily charged emotivity, through spectacle, music, rapid movement of scenes, sharp contrasts.
5. Epic scope.
6. Fluidity of many short episodes and open stage, of verse pattern and scene.
7. Audience intimacy, through presentational form: prologue, epilogue and direct address.

The last six characteristics suggest Northrop Frye's "archetypal masque, the prevailing form of most twentieth-century highbrow drama, at least in continental Europe."²⁷ But the danger is, that in plays like Marat/deSade, the

²⁷ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p. 290.

classic form and spirit of balance and mesura come close to being violated. If one were to continue the comparison, one would find them almost all anti-masque or grim critique; for there is no suggestion of a communal banquet, or redemptive young love, as in medieval and Renaissance masque. Perhaps the attraction of the chained Duperret for Charlotte Corday (Marat/deSade) was a parody of that convention. In La Mancha, however, the shift in timing the delicacy and dignity of the recognition scene at Quixote's deathbed; the conviction which the actors gave to Dulcinea's plea--that without his knighthood be true, she would lose her "glimpse of beauty bright"--more than counterbalanced a satyr-like turbulence of much of the play. There is a fine suggestion of anti-masque, which takes place in the garden villa of More (Man/Seasons), with the affable, ^{and evilful} Henry VIII, concupiscence himself, in the role of satyr Pan:

(Fanfare--at the end of which HENRY, in a cloth of gold, runs out of the sunlight halfway down the steps and blows a blast on his pilot's whistle . . . he descends . . . blowing softly)

HENRY: I happened to be on the river. (Holds out a shoe proudly) Look, mud.

A page later:

I dance superlatively! (He plants his leg before her face) That's a dancer's leg, Margaret.

.
Lady Alice, the river's given me an appetite.

One should not try too hard to classify the shape of expressionism, since the form functions as the idea is; and may range from Chekhovian formlessness of futility, to the epic styles of Calderon and Shakespeare and Claudel, and to Maxwell Anderson's play intertwined with a play in the lesson of Joan of Lorraine. Neither "tragedy" nor "comedy", didactic expressionism presumes a quest--archetypal or moral--in that the idea affords hope enough to ask a question or to leave the audience with a challenging one. Whether Eugene O'Neill communicated his concern for man by means of mask conventions or by realism does not matter so much for a study of didactic drama as the fact that O'Neill said that he was "interested only in the relationship of man and God".²⁸ A playwright does not search a relationship in the total alienation of the theater of the absurd; on the contrary, he searches for emotional balance, for the "whole man" in some sort of hierarchy which a search for God or order assumes. Distressed with the failure of science and materialism, O'Neill found deeper and older forces, peopled most of his plays with archetypes, and wrote an almost medieval^{moral} play in Lazarus Laughed.

²⁸ Nine Plays of Eugene O'Neill, Modern Library (New York, 1952), p. xvii.

Mystical, but not so boldly metaphysical as Eliot, Claudel and Obey, other playwrights believe with Brecht that there is a glimpse of hope, weary though the gods may be with humankind, so long as society can nurture an honorable individual who dares stand alone against the Senseless or against the Promoters or The Mob. Giraudoux and Anouilh name the archetypal heroes and the anti-heroes--the Generals, the Oilmen and their Pimps--they show the porsy pussiness of Beaudricourt in The Lark; the drooling old lechers in Tiger at the Gates, but they are not sure that society "can be saved every afternoon", by putting the evil ones onto the stairs leading below the cellar.

Not always so allusive nor so patently poetic as the Europeans, the American moralists, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams mount their allegories in a realistic format. Endeavoring as the Europeans do to make their audiences engagé, they present non-heroes who are not even aware and who engage only pity rather than empathy.²⁹ The Salesman tries vainly to escape the System, to seed a

²⁹ In twenty-four years of teaching high school seniors in English classes, the writer has found that unless the symbolism is as obvious as in The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, most students do not understand the metaphorical criticisms of society as posed in Miller's All My Sons and Williams' Streetcar Named Desire.

regenerative garden, but the light is blocked out by the towering and impersonal concrete walls (Miller's Salesman). John Proctor, however, in Crucible does allow the audience a glimpse of the redemption of society by that one "just" man.

Using presentational techniques, stylization and emotional gimmicks, ~~other~~ modern playwrights of the anti-masque present anti-heroes suffering the anarchy of emotion and of an uncaring society. Dramatization of ritual deaths of lesbians and psychotics, or erotic nightmares ad reductum absurdo (phlegm carried in a glass of water throughout a play³⁰) do a disservice to humanity. That is not a universal audience of whom or to whom the playwright speaks;

³⁰ In Yale's Playwriting 7 Seminar, similar strange "business" was sometimes the "statement" of the original plays written by a few of the more recent graduates of the class. About a play in slaughterhouse setting and idiom, with an obvious statement about the dignity of the individual, these were comments of some of the younger playwrights: "too cliché", "not intellectual enough", "doesn't have enough esoteric symbolism".

"The head of one of the leading drama departments in the country recently stated that the young students that come to him, who may never have seen a new-wave play or ever heard of Beckett or Albee, write in this same anti-form, alienated manner--so deep and real and inexorably part of our age is the view of life grasped in this particular dramatic style." N. E. A. Journal (October, 1962), p. 47.

a conglomerate audience would deny this drama of esoteric narcissism and learn nothing save despair of self. Among those playwrights who see no saving values and no hope for society are Jean Genet, John Osborne, Harold Pinter, Edward Albee, Eugene Ionesco, LeRoi Jones and Samuel Beckett. For them, Godot never comes. No will or meaning or individuality remains to the Smiths. There is no space, no serenity in or out of the cribbed confinement that John Osborne's characters feel in Look Back in Anger. Although not typical of other works by Albert Camus, Caligula deliberately feeds alienation and consequent frustration, and chooses destruction for the sake of sensation. Friedrich Duerrenmatt's The Visit finds no recognition of morality left among the townspeople, and Claire, he bequeaths to us as inhuman, all-pervading Evil, the only active Principle in the play. Nihilist or Faustian or possessed, these demi-beings are not placed against any countervailing force; they seem as determined to be damned as was Everyman to be saved. The problem for the playwright is: How to court and engage the simple as well as the wise, and at the same time show reconciliation of man with his inner world and the outer. The problem is: How to "develop out of the haphazard, cash-yielding crowd a body of opinion that will be sensitive, appreciative and

critical."³¹ Cannot the new playwright be as responsible as the medieval playwright who used his art to foster a vision of and perhaps some faulty, uneven service of an idea? A mediocre public of the same Gibs and Joans as sat in audiences in the middle ages would learn more of public responsibility from the medieval play than to share sitting in a corner to chew nails in despair compounded. Alternatives must be shown, for an average audience is not intelligent or imaginative enough to make the recoil to the desired goal. If these playwrights of the absurd see man in a post-Christian materialism at the mercy of the same old devil in new guises, still waiting for human irrationality to materialize his innumerable substances; if man has become neurotic in proportion to the specialization of his society; if he cannot communicate; if

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold . . .
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction . . .³²

then a look at a very similar drama, but one which provided a sturdy ladder of choices by which to climb, rather

³¹ Eric Bentley, The Playwright As Thinker (New York, 1946).

³² W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming", Reading Modern Poetry, eds. Paul Engle and Warren Carrier (New York, 1955), p. 154.

than to descend, is in order. "Does not the present cry of Back to the Middle Ages . . . mean that . . . (it is caused by) our shameless substitution of successful swindlers and scoundrels and quacks for saints as objects of worship, and our deafness and blindness to the calls and visions of the inexorable power that made us, and will destroy us if we disregard it? To Joan and her contemporaries we should appear as a drove of Gadarene swine, possessed by all the unclean spirits cast out by the faith and civilization of the Middle Ages, running violently down a steep place into a hell of high explosives."³³

The following chapters will not be a historical record, nor a study of prosody as such except as related to dramatic rhythms; but a study of content, statement as they relate to technique, and the study of the relationship of statement-technique to the making of the moral attitudes of an audience. Perhaps this can be only an ^{over-view} ~~study~~ of the historical-sociological and moral attitudes as they relate to that particular society which the playwright reflected and at the same time taught. But the writer hopes to find in such a study evidence that playwrights can and should teach the Christo-humanistic ethic for the survival of the

³³ George Bernard Shaw, Preface to Saint Joan, in Bernard Shaw Seven Plays (New York, 1951), p. 761.

individual capable of modestia, misericordia and mesura.

Chapter I explores the possibility of a connection between a growing collectivism and a diminishing awareness of any ethos for preserving the non-material and sacred "I".

The molders of the new anti-individualism are not the traditional educational media. As audience and teachers and playwrights become less aware of the book, the only media for communication of the cultural heritage are the T. V. and drama. Expressionistic techniques, proved by centuries-long popularity, can attract a non-reading audience.

Chapters II, III and IV examine the medieval dramaturgy in detail, showing the relevance of its theater to a world that was able to accommodate Nature and the concept of the Limitless. Chapters III and IV show the beginning of secularization with the beginning of the sophistication of dramaturgy and the effect of its accretions and refinements on the shape of the play.

Chapter V finds a strong cohesion between the Renaissance theater and the medieval; Renaissance writers explored the ideal society, the ideal ruler and used the medieval dramaturgy to clarify by allegory, to bring to sympathy by passion, a conviction that there was a responsibility on the part of the audience as well as the playwright's responsibility for his audience.

"Logic, mathematics, physics teach some truth,
yet do not reach that truth wherein is the soul's
safety, without which whatever else is, is vain."

-Hugo of St. Victor

To see eternity in a flower was not an enlighten-
ment dispensed only to nineteenth century romanticists;
nor the humbling awe at the marvelous diversity of the
reproductive processes of flowers, given only to sci-
entists of the twentieth century. The poetry of the
twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries
was a feast of Nature's beauty spread by a "floury grene
wente/ Ful thikke of gras, ful softe and swete,/ With
floures fele, faire under fete,"¹ The birds and animals
are paradisaical and so are the ladies and heroes:

"I sawgh hyr daunce so comlily,
Carole and synge so swetely,
Laughe and pleye so womanly,
And loke so debonairly
So goodly speke and so frendly,"²

The Breton lais, the tales of Chretien de Troyes, the
love romances similarly reflect living room and repose for
man's mind in nature. That it was not an unreflecting

¹ Geoffrey Chaucer, The Book of the Duchess, ll. 398-400.

² Chaucer, ll. 183-189.

joy in natural beauty is given ample proof in medieval allegorization of the meanings of nature as it reflected God's order.

As the Church and feudalism together had re-established "order" out of the anarchy of barbarism that had followed the collapse of the Roman empire, new and gentler virtues supplanted the old vertu that had been the brute strength of Rome and of Charlemagne. The Church, bounding each area of man's life, persuaded him daily to find his fulfillment with simple beauties of nature and faith in God's love. Nature-affinity became part of the understanding of God; appreciation for bread and health and beauty of the physical world became adoration of God.³ As man enjoyed the ritual of the seasons, his reflections took the shape of the metaphor and symbol supplied by the Church. The Gothic cathedral itself was a metaphor--the heights of spiritual exaltation, and transcendence over the grotesquerie of the bestial in nature. And the cleric-playwright programmed these severe contrasts--excellent

³ A trenchant and revolutionary book, Life and Death of the Christian West, by Albert Gleizes (London, 1947) holds that as man removes himself further from hand-tilling and handcrafts, he loses the nurture of spiritual communion with nature and with God, as well as the vitamin and material nutrients of earth.

raw material for drama--into an attitude of joyful acceptance of the good in nature, and a more or less stoic acceptance of the fearful.

The balance of ambivalence would be a difficult rationale to teach, but necessary to teach for the class-social sanitas of the whole man. The church began by incorporating the rhythms of the seasons, of pagan celebrations, of the archetypal duality inherent in man, into the church mystique and the church cycle; the flowering-dying-rebirth significance was now church ritual and church calendar; the struggle-death and the recognition-exaltation rhythm became part of the church's seasonal liturgy:

The rhythm of life was preserved by the Church, of the wheeling of the year, of the going of the seasons, and the inward rhythm of man and woman too. For centuries man lived in rhythm. We are now a poor, blind, disconnected people with nothing but bank holidays and politics to satisfy . . . Vitally, the human race⁴ is dying. It must plant itself in the universe.

It was the imitation of this medieval "idea", in analogue, in figure and symbol, that was the business of the playwright then, as of the didactic playwright today. And as the "how" of dramatic technique is so predicated

⁴ D. H. Lawrence, as quoted by John Speirs, Medieval English Poetry, Non-Chaucerian. (London, 1957) p. 399.

upon the "what" of the idea; as the technique is so inextricable from the whole fabric of medieval pattern of thinking, one begins a review of medieval dramaturgy with the attitude of the audience, psychological and sociological.

Jung's mythic archetypes and the pull of man's eternal polarity were but more honestly revealed in the medieval drama, and more readily accepted by the broad cross-section of the populace that comprised the medieval audience. Most of them, illiterate, humble, conditioned by generations of church indoctrination, were eager to witness evidence of the supranatural, to pass from the "visible to the "invisible", to understand by concretized images the forces they did not understand. The Church encouraged this sense of the mystic; it made overt a sort of cabala--symbolic meanings of flowers, animals, numbers.⁵ And when the local priests blessed the vine-

⁵ Mathematics and its derivative--the harmony in music and in allied arts--was the most obvious link between the physical and the spiritual worlds. Because the use of numbers demonstrated the harmonious workability of Absolutes, it seemed there might be other absolutes in that world which Man's mind did not comprehend. As symbolism, numbers became part of the church formalism. Three-ness took on a special significance: "The soul is made in the image of the Trinity". Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France in the Thirteenth Century. (New York, 1958) p. 30.

yards, when they participated in the spring ploughings (three ritual furrows--by the ploughman, by the priest, and by the chieftain⁶), it brought the invisible into the existential world; the sacrament brought the sacred world into the profane. The world to Everyman became three worlds: himself, the physical world or microcosm, and the spiritual world or the macrocosm. To live solely in any one of these worlds would damn him, here and hereafter. Only the whole scale, the Trinity in unity was good. ~~Artistically, as well~~, Mysticism, or spiritual esthetic thought, "reconstructed in sensual, emotional immediacy", brought men the warmth of beauty and the security of order and gave to finite time the space and relevancy of God's time. (The following quote from Lawson's Theory and Technique of Playwriting ["Modern Dualism", p. 99] prescribes the medieval "attitude" for moderns also: ". . . pragmatic thought provides a partial adjustment only to the needs of the everyday world . . . Spiritual esthetic thought offers a means of escape from the sterility of the environment . . . we find that both systems are necessary in order to live at all under the given conditions of modern life.")

⁶ Speirs, p. 318.

Gross and brutal many of the aristocrats and peasants were, but all the media of expression show the fourteenth century man to have been also sincerely pious, without finding such a traumatic conflict in his soul as to destroy his assurance that there was a way of salvation for him. He was not expected to be perfect, according to the genial accounts of Geoffrey Chaucer and Chretien de Troyes. Medieval literature revealed man as frankly venial, but with childlike confidence that God knew that he was only human. The mystery and morality plays of that time showed despair of all sins the most occlusive, for when hope was gone, the grace of god could not come to a man. The romances, the poetry of courtesie, the sculpture and the cathedrals reveal hope and recognition of spiritual transport, once men could openly, sincerely admit "Mea Culpa".

The intelligent writers of the day saw in man's ambivalence wholeness and balance rather than nihilism or "broken circles". This sort of animal-rational mutability was comprehended in a unity and continuity: was accounted for in the system of "order of the genera of things" in the physical and the metaphysical world.⁷

⁷ Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (New York, 1965), p. 80.

The grace and balance of this religious ideal accommodated to the humanistic ideal is evident in the societal relationships and in the conventions of "amour fin". Without the concept of a responsible hierarchical order extending downward from God, neither chivalry nor noblesse oblige nor romance would have been possible. That these ideals were actuated is attested by the mutual obligations sworn by lord and vassal;⁸ by the guild's protection of the rights and opportunities of both masters and assistants, and also of the individual trades against impersonal monopolization;⁹ by the Pope's condemnation of fraud, salesmanship, debt and usury;¹⁰ by the codes of conduct for lovers,¹¹ which, though imperfectly observed, were a refining influence on the "brute that the emancipated man could be."¹²

The literature of love was formulated in deliberate analogy to the scale of Christian devotional worship. For

⁸ F. L. Ganshof, Feudalism (New York, 1961).

⁹ G. K. Chesterton, Chaucer (London, 1932), p. 70 ff.

¹⁰ Chesterton, p. 74 ff.

¹¹ Chretien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances, trans. ed. W. W. Comfort (London, 1914).
Andreas Capellanus, De Arte Honeste Amandi.

¹² Henry Adams, St. Michel and Chartres (Anchor Books edition, 1959), p. 232.

some, this religion of love was to make more real the pattern of Christ's suffering and redemption. If, for others, "this is not a religion, it is, at any rate, a system of ethics."¹³ If only a part of the populace earnestly were to strive to keep such ideals evident in their lives, their efforts would have tempered passions *into* a more rewarding mesura. Lewis reviews the position of Alanus at Insulis: ". . . the naturalism of Chartres can moderate both the rigours of theology and the wantonness of the court. Goodness does not mean asceticism; knighthood does not mean adultery."¹⁴

"This religion of love is dead . . . and its art alone survives as, on the whole, the highest expression of man's thought or emotion; but its influence was great in its day, and the lesson of courteous love . . . lasted for centuries as the standard of taste."¹⁵ This refinement of love is cited in the explication of Thomas of Hales' love sonnet:

The suggestion in these images is that the maiden of the poem is placing herself above a mere natural plane by remaining chaste . . . Yet the fact that . . . her chastity itself is a gem more valuable than any earthly gem

¹³ C. S. Lewis, Allegory of Love (New York, 1958), p. 39.

¹⁴ Lewis, p. 104.

¹⁵ Adams, p. 232-233.

suggests that this is part of man's nature too. He has a soul which is immortal and therefore capable of true (i.e., eternal) love . . . man must raise himself above the merely natural level through sanctifying grace . . . so that he may become the soul's lover . . . Only through this gift can man transcend his mortal nature . . .¹⁶

Gawain's self-restraint is the entire burden of the Green Knight. Medieval love songs vaunt the delights of "postponed and sublimated satisfactions": Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-1377) has his countertenor sing in "S'il estoit":

She who gave me greatest joy did so by holding
out the hope of joy as an alluring prospect,
without a word or deed in her aloofness.

and the tenor at the same time:

If every lover enjoyed his love at once, its
worth would shrink. Such lovers do not learn
the high reward that comes from service to a
great lady. But he who lives with his desire,
and his lady love perceives this, will know a
joy beyond compare when love has kept him
waiting.

Mundane as the objective of this restraint may be, the songwriter and the man for whom he wrote were realists as well as idealists. But insofar as medieval man approximated the ideals of religious devotion, his "world

¹⁶ Stephen Manning, "Analogy and Imagery", Middle English Survey (Notre Dame, 1965), p. 22.

is sky-blue and rose, with only enough red to give it warmth, and so flooded with light that even its mysteries count only by the clearness with which they are shown."¹⁷

Through the efforts of the church playwright men could "see" enough glinting reflections of God's glory in nature and in man to assure them of the interlinkage of the three worlds of Nature, Man, and Ultimate Reality. All the wealth and talent of the Church succeeded, in great measure through its drama, in convincing man that the idea was more causative than the thing, that the material sense-life was only an illusion of the length of a lightning flash, a brief reflection from the mirror of Reality. It was the purpose of the Church playwright to teach that each man had his importance and his place in that Reality. The medieval man was not to feel alien, although reality precluded an easy happiness as it also precluded despair. He did not suffer the illusion that there was an eventual apotheosis for mankind in this world. That hubris was not his sin. Ignorant, crude, with a roystering humor, with but little reverence for learning--"not worth a bean"--medieval man had to be shown exempla of the correct choice out of the dilemma of his

¹⁷ Adams, p. 233.

own soul's polarity.

In drama, as well as in other art, the smallest detail had significance. The smallest number used, the blandest color, the lowliest character--Longaeus or Garcio or Daw, in the mysteries--had figurative significance, as had, in sculpture, the ugliest babewyn, the smallest head under the pediment; so also had each object in the painting which depicted relationships--from a weed, a fly, a bird, and an animal, to man inside his mundane house; from whose apertures man might view the external world of nature, with always church or buildings of some larger human community beyond, and beyond that, God's good sky.¹⁸ The art of the Middle Ages became liturgy and sermon; liturgy and sermon became art. In rare unity of symbolic theme, in unprecedented concentration of focus, and in extraordinary beauty, the arts proliferated to magnify the Most High. And the artist's didactic talent taught no more than he himself believed: "The newest and the farthest things, he felt to bear upon his life. At his happiest, if not also perhaps at his clearest, the medieval poet, as the medieval man, feels this. Sustained by a sense of the universe and of the relation between each particular in a divinely made Whole."¹⁹

¹⁸ Angus Fletcher, Shakespeare and Allegory (Cornell, 1964), plate in appendix.

¹⁹ John Speirs, Medieval English Poetry, Non-Chaucerian (London, 1957), p. 399.

How should the playwright-teacher appeal to intellect and to spirit of a "rambusteous" audience which all too often "brast" the bones of their neighbors? Ignorant, crude, with a roystering humor, with little reverence for learning as "not worth a bean" this audience felt a common heritage and a common destiny with the rich or with the lowliest. This catholic mixture of men, whether British, French, Italian or German, sang the same songs, said the same ritual and prayers and heard the same tales, and lived under the same European feudalism. Whether the crowd came at dawn to the East portal of a great cathedral to view the mystery, or whether they came from boredom, or enticed by promise of holiday or indulgences, or threatened by fines, does not matter so much as the fact that the dramatization which they were to see did reflect a social and religious system that militated against abuses risen from man's cupidity and slander and lack of charity. The illiterate, the provincial, the cosmopolitan, the intellectual went to church and to the dramatized Biblical mysteries. This sense of community obtained not only for the here-and-now, but in relation to time-past and time-future. Cain and Abel were constants whom the playgoer could recognize in the neighbor, or in the duke on the bench nearby. On stage the Biblical characters were dressed in clothes like his,

spoke in the same frank and irreverent vernacular. The soul of the lord to his right was of no more worth to either the Devil or to God, than his own soul.

The idea of forbearance to the feudal levels above and to the feudal levels below actuated a sort of practical democracy that can be seen in ^{an account of} the rebuilding of the Chartres Cathedral. J. K. Huysmans in La Cathedrale (Paris, 1898) describes the communal effort, not just by those in near communities, but by those from far provinces of Normandy and Brittany also. Converging on Chartres, carrying silver, jewels, the rich helped those dragging carts of wheat, wood, and wine; the women, children, lords, beggars, if unskilled alike attended to all tasks; preparing mortar or cooking; they joined in the evening prayers and psalms. At Chartres or at the easel, or at the writing table, the artists did not sign the works of their devotion with the names of amour-propre. Lord and serf alike, with selfless consecration and love of God, created feeries of lacy stone, cathedral windows of jewel-deep colors, statuaries of ineffable grace.

The playwright had a practically captive audience with built-in receptivity; an unabashed and uninhibited audience, which responded unreservedly to dramaturgical skill, hopping and whistling its pleasure, hissing and spitting its disagreement. That the play would be diverting was certain,

for life was, for the general, spare and discouraging enough. But the playwright had to do more. He had also to "inject the relevance of Christian worship into secular life", with the hope for the "morality of personal conduct extended into the body politic".²⁰ He would first fuse the timeless and the ephemeral by putting static Biblical characters on the stage as exempla to change or purge the attitudes of the playgoers. But he must do more to obtain conviction from his audience. The dramatist-poet knew, as his modern counterpart knows, that "thinking is feeling", and therefore selected and intensified those incidents of the Bible which were most affective emotionally: the Birth and the Passion of Christ, the Woman in Adultery and Lazarus--sentiment, horror, sex and necrophilia.

It was the Passion of Christ that the church first superimposed upon the pagan Birth-Death-Resurrection ceremonies, and with the greatest success. Here the playwright could impress the idea by endocrine substratum to stimulate the ambience, for faith. The playwright goes the audience to the "wet wounds", "the bright blood spurting long", to the clinical details of severed tendons, muscles that will not hold--as discussed by York journeymen methodically

²⁰ F. M. Salter, Medieval Drama in Chester (Toronto, 1954), p. 58.

going about their business with the tools and expertise of their trade; then haws the audience again to the suffering of Jesus, thence again to the cruel jibes, back to the kneeling Mary's anguish. The sadistic violence of Caiaphas, the pointless cruelty by all around him contrasts to the silence of the main character throughout the trial and buffeting. The Wakefield "Buffeting" has the Torturers playing Hot Cockles with this "jangling Jesus", and provides such a din of farcical chatter and puns and body action that the audience reacts by empathizing with the silent sufferer. The cry of the ungrateful Malchus-- "Kill him! Kill him! He has disobeyed the law. He would ruin us all!"--becomes the cry of all the fearful and the impulsive who are gulled by legalists and rationalists through all the years.

Denied surprise elements in character and plot, the playwright used severe contrasts of incident and mood to sharpen the sense and excitement of ideological conflict. He played the gamut of emotions, selecting episodes evocative of pride, anger and despair, matched on the ascending scale with gratitude, hope and exaltation: the sacrifice of Isaac and his restoration; the slaughter of the innocent babies and the flight of Christ; the plaint of Mary at the cross as against her resurrection (Coventry cycle). The artist amplified the dynamic effect by extremely wide and abrupt swings

from joy to terror, from beauty to farce, sometimes within two clashing words.²¹ He skillfully see-sawed the "fuming" of Herod and Satan with the forbearance and silence of their opposite Christ-figures; the too-much slandering of Mary Magdalene, which is salaciously attractive at first, turns finally to sympathy for the silent Mary. Exaggerated and constant contrasts bring the audience through such violent swings of emotion that, sickened and sated, they feel their own complicity in commission of the sins upon the stage.²²

The sublime is brought down to terms of the lowly: "Methought, one (angel) scremyd on lowde . . ."²³ and again the childlike expressions tie the transcendental to the real: "Herod repeated, French-wise, 'Whose Child?' Then weps't he shrill." (The lordly villains speak French;

²¹ Finding the grotesque in the sublime and the sublime in the grotesque is an ironical paradox that delights the modern as well as the Gothic audience. Characteristic of both periods is the Teutonic preoccupation with the Totentanz. The dread and violent action, the blood and the rage is suggestive of its descendants, White Devil, Spanish Tragedy, and even of that expression to arouse passion--"Blood, sweat and tears".

²² In art, the Isenheim altarpiece by Matthias Grunewald at Colmar, France, which depicts in part the crucifixion of Christ, is a visual illustration of the technique of exaggeration used to horrify the senses to pity, guilt and shame.

²³ Wakefield, First Shepherds play, EETS, XII, 1. 310.

"Frankish fare" is frowned upon by the early; a verbose talker is suspect.)

Much Rabelaisian humor was at the expense of "the enemy"--that ever-effective commodity against which the propagandist directs the native spleen. Medieval man reviled villains at once Biblical and contemporaneous: Jews and foreigners, rabbi-priests, rich-royal Pilates. (Expressive of all these villains is the merchant Jonathan in the Digby Play of the Sacrament.) To these the dramatist attached associations of the infidel and heathen and exotic, so that hatred was directed against these worldly figures of anti-Christ, the colossi who would bestride the world.

The villains to hiss, and litanies of hate--did they perhaps serve the purpose of exorcising innate cruelties? The dramatist of that time, as does the opinion-shaper of today, cultivated a sort of anti-snob snobbism; and his audience slapped their thighs in delight as the child Jesus gave the priest-scribes their come-uppance; as Cain struck at the angel: "Take that thyself, even on thy crown"; as Pilate's boy bested Pilate himself; as Herod is hoist on his own petard: "The high horse of Broughton (gallows) should be ridden by lords of your degree." Secretly they empathized with Cain against King, government, nobles, obligation, altruism; and they probably went to their deaths much as Cain did--unrepentant, rudely independent, taking

things as they came, stoically, but still with some hope.

Domestic humor was used to gain easy empathy also, then to direct the gibes against the foolishness of women's judgment and preoccupations to the parallel characters of Noah's wife and Mak's wife--stubborn, near-sighted, comfort-loving, assuming to make decisions she was not capable of making--the weaknesses of Eve personified. These gibes, and even sermons against women (as delivered by Peter in Wakefield when Mary tells him of the resurrection of Jesus; and again in Thomas of India), are typical: "Let them blow awhile . . . ", "so full of feyne words, these women"; as are these generalizations: "All women are crabbed, and so thou art, by John", and "all women are tetchy". Types of exasperating women, Gyll and Noah's uxor spinning their excuses, are but foils to set off the tenderness and goodness of Mary. Against the cheating and griping are set examplums of gentleness and sincerity. The Wakefield shepherd marks the "peeping of the shrew-mice". He calls his dog, he is proud of the kind care that he gives his sheep, and he grumbles at the burdens laid on him by his fellowmen. The delight of the shepherds at the smiles of the infant, their simple generosity, reveal the "good" in man. In the Wakefield cycle, Cain begs to be buried in the "Gudeboure at the querell hede"; Satan begs Christ to be allowed to accompany Christ and do his works,

This same figurative formula for man's salvation was given to the picturization in cathedral windows of the tree of both life and death growing out of Christ's cradle.²⁷ In Wakefield Annunciation, Joseph gives added dimension to the connotation of the "tree-wand-rod":

But I was old and stood beside,
I knew not what they meant.
.
Forth with my wand they made me stand,
With bloom it flourished in my hand.²⁸

For didactic purposes, man's time is shortened or lengthened, with no need of explanation. Time and Christ's gestation could be shown graphically by only one line of dialogue: "Nine months passed." Satan's fall was accomplished in one line, and his second analogical fall into the pit in Wakefield's Deliverance of Souls also was accomplished as quickly as Jesus' "So syde I ere." In the Digby Mary Magdalene, Mary's forty years converting the heathen are as expeditiously foreshortened. The star leading the Magi to Bethlehem dims and reappears to show the passage of time; the blackout of the stage for a moment allows the birth of Christ. The Coventry plays expanded the events about the birth of Christ to apochryphal sequences

²⁷ Emile Male, The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France in the Thirteenth Century (New York, 1958 tr.), p. 187.

²⁸ "Annunciation", Wakefield Mystery Plays, edited by Martial Rose (New York, 1962), p. 182.

regarding Mary's childhood and her mother. The two Wakefield Shepherds plays are reiterative complements, each interlinking the secular and the divine worlds, using ironic parallels to reinforce the idea that Divinity "Ther lygys that fre/ In a cryb full poorely/ Betweyx two bestys."²⁹ Expansion of the passion into three Coventry plays, four Wakefield plays, emphasized the Crucifix as central to the idea of Redemption, and central to the importance of the sacraments, and central even to Christian faith.

And if the drama was to be didactic, not even the apocryphal material was extraneous. To have Luke the Gospel writer as the second disciple on the road to Emmaus (Wakefield Peregrini) is reinforcement of the lesson by use of the familiar. To have Longaeus' blindness cured by the blood of the Christ whom he had pierced is to increase both awe and poignancy. The religious purpose of the drama is well served with the enlargement of dear details such as the simple toys that the shepherds gave to Jesus and "the good holsum ayll/ That is the boyte of oure bayle."³⁰

²⁹ Wakefield, Second Shepherds play, edited by J. Q. Adams (ll. 643-248).

³⁰ Wakefield XII (ll. 247-248).

The detailing of earthy concern for food, for tetchety wife; the humor in pun, situation and satire; the joke built upon a sheep that wasn't there;³¹ the "bawky" mare and the balky self whom the "prechyng of Peter might not converte", until, like Thomas of India, "I felyd the wounde that the spere dyde clyve" (Wakefield XXVIII)-- these were the words of that dialogue of Dust with Deith. Even the increase of body blows in the Buffeting plays sensuously strikes with hammer-blow repetitions to implicate the audience, to make them feel contrition and the need for Redemption. For Christ to say that the Holy Ghost did anoint him "like a leech"; for the "crakid" nasal yelps and the stumbling "gle, glo, glory", and "gle, glo, glos, glum"³² to parody the hallelujahs of the angels was to insist on the metaphor that the clumsiest human attempts to approximate the divine are rewarded with inner Grace sufficient unto the day.

For finer metaphorical figure, there was Cain, doomed to be dressed in the skins of the dead, struggling with his four strong and restless horses whom he must "both hold and

³¹ Wakefield, Second Shepherds play (l. 187 ff.).

³² Coventry, EETS, p. 158. Since the Lincoln Corpus Christi plays and the Ludus Coventriae have been shown by Hardin Craig in his English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1955), p. 239-280, to be the same, further reference to either group of plays shall be made as Coventry.

drive". But for those many who were not imaginately inclined, the use of real horses (in Conversion of St. Paul also) lent life and immediacy of perception.

The characters themselves were dressed as realistically as their speech. The homespun of the medieval simple, or the Persian chiffon of the noble lady lent relevance and credence to the mystery play. The costumes were either given by the nobility or bought by the guilds or later, by the towns that fostered their respective cycles of mystery plays. The French Miracle de Théophile of the middle 1200's lists costumes such as one of violet velvet with sleeves lined in gold, and a purple satin cloak; a changeable taffeta for a paralytic.³³ (The slightest shift of movement or light would bring varying color for an eye focus.) In the last of the 1100's, Jeu d'Adam's God and Eve were dressed in white leather.³⁴ English medieval plays followed the precedent in listing costs (to the town or to the guilds) of white leather for angels, black leather for the devil, with costumes for other actors correspondingly costly and painstaking. In the Castle of Perseverance, the costuming of the Virtues is: Mercy in

³³ Grace Frank, Medieval French Drama (Oxford, 1954), p. 70.

³⁴ Le Mystère d'Adam, trans. Paul Studer (Manchester, 1918).

white, Righteousness in red, Truth in sad green and Peace in black.³⁵ In Rose's Thomas of India, Jesus was "in apparel red arrayed".³⁶

Whether the stations at which the various episodes of the mysteries played were in the various church loca, or later at the street crossings, along the way of the "progress" of a Corpus Christi cycle toward a cathedral, or whether on scaffolds around one central platea, the setting was as panoramic as the subject. Fluidity and even simultaneity of action was demanded by mystery plays such as the Wakefield The Offering of the Magi, where the kings meet and together go to Herod's palace, when they continue to follow the star, then "here lyghtys the kyngs of thare horses" (l. 504) to pray, then continue to the scene of the "mansion" of the Nativity. The Wakefield Second Shepherds play argues for a simultaneous setting, with one side of the "stage" representing the open fields and the other side, Mak's cottage. The many plays involving movement--the Wakefield Conspiracy with John and Peter's journey to the city, the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and Pilate's house; the Wakefield Herod the Great requires two acting areas--for Herod's court and for the killing of the children in town.

³⁵ E. K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford, 1903), I, 4 ff.

³⁶ The Wakefield Mystery Plays, ed. Martial Rose (New York, 1962), l. 86.

The Coventry Herod is on a platform, according to lines 125-128 in The Massacre of the Innocents. The Coventry Salutation and Conception requires levels of supposed platform staging to accommodate the preliminary discussion between Pater, Filus and Spiritus Sanctus and Gabriel's subsequent descent to Mary. The simultaneous and multi-level staging of Heaven, the World and Hell was an easily understood linkage of visible and invisible worlds. Symbolic, stylized set-pieces were easily changed and moved, as in the Oriental theater. Such a presentational device spurred the imagination of an audience that "scorned the things of the senses".³⁷ In Mystere de la Passion, played at Mons in 1501, "sixty-six mansions were aligned on a scaffold forty meters long, from the wheel of Paradise, before which was enthroned the Father, to the throat of Hell." There was even a sea on which floated a ship. (Translated from Le Theatre Religieux au Moyen Age (Classiques Larousse, Paris).

That this was a theater that could do more than stimulate the imagination is indicated by such feats of mounting as a "deluge of five minutes of continuous rain"; a last-second, imperceptible substitution of effigies complete with

³⁷ Male, p. 20.

bones for the burning; the visible erection of an ark or of a temple on stage. Here was a marvelously engineered stage with capacity to ascend fifty angels at once, "aloft in clouds"; to enable mobility of ships and mountains.³⁸ Wickham asserts that "the picture that emerges is of a theater ornate and colorful".

Excitement was enhanced by sounds ranging from the trumps resounding in the Wakefield Judgment to the "noys herde so hydously" from Hell; from the "breke outt youre voce/ let se as ye yelp" (Wakefield First Shepherds) to a song by Jesus at his entry in Thomas of India (Wakefield). Although Wakefield cycle does not have so much liturgical music as has Coventry cycle, yet the choruses of angels which sing in the Shepherds plays and at Christ's ascension can be assumed to have the finesse and sophistication of the medieval polyphonic music, secular and religious, which one can hear on records today. Development in music for the stage must have corresponded to the high degree of achievement in the harmonious skill, and in the inspiration which is evident in such fields of medieval art as sculpture and architecture. The medieval mise-en-scene did not give less evidence of "man's capacity

³⁸ Glynne Wicham, Early English Stages, 1300-1600. Vol. I. (London, 1959)

to discern the beautiful, to introduce the sublime into nature".³⁹

Should spectacle and sound not be enough to hold attention, the dramatist used the different forms of direct address which varied from "Here beginneth . . ." in the prologues (spoken by Doctor, Messenger, or Cain's boy, or by Deus or Herod), to straight homily--"You see . . ."--delivered at random throughout the plays, even by the villains who were made to serve the purpose of didacticism. In the Wakefield Judgment, the address is to "You, sires dressed in mink, on those benches". The Doctor of Wakefield XI (EETS) speaks in the manner necessary to this mass audience, in a day when there was no bell or light to warn of the play's beginning: "Preying you of audience, now ses and tak hed/Ces youre blaberying, lousy begchis . . ."

Such was the audience intimacy of the medieval play, (an intimacy seen again in modern plays like Marat/Sade (a drooling inmate fixes a man in the audience with a piercing, contemplative eye), like Royal Hunt, like Murder/Cathedral); such was the individual aim of the medieval sermon-plays. More general, but still direct presentational didacticism occurred in the prologues and the epilogues--sermo by the Expositor, the Messenger, by Pilatus or Deus, who explained who they were, what they had done, and what they were to do.

³⁹ Edward Honig, Dark Conceit (Evanston, 1959), p. 43.

This was the technique to be used by the ritual personages of later plays, by the Vices, by the World, Devil and Flesh and their henchmen. In transitional semi-liturgical drama, the audience listened for the double meanings which were indicated by the suggestively symbolic apparel. (Violaine in her Dalmatic (L'Annonce) is a modern use of this "doubling".) Presentational drama avoided any pretension to quasi-realism; Prologue and Epilogue were honest sermons. Interspersed homily reviewed the chapter and text of the Bible, especially the Prophetæ; The Wakefield plays Thomas of India, Play of the Doctors, The Pilgrims, The Judgment; and the Cornish play David and Bathsheba.

But the intermittent homily and even the plays almost wholly instructive, such as the Wakefield Thomas of India and many of the York plays, and all of Coventry, were made more impressive by the imposing mien and costume, the mimetic and rhetorical skill of the actor. If, as John Gassner states, "The text is only shorthand for the actor; a playwright must leave much for the actor to create",⁴⁰ then much must have been required of the actor of medieval drama, for this is a dimension of art that is not primarily literary, but mimetic in three dimensions of "reality" as well as in the dimension of allegory.

⁴⁰ Seminars in Playwriting 7 and Playwriting 127, Yale University, 1965-1966.

As an integral part of the entire play, the acting skill reflected the status of guild or city. A York corporation law of April 3, 1476, declared that "Every year during Lent, four of the "most cunning and discrete players within the city" examine all the actors in the play and discharge those who were inadequate in "cunning, voice or person". Even the Brechtian type of group actors which were used in mysteries like The Crucifixion, Slaughter of the Innocents, were put to the test by an audience knowledgeable and particular in the trades and arts. "Here Erode ragis in the pagond and in the strete also"⁴¹ is a stage direction calling not only for physical stamina, but for voice volume and skill of rhetoric. One can imagine the effect of a wind-wrapped Lazarus, dust-gray and mottle-faced (with all the imagined stench of decay) stumbling toward a stupefied audience to deliver a long sermon at the end of a most graphically descriptive play about death. Would the effect be less than the shock effect delivered by the modern counterpart of Lazarus in Marat/Sade?

The pronouncements of Christ, or the prophets, or of God, were lyric and heroic: stylized rhythms, in-written, became almost incantatory, urging the sublimation of joy and celebration into exaltation. And paradoxical as it may have

⁴¹ Magi, Herod, and The Slaughter of the Innocents, ed. J. Q. Adams (Cambridge, 1924), between II. 783-784.

seemed, the stylization accorded with "the spontaneous, child-like emotion of the peasant". The religious sincerity of the actor must have been at one with his audience, for their inter-reaction was necessary for that "explosion in imagination . . . resulting in perception of the path to salvation prepared by divine Grace".⁴² His soliloquys had also to convey convincingly the most personal of feelings and thoughts. To transport the poignant emotion roused by the anguish of father Abraham to a grasp of the "gostly fadyr's concern" (Chester cycle)--enough concern to sacrifice his own son--the actor must have sensibility and use apperception. It was no mean challenge to play Mary's response to Gabriel's annunciation:⁴³

A! now I ffele in my body be
 Parfyte God and parfyte man. (ll. 293, 294)

 I cannot telle what joy, what blysse,
 Now I fele in my body! (ll. 305, 306)

The actor must accomplish for the audience that which Gabriel purposed for Mary:

Her body xal be so ful-fylt with blys
 That she xal sone thynke this sownde credyble.⁴⁴

As it was the design of the Church to encourage gratitude and joy for the smallest gifts of nature, the actor must find in

⁴² Wickham, I. p. 314.

⁴³ Coventry XI.

⁴⁴ The Salutation and Conception, Coventry Play XI, ll. 212, 213. The N. Towne plays shall be referred to as Coventry plays in this paper.

himself the tenderness of the young Daw, who, though cold and hungry, smiles:

Yit me-thynk my hart lygh⁴⁵is; I se shrewys pepe.
Ye ar two (t)all wyghtys!⁴⁵

and of Coll and Gib who present their gifts to Jesus:

Hayll, lytll mylk sop!/ hayll dauid sede!
Of oure crede thous art crop/ hayl, in god hede!
.
Hayll, lytll tyn mop!/ rewarder of mede!
Hayll, bot oone drop/ of grace at my nede!⁴⁶

The underwarp of colloquialism warms the baby's welcome into an unevenly textured world. The homely salutation suggests by ironic parallel the sublimity of Gabriel's "Hail, Mary's".

He must be an intelligent actor who could deliver metaphorically lines as: "Here beginneth Darkness and Lightness/ Here beginneth Dryness and Wetness . . ."--a long catalogue of the precariously balanced dualisms of man's ambivalent state after his fall (Chester cycle, The Fall): who could interpret sympathetically Thomas of India: "I am not that I am" (a line to be repeated two centuries later by Iago). It would take no mean actor to say Adam's "ffleshe of mi ffleshe and bon of mi bon" with a mixture of reverence, pride and fondness.

No half-world of shadow and light patterns, no mood created by structured masses and relating forms, was available in the open-air theater. Given the requisite vigor and flexible

⁴⁵ Wakefield Shepherds, EETS, 11. 138, 139.

⁴⁶ Wakefield XII (53), 11. 467-471.

voice, the actor must be the master of pantomime, from the "broad, bustum gut" variety to the dignity of the silent Christ. Gordon Craig's predication that the dancer was father of the actor was most descriptive for the actor of the middle ages. To keep attention, the miming, projection, timing and diction had to be forceful and flawless. Randolph Goodman describes the comic actor as "juggler, acrobat, clown, a master of "rich humor and forceful realism", whose basic repertoire was an extensive "vocabulary of face, mime, gesture and vocal variety" supported by much "breath and spirit".⁴⁷

Humor the most ribald, violence to the point of senseless sadism, had to be played so exaggeratedly as to make vice seem ridiculous or ugly, and yet make the roystering peasant at home: "Unless I give him a blow, my heart will burst/ Both his eyes in a row/ Thrust out I durst"; or, "Go, thrash him/ And slash him/ Nay, I myself would smash him". These incarnations of malice lost some of their viciousness and the Pilates and Herods lost "measure" when they had less than human dignity: "He would sleep in a twink", if you "knock him", and "with knockys make him wake". Such grimace and gesture and yelling accompanying "with great stones let his brains be brast" and "Were I dead and rotten" was insurance to capture the doughtiest

⁴⁷ Drama on Stage (New York, 1961), pp. 14, 83.

audience. Anti-establishment empathy is, as ever, effective:

We ar so hamyd,
For-taxed and ramyd,
We ar mayde hand-tamyd
With thyse gentlery men.⁴⁸

Then the playwright rounded off the hearty laughs with the
"Te Deum" or:

Now god till vs his socoure send
And he that is withoutten end
And ay shalbe,
Save vs from fowndying of the feynd.

To bring a rude and simple audience along from 4:30 in the morning until nightfall (if the cycles were played at York or Chester in pageant style); or to hold an audience seated upon no more than heaped-up banks of dirt centered about the "place";⁴⁹ to listen to homily interlaced with passion, was an achievement that the modern world must credit at least partially to subtle and skilled actors.

But the medieval actor was aided by histrionic directions in the simple words themselves; by rhythms and balance and harmony derived from liturgical symmetry and qualitative proportions. Symmetries of "larger assured masses" (Matthew Arnold) became thesis and antithesis (reversals) and synthesis (or resolution): Mary Magdalene's dichotomy; the anti-God

⁴⁸ Adams, Second Shepherds, ll. 15-18.

⁴⁹ Richard Southern, Medieval Theater in the Round, (London, 1957).

kingdom and creatures of Herod; the parody-parallels of Play of the Sacrament. Much like ballad formula, the shorter equivalencies and "echoes" were not only mnemonic and mesmeric, but were easy to hear, to anticipate and to remember. The even shorter trip-hammer phrases of short Anglo-Saxon words also gave movement and speed:

Why, who wanders? who wakys?/ Who commys? who gose?
 Who brewys? who bakys?/ Who makys me thus hose?⁵⁰

Anaphoric devices, questions, fast interplay of dialogue, variety of lengths of lines and stanzas offset the charge of "static drama". Rhythm and sequence are not to be measured by legalistic cant, and here "progression" answers to the psychological swings and needs of the human mood and spirit. The human predicament was the issue: divide it into dramatic units as empiricism dictated. Expansive and exuberant, the play carried the people with it and with its message.

Nor were the plays infantile in productive imagination and sophistication, if they could have a fountain produced at each jump of St. Peter's decapitated head; if the leaves and even the heavens could open, the fountains flow, angels descend with flaming swords;⁵¹ if choruses of children sang for the entry of Christ into Jerusalem (York).

⁵⁰ Second Shepherds, ll. 413-416.

⁵¹ Allardice Nicoll, World Drama (New York, 1949).

A wide variety of instruments--rebec, recorders, bas-violles, psaltery--was used in liturgical drama, and records at Coventry, Lincoln, and Beverley indicate that an even greater variety was introduced for the performance of the mystery plays. The recent production by the New York Musica of the thirteenth-century The Play of Daniel has stressed the range and effectiveness of medieval instrumentation."⁵²

The "stage" was vibrant with large action, and color and music--epic, naturalism, abstraction, and musical in one; it worked, for human life is all of those things at once.

What artificial plot can be stronger in conflict than the classic tension between man's bodily will and the nus of a limitless Space-Time? Unity and continuity lay in this single theme upon which the author and the machinery and the actor focused: salvation by means of the categorical imperative laid upon the limited by the limitless. This theme-line was given intensity by repetition in analogue and anagogue, "types" and "figures", by reality of contemporary speech, dress and situation, by emotionally encoded words and rhythms tied to long-familiar liturgy. But the playwright, like Antaeus, by remaining footed in the ground of simple words, strong emotions and dear narrative, held the Herculean masses.

⁵² Rose, p. 51.

When in the sixteenth century, announcements were made that the Corpus Christi plays would be replaced by "une fable, une histoire profane"--the fall of Troy,⁵³ the general public were dismayed and stubborn. Although restrictions, deletions, emendations, censorship had devitalized the cycles, the townspeople of Chester retained their script in spite of contrary orders from the Archbishop of York, and performed the cycle. For this defiance the mayor of Chester and his successor were arrested and taken to London for trial.⁵⁴ "After 1576 we hear of no further attempt to perform the Wakefield Plays."⁵⁵ The collection of religious scripts and the discouragement and outright prohibition of performance or destruction of the mystery plays by Tudor and church authorities had the effect of proscribing religious theater.⁵⁶ H. C. Gardiner (p. 113) concludes that the decline of religious theater was not attributable to lack of interest on the part of the audience, but

⁵³ Mâle

⁵⁴ Gardiner, H. C., Mysteries End: An Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage. New Haven, 1946, p. 81.

⁵⁵ Rose, p. 16 ff.

⁵⁶ "The correction, indeed the abolition of the plays is attributed to the influence of Edmund Crindal, Archbishop of York, and to Matthew Hutton, the Dean of the Minster." Hardin Craig, p. 201. Gardiner, p. 81, also records the persistent popularity of the mysteries until "they were suppressed by Reformist zeal, reinforced by state opposition to their alleged idolatry and superstition."

that they had "enjoyed the plays not only because of their broad comedy, but also because it was still religious." There surely were among this audience the many who were cheerfully ignorant, the many who were carefully legalistic, those who were no more prodigious in faith than Peter or Timothy; the cruel, the bigoted. But a measure of social and personal equilibrium was assured^{by} protective hierarchies.

For the honnête homme, the church had contributed ideals of honor, pity, generosity--in sum, the "keyword of the thirteenth century--Charité".⁵⁷ For the average man, feudalism

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Laws against usury throughout Europe from the fourth century until the beginning of commercialism in the middle of the fifteenth century realised in some part the Charity and the Pity which was urged so insistently in literature and the drama. (Chesterton, *ii passim*; W. W. Comfort, *vii and x ff*; Sir Thomas Malory, The Holy Grail, (Harvard Classics, 35, *passim*) Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Tristan, by Chrétien de Troyes: "L'auteur nous demande la pitié . . . parceque ecoutez comme le Seigneur Dieu est plein de Pitié." (Le Roman de Tristan et Iseult (Paris, 1946), p. 86.

Mais l'ermite rappelle aussi a Lancelot la misericorde infinie de Dieu . . ." (La Queste du Saint Graal, tr. Albert Peuphilet (Paris, 1949), p. 44.

The shepherds in Wakefield First Shepherds think to leave some meat "on poor men to bestow". Mâle cites the Knights of St. Jacques as one of the orders that defended travellers on the highway; monks often guarded bridges; other knights swore to protect the ill and the abused.

~~was~~ was structured with ethical considerations downward at each strata.⁵⁸ Craft guilds had a religious basis, considering toil a devotional exercise, a return of thanks for skill and health. Guilds had their patron saints, guild chaplain and chapel. For the artist, the inspiration of the church and the drama suggested the subjects for painting, sculpture, and cathedral window.⁵⁹

If the art of an age lives only as it is true for an age--particularly the art of drama, which depends on "truth" for its acceptance and life--must not one conclude that the Church did achieve in part its didactic purpose, that of putting a faith to work toward ending baronial wars, toward raising the stature

⁵⁸ For example, the loyalty of a vassal could be retained only if his lord honored at least three conditions: that he not strike the vassal, that he not seduce the vassal's wife or daughter, that he defend his vassal. The vassals in turn owed patronage, health and protection to the serfs. And again the serf was protected by conditions such as that he not be bound to serve the lord for more than forty days in a battle or was. (Ganshof, p. 32).

⁵⁹ Details of Renaissance Pieta sculptures correspond to stage directions of Ludus Coventriae, Passion Play II, following l. 1131 and l. 1139.

Méle, ii, p. 185, and W. L. Hildburgh, "English Alabaster Carvings as Records of Medieval Religious Drama", Archaeologia, xciii. 50-101 (1949), shows art of the medieval period taken from scenes of religious drama.

Mr. Douglas Cole of Yale University, during 1966-67 was to study scenes in English cathedral windows which had been inspired by medieval drama.

of women, to glorifying labor, to preserving Greek philosophy and liberal arts⁶⁰, in short, to civilize the barbarian?

Forasmuch as of old time, not only for the augmentation of the holy and catholic faith of our Saviour, Jesu Christ, and to exhort the minds of the common people to good devotion and wholesome doctrine thereof, but also for the commonwealth and prosperity of this City, a play and declaration of divers stories of the Bible, beginning with the Creation and Fall . . .⁶¹

The church learned early that "action is eloquent and the eyes of the ignorant more learned than the ears."⁶²

Through the centuries, it developed a dramatic logic to hold the attention of the artisan, serf and noble for at least three hundred years.⁶³

⁶⁰ Lectures by T. K. Scott, Jr., Medieval Philosophy 26a, Yale University.

⁶¹ Salter, p. 33.

⁶² William Shakespeare, Coriolanus, III.ii.76.

⁶³ When the Church used chants and antiphonal singing, introduced from the Eastern church by Ambrose of Milan in the second century, drama again began dialogue with its audience. Harold Ehrensperger cites evidence for liturgical drama as early as the fourth century. (Harold Ehrensperger, Ends and Means (New York, 1962), p. 41). The Church, like the classical Greeks, now "bound reason and emotion together and expressed idea via music and physical movement." (Ehrensperger, p. 80).

"Rudimentary dramatic rites appeared early in the form of pantomimic representations of the Nativity at Christmas and the Resurrection at Easter. By the ninth century, miniature Latin plays known as tropes developed when chanted dialogues were introduced into the wordless sequences of the mass at Easter, Christmas, and Epiphany . . ." (Gassner, Treasury of the Theater, I (New York, 1951), p. 186)

By the sixteenth century the refining influence of the Church had produced men like Thomas More, Michel de Montaigne, Sir Philip Sydney, Erasmus, and William Shakespeare--wise and good and constant, the highest types of Christian-humanist conscience. One of the beliefs that these humanists shared was that children should be taught first how to be wise and good; then they were to be taught the sciences, applied under direction of the Christian conscience.

"Haut et droit/ sage, constant et froid . . .",⁶⁴ the medieval-Byzantine Christ was the centroid of social stability, of personal hope, illumined by beauty. But the people were helped to this persuasion by many generations of religious teaching.

⁶³ (continued)

By the tenth century, the Saxon nun Hroswitha was writing saint plays. In the 1100's, episodes from the Bible were set into motion with costume and music. At Augsburg, dramatic interpretation occurred as Peter raced John to the tomb of Christ. The twelfth century also saw Jeu de St. Michel, St. Catherine, Miracles of Our Lady mounted as full dramas, (Trope dialogue de l'Introit de Noel a Saint-Martial de Limoges, Le Theatre Religieux au Moyen Age, p. 4.), as was Adam in Rome in 1143, and Daniel in France.

The beginning of the thirteenth century saw processions of the Prophetæ in Europe and England, definitely recorded at Riga and Rouen; Rutebeuf's Miracle de Theophile, and the Corpus Christi Processions which preceded or terminated in the Chester and the Cornish cycles of the early fourteenth century.

⁶⁴

"Passion de Jean-Michel", quoted in Gustave Cohen, Le Theatre Francais au Moyen Age.

"L'homme a toujours aime reduire le monde a la scene et il faut avouer que jamais il a mieux reussi qu'au moyen age."

-Gustave Cohen

With the decline in the power of the aristocracy from the twelfth century on, a new concern for the stability of the social and religious community had given rise to more gentle criteria for an aristocracy of courtoisie, which would not be based on money or man-power. With the growth of the merchant class, the number of people able to afford time for an education and to enjoy the mental exercise of encoded word and symbol had increased. The liberal influences exerted by the philosophers of Chartres, by idealistic teaching orders effected in this new socio-economic order an increased sophistication.¹ The Augustinian predilection for types and symbol and the Thomist passion for symmetry, the pleasure in doctrinal pattern found expression in a more abstract drama than the Biblical narratives. Objectifying one's inner drives garbed in allegorical characters was necessary for recognition of self--a primary step up the ladder of relationships to neighbor,

¹ Under the influence of the humanistic school of Chartres from the tenth to the twelfth century, the Church became liberal enough to consider man himself as the temple. A church which could embrace at one time the Pelagianism of the fifth century as well as the Jansenism of the fifteenth, that could encourage scientists with views of near-agnosticism did encourage. Lectures in Medieval Philosophy 26a, 1965, Yale. *some tolerance.*

Nature or God. ¶ As early as the agon of the Greek protagonist with Fate, and Jacob's struggle with the angel, the arena and prize was something other than the physical self: C. S. Lewis (Allegory of Love, ii, passim) traces the "mid-morning of personification" from Seneca to Tertullian, in whose De Spectaculis "Unchastity is overcome by Chastity, Perfidy slain by Unfaithfulness"; to Prudentius, whose Psychomachia (fifth century) refined the "bellum intestinum" of Statius' Thebiad. The Eighty-fifth Psalm was early precedent for allegorizing the four Daughters of God--Veritas, Misericordia, Justicia, and Pax, who, with Contemplation, discuss with the Trinity the salvation of man, in Coventry The Salutation and Conception. Also in Coventry's Mary in the Temple, five Maidens represent Virtues. In Jeu d'Adam, the Vices, Ambition and Dissatisfaction (Pride's subsidiaries)--cause the Fall.

Vices developed as antithetical personifications expressing the absence of the corresponding Virtues. A religious processional at Beverley, in the early thirteenth century, had one pageant devoted to each of the Virtues, seen in combat with her corresponding Vice: Ira versus Prudentia, Superbia versus Humilitas, etc. Craig refers to the early Chantilly manuscript of a pageant, La Moralité des Sept Peches et Sept Vertus; and another which illustrates the

theme-plot which the liturgical plays were to take, La Pélérinage de la Vie. The Pater Noster of the early fourteenth century had an allegorized man yield to sin, repent without an inner struggle, after a formalized struggle between the externalized Vices and Virtues. In the Chester plays, the devil confronting Eve is a "worm" with an angel's face. In the Wakefield cycle, the devil appears as Pride. Mors (Dethe) in the Coventry Judgment is personified. The Chester cycle added Virtues, Powers, Dominations and the nine orders of Angels. By 1565, the Creation of Eve as acted by the Grocers of Norwich had the characters of Dolor and Mysère take Man by both arms in order to apply direct morality to him.

The French Le Mystère de la Passion, written in the fifteenth century by D'Arnoul Creban, has Diablerie; in "La Mort de Judas" (in the same mystere), Despair, as one of the most seductive daughters of Satan, is sent to persuade Judas, dialectically, to despair of Pity or Hope and to an unhealthy desire for Death.

There is no question of the provenience of the morality characters from the mystery, and, in fact, actual and abstract characters co-existed in miracle plays, as in the Coventry cycle and in semi-liturgical plays such as Mary

Magdalene and Conversion of St. Paul:²

Belyal "avaunte(s) hym sylfe" and plots with Mercury:

Though on hath dyssavyed vs, yet now a days
 Twentie doyth gladly folow oure layes;
 Some by Pryde, some through Envye;

 There was neuer among Crystans lesse charyte
 Than ys at this howre; and as for Concupiscence,
 He rayneth as a lord thorow my violence.

 And most now ys praysyd my cosyn Covytyce.
 (ll. 486-495)

"Every form clothes a thought": so, in sculpture,
 the Apostles stood on the shoulders of the four correspond--
 ing prophets; Isaac became a proto-type for the Lamb to be
 sacrificed; Abel, a proto-type for the Good Shepherd; Eve,
 a proto-type of Mary; and Cain, a ~~proto~~-type of Satan. And
 later there were, in the various moralities, Davy Drydust
 and New-Gyse and a Bunyanesque jury, with those good men
 and true--Wrong, Sleight, Doubleness, and Falsehood.

² The fifteenth-century Conversion, not the Latin Con-
versio credited by Jean Frappier and A. Gossart to
 the twelfth century and by J. Q. Adams to the thir-
 teenth century.

This paper can use dates only to establish general re-
 lationships of time; for several discrepancies in dates
 assigned to the writing or the playing of certain plays
 or cycles appear in the various texts concerning the
 Beverley plays, Corpus Christi procession, York plays
 and Chester plays. As there were insufficient records
 kept of productions, and, as much material was held
 and destroyed by authorities, chronology would be diffi-
 cult to establish. Harbage and Schoenbaum's Annals of
English Drama, 975-1700 (University of Pennsylvania)
 gives the earliest dates--the ones this paper uses for
 time relationships.

The scholastics of the twelfth century had taught that freewill does not choose evil in its own shape. Therefore, since man could not expect to see angels or devils or even his own inclinations in recognizable form, he must learn to recognize their various and pleasant and neighborly guises. Mary Magdalene³ makes explicit the medieval passion for relevant order in all the three worlds of man, nature and super-nature, and the derivative capacities of even the hierarchy of Evil: The Devil, who is the head of the anti-Trinity of Devil, World, and Flesh, instructs Flesh, the lowest and closest to man, that he should dispatch Lechery to introduce the gentle-mannered Curiosity to Mary. Mary's consequent seduction by the attractive and "galavnt Corioste" is visually obvious. Nor does Curiosity seduce Mary directly; he uses flattery, attention, gentleness. And Mary, being kind to Curiosity, opens the door to Flesh, then, in deeper consequence, to the World and finally to the proliferate seven vice-devils.⁴

The mounting of these semi-liturgical plays and the Cornish and the Coventry now required at least three stations

³ A non-cycle semi-liturgical play which J. Q. Adams places at the latter half of the fifteenth century.

⁴ E. K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford, 1903), p. 5, cites the opposition of Devil, World and Flesh to Faith, Hope, and Charity.

or "mansions" around a central "platea". Since there are in these same non-cycle plays at least two levels of allegory, there had to be multi-actional and multi-level stages. As the "galavnt" Curiosity courts Mary Magdalene in the platea,⁵ the simultaneous action of the Devil, the World and the Flesh on their scaffolds above seems to all but overlap the "realistic" level below. As the seven devils leave May to return in thunderclaps to Hell, the Devil orders the Bad Angel and the seven Sins to be beaten. The result of the "mansion" staging about the platea was a fluidity and rapidity of action showing (1) causality; (2) various levels of meaning, historical/psychological; (3) all time is one; (4) accommodation of the parallel action or the antithetical repetition.

On either side of Christ, in the Wakefield Judgment, were the saved (close to the ladder-clouds) and the condemned (close to hell-mouth). Christ begins: "Whenne I was hungry, ye me fedde . . ." From the one side, Bona Anima asks: "Whanne hadde we, Lorde that all has wroght,/ Meete and drinke the with to feede?". Bona Anima II: "Whanne waste that we the clothes brought/ Or waste the in any nede?" Christ assures them: "Whan any that nede hadde, night or day,/"

⁵ J. Q. Adams, Mary Magdalene, 1. 514.

Asked you helpe and hadde it sone". In reiterated emphasis, Mala Anima I asks: "Whan had thou, Lorde, that all thyng has/ Hungir or thirsts, sen thou God is?". And, like the second Bona Anima, Mala Anima II echoes: "Whan was it we sawe the seke, allas?"⁶ By the time Christ makes the similar "reckonyng" to the "cursed caytiffs of Kaymes Kynne", the same sermon with which he had begun the judgment has been applied five times.

Among the mysteries, the Chester Prophets and the Har-
rowing of Hell and the entire Coventry cycle introduced a format stiff with hieratical dogma. As the religious play pushed hard for "recognition" of moral truths, the naturalistic characters of the mysteries yielded to formalized lore and the purposes of the sermon. More non-historical characters were added in the semi-liturgical plays: the poets, vexillatos I and II to speak Prologue and Epilogue, the Imp-
erator, and the various heathen anti-Christis such as the Jew Jonathas, the allegorical Philosophers and soldiers in sub-
jection to the anti-Christ Herod (as minor devils to the greater); the World, with the allegorical Metals as "vij pryngys of hell of gret bowntosnesse" in attendance; Mercury as a devil; the Jews of distasteful names in attendance on Jonathas (Jasdon, Masphat, Jason). Not distracted by emotion or minutiae of unfamiliar story-line or characterization or

⁶ Adams, pp. 349-354, ll. 300-316.

setting, the mind was free to expand and multiply the metaphors.
~~phors and doctrine.~~

Legacies from the mysteries to the semi-liturgical plays were (1) a tie to the Biblical characters; (2) presentational techniques of direct address and audience intimacy; (3) static characters and types; (4) naturalistic diction, the actor's projective force and earthy style; (5) the stylistic station or mansion setting; (6) thematic unity; (7) episodic scenes with fluidity of motion.

The added rapid course of balanced, easy-to-follow and easy-to-anticipate movements and lines and masses streamlined audio-visual education which had already been effective. The suggestive repetitions of place and word and theme wound more loosely and widely than the mysteries to reach the focused "recognition" of the importance of the church Sacraments.

In the second half of Mary Magdalene, the heathen of Marcyille (Marseille) present lively parodies of the church hierarchies, services, sacraments and creeds, which, by anti-thesis, emphasizes Catholic dogma. The Cornish Death of Pilate, an apocryphal miracle play, also uses the negative to emphasize the positive. The leprous Tiberius has been cured by the handkerchief with which Veronica had wiped Christ's face. At her request that he kill Pilate with the most cruel death possible, Pilate and Tiberius enact an ironic parody of

Christ's condemnation by Pilate. To Pilate now are addressed echoes of the words which he had addressed to Christ: "I have no wish to harm thee . . . In Pilate's answer "I found/ No fault at any time, or cause to kill him." The executioners ask: "Tell us if thou are a sorcerer . . ." and "But whoever sees him, loves him/ In his heart".⁷ The riddle in this paradoxical reaction to Pilate is answered by an executioner who hints, "By my cloak" in oath against Pilate; then, by Veronica who explains that "As long as there is about him/ The garment of Jesus . . . He will not be destroyed". The "epilogue" has earth, water, and brine repeatedly reject the body of Pilate; three devils finally appear with the body and review its rejection by the elements of earth, and its destination in hell.

Play of the Sacrament shows a plotted parallel opening "vaunts"--by the merchant Aristorius honoring God for all his wealth, and by the Jew Jonathas on the other side of the stage, honoring his Mahomet. The conflict seems weighted on the side of the powerful Anti-Christ who rules all powers and principalities outside of Christendom and to whom Pharaoh, Herod and Pilate and heathen all pray. The "progression-conflict" develops as Jonathas buys the Host from Aristerius in order to destroy it; then, with his mis-benamed crew, Jonathas puts the Host through buffetings anew, "And so shall we smyte

⁷ A. C. Cawley, ed. Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays (New York, 1959), p. 244-247.

theron woundys fyve,"⁸ to inflict symbolically the five wounds suffered by Christ. The host is symbolically subjected to boiling oil, to being put into an oven with the fire evident. After the sojourn in hell, the Host breaks out when the "ovyn must ryve asunder, and blede out at the cranys, and an image appere owt with woundis bledyng" (stage directions preceding the "action" in l. 633). In the process, it is the Jews who have reviewed the history and the positive values of the Crucifixion and all the powers and blessings that the Host has for the Catholic, complete with liturgical Latin tags. Seeing that there is indeed blood and life in this Host, the Jews are converted and baptized immediately. (There is also a restoration of the hand to the Jew, which piques the memory with the restoration of the ear to Malchus in the garden of Gethsemane, particularly when one of these Jews is named Malchus.)

These plays revealed the Church as the harmonizing agent for all seasons and all three worlds. The mechanical "conversions" of Saul, of Jonathas, of the king and queen of Marcyllie, the instant repentance without any inner struggle by Mary Magdalene and Aristorius indicated a belief in the efficacy of the human will in harmony with the teachings of the Church.

⁸ Adams, p. 252, l. 378.

The sacraments were the present and practical aid that the Church could give man in his struggle. Immediately after the conversion and baptism of Saul, in the Conversion of St. Paul, he begins his public ministry with a sermon on Seven Deadly Sins: "Welouyd frendes, ther be vij mortall synnes . . ." (l. 510). In Sacrament, Aristorius confesses to the Episcopus and to the Presbyter that "I haue offendyd in the syn of coutys;/ I sold our Lordys body for lucre of mony." (ll. 821, 822). The Episcopus applies the Dun Scotus regimen:

Euer whyll thou lyuest good dedys for to done
 And neuermore for to bye nor sell;
 Chastys thy body, as I shall the tell,
 With fastyng, and prayng, and other good wyrk.
 (ll. 834-837)

The didactic raison d'etre of the church drama moved on with the increasingly vested interests of the church. The hierarchy of the church is opposed to those of the Jew and ~~the Emperor~~ of the Emperor and ~~to those~~ of the heathen Marcyll. There is not so much self-implication provoked in these plays as in the mysteries, for here the villains are anti-church-- the Jews, the heathen, the classic gods, and are ludicrous and coarse. The allegory is no longer very religious or ideological and the "villains" are perhaps related, ^{to} the more doctrinal Vices to be stressed more uniformly in the later moralities. The "semi-plots" go beyond the apocryphal material to exotic characters and foreign places. The curiosity

about the new countries opened by travel whetted the taste for the marvelous in a purely secular sense. The attempt to dispose of the body of Pilate, to destroy the Host, are crude and satisfactions of a venial Curiosity of the audience. The genuineness of the empathy with the mystery characters cannot be equalled by the artificial and more impersonal scenes of the "marvelous". These seemed to be plays that were neither fish nor fowl, plays of a limited purpose, that because of a lack of broad concepts, and of emotional rapport, and lack of metaphorical significance had neither ideological value for the more imaginative, nor relevance to everyman's everyday life. The passions were not involved.

The two major parts of Mary Magdalene are very loosely connected, with little discernible relationship. The Play of the Sacrament has a rudimentary plot, with the insertion of an irrelevant and satiric episode between Colle and his Master Brundyche, the "leche"--physician. (This inner interplay between cheeky servant and maligned master recalls Cain and Cain's boy in the mysteries, and suggests later similar scenes, notably one between Harpagon and La Fleche in L'Avare by Molière.) However, the scene is not integrated into this semi-liturgical play, and if it is a play within a play, it is without significance.

But if the characters and plots were puppetry, the stage

effects must have been splendid. Wickham and Salter rightfully assume the same care and sophistication for religious drama as for the secular processions and entries, and their later successors in the masques and interludes; the same use of intricate design that is evident in the architecture, sculpture, painting, music and literature of the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. From Richard II to Queen Elizabeth, the royal entries to the palaces in London each offered several "teaching stations" for the Biblical, moral, historical and sociological edification of the monarchs. Occasions and places for these full-dress, panoplied homilies were at the cross-walks and/or cisterns along the way. Wickham tells of the richness of costume and hangings (p. 163) and of the "devices". When Richard II "entered" in 1377, mechanical golden angels descended, one to place a crown on his head, the other to offer him wine. There was a "wilderness" for an enactment of John the Baptist; in another scene, a garden could be raised or lowered--as modern hydraulic stages--to "ayd Ryse by vyce"; in another scene, "Bestes goyne abowts the martyrs by vyce". At one station Richard was greeted by a chorus of children singing his virtue and honor in French, and by a balancing chorus singing in English (Wickham, p. 64).

In 1392 Richard II was greeted at one station by a girl and a boy descending from a "tower" with no visible steps or ladders or "vyces". Reconciliation of the Houses of the Red Rose and the White Rose was signaled by a garden scene of rose arbors, complete with birds; the leading roses on each side turned to "beholde" each other and "cast away the swords" which they had held in their hands (Wickham, p. 84).

Allegorical gardens, castles from which wine would flow for the populace, ships and rocks and mountains that moved, pastoral scenes were embellished with life-like figures of animals, maidens (Wickham, p. 167). In 1432, at six different stations, Lydgate admonished Henry VI to observe the ethics of kingship, with metaphors extended variously to church, state and person. On the one pageant were presented, with suitable poetry, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost in the persons of young virgins. "The next pageant stage presented Dame Sapience attended by the seven Liberal Sciences, in persons of sages like Aristotle, Euclid, Boethius. In the next pageant David and Solomon are cited by Clemency as precedents for proper use of authority." (Wickham, pp. 75-84). In 1558 Queen Elizabeth answered in good Latin to the symbolic homilies addressed to her from the various stages (Wickham, iii).

The religious theater planned its stagecraft as meticulously as the entry spectacles. By means of intricate levers, fifty men ascended to Heaven at Mons in 1501 (Salter, p. 4). The Wakefield Ascension had to provide a broad and sturdy staircase to be lowered from Heaven in the clouds for all the Angels and Good Souls--an ancestor of the La Mancha staircase. In the Chester Ascension, Jesus is enthroned on a cloud in mid-air. Cloud devices were used for the appearance of the dove in the Baptism of Jesus, for the ascension of Jesus, for the assumption of Mary who sits at Christ's side in the Coventry plays. In Sacrament, an admirable sleight-of-device first produced a bleeding child from out of a boiling, bleeding oven; and then, "Here shall the image change agayn onto brede." (directions, l. 745 f.). Medieval stagecraft evidently was undaunted by ". . . here commyth Saule ryding win with hys servantes"; and subsequently, ". . . here commyth a fervent with great tempest, and Saule fawlyth down of his hors" (Conversion, l. 168 f. and l. 182 f.).

Although the semi-liturgical play provided a colorful carnival, it did not inspire the emotional conviction of the mysteries. Lacking unity and conviction, this type of play nonetheless revealed the growing diversity of uses of theater, and led to its complete secularization: the non-Biblical villains, the exotic, the marvelous, the satire and pointless

ribaldry. Its form also seemed to introduce a more complicated vehicle for a more intellectual enjoyment at the same time that it depicted crude actions and characters. The hierarchies, the Vices and Virtues, the parallel structures, presaged a prescribed form for a drama which would be entirely separate from the Church.

Techniques to mount the concentric construct (similar to the pure morality plays which would be in England by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) were evident in the French Jeu de la Feuille of the twelfth century. Although not a morality, there is an analogous plot within a plot and, within that "fairy" plot, another revelation: "Sans doute la toile du fond s'écarte pour découvrir le nouveau tableau de Fortune et de sa roue."⁹ But the wheel itself, representing change and hazard, is presented in a dream conflict between reason and Morgue le fee. As she and other fairies speak of God, one is struck not so much by the mélange as by a subtle relative positioning of these elements in a man's life.

The disparate elements imaged in this drama were acknowledged Presences to the audience, the basest of which a man might avoid by learning their insidiously respectable guises of Honest Appetite, Neighborly Concern, Common Sense. If a man could admit that his "seemyng-fare" dreams of sensu-

⁹ Le Théâtre Comique au Moyen Age (Classiques Larousse, Paris), p. 34, footnote 2.

osity and an easy Fortune were illusions, he could learn humility. A humble man might more readily apply the old Epicurean "measure" to his living and put his hopes into his faith and his work. Once he had defeated his pretensions and self-idolatry, he could understand and practice charity for others. It was not enough to know, according to medieval philosophy. A man must act accordingly.

As the Church was teaching dimension for men's lives, a Christocentric culture worked to make man's state more democratic as it was less egocentric: ". . . ni nes hommes . . . ni des objets n'ont de valeur en eux-memes, mais seulement dans le mesure ou ils conduisent au Christ."¹⁰ Money, sex and selfish diversion were not pandered, except as practiced by the despised outlanders, ^{pictured in drama.} These standards the church drama taught. The parish went to the drama even as it became secularized to the point of becoming political satire in the sixteenth century. The methods of the abstract expressionism worked still, because the passions and wills of humankind strive still, in the same contest with reason. And people are reached still by the same dramaturgical appeal to emotions as well as to reason.

¹⁰ G. V. Reau, Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien (Paris, 1955), p. 5.

Those who have worked with or attended modern productions of mysteries or moralities assert that this technique succeeds with today's audiences,¹¹ as with the Gybs of the fourteenth century or the Colins of the fifteenth, or an R. Willis of the sixteenth who recalled in 1693 (when he was about ninety):

. . .and that is called the Mayors play where every one that will comes in without money, the Mayor giving the players a reward as he thinks fit to shew respect unto them. At such a play my father tooke me with him and made me stand betwene his leggs, as he sate upon one of the benches where wee saw and heard very well . . . This Prince did personate the wicked of the world; the three Ladies, Pride, Covetousness and Luxury; the two old menn, the end of the world

¹¹ Dr. Vedder Gilbert of the University of Montana (English) has spoken informally of the hearty audience given the medieval church drama which he had attended in France.

Dr. Eugene Vance of Yale University (Comparative Literature) discussed for his Medieval French class of 1965-1966 the surprising engagement of the audience and the strangely vivid impression he received from a performance of the medieval play Daniel, and, as reported to him, the "very successful" performances of Jeu d'Adam, a 12th century French mystery.

Experience with the production of Everyman (Community Theater in Libby) reaffirms the belief that in the medieval plays there is in-written a tension of clear, tight conflict; exciting absorption in a reality larger than Self; persuasion in the free rhythm and flexible lines; emphasis from the cadenced equivalencies and "echoes" of ideas and phrases; emotionally encoded vernacular in doggerel or in subtler rhythms.

and the last judgment. This sight . . . when I came to men's estate, was as fresh in my memory, as if I had seen it newly acted."¹²

¹² David M. Bevington, From Mankind to Marlowe (Cambridge, 1962), p. 4.

"That the matter be crystal-clere"

-Everyman

Early morning, In York, 1425, or an afternoon in Munich, 1525, the sun's rays slant into the porch of the Cathedral, gilding the sculptures as in a Monet painting. Almost the whole town is there already--all the rag-tail standing in the square, or sitting, some on the cobblestones, some on benches which they have brought. Lords and ladies have found a higher vantage point--the upper-floor windows of nearby homes and shops, or they sit, friends and neighbors, from lords to villeins, on benches or stand in the church square, or around the platea. In resplendent velvet and satin and chiffons of Persia, either given by the nobility or bought by the more opulent guilds, here were Everyman and his lady, and Saul, and Herod who raged in streets; devils pinched onlookers and sat with the audience. (One could pay for a better view, for the play cost nothing, being paid for by the town or the guilds. In some towns, a pence was charged.) The vexillatores have been about the town for two hours, trumpets blaring for attention. For 150 lines of bann they have announced all the horrors, and the "fayre" outcome for everyman, as they hoped for their friends, the listeners.

In Castle of Perseverance, on might see:

The Worlde, the Fende, the foul Flesshe so joly and
 jent;/ Thei leyden hym ful lustyly with synnys
 al a-bowt. (ll. 29, 30)
 Bakbytinge and Endytynge, with all men for to
 route. (l. 34)
 God hym geuyth t(w)o aungelis ful yep and ful
 yare (l. 18)
 The goode aungel and the badde, to hym for to
 lende. (l. 20)
 Ya, and welcome be ye whenne ye com, our worth for
 to prove (l. 150)
 Fare wel, fayre frendys/ That lofly wul lysten and
 lendis/ Cryste kepe you fro fendis! (l. 153)

When the audience saw a "goode felowe", a hard-working "felowe" like Mankind or an upper-class Everyman badly bewildered, or even an innocuous Humanum Genus, tricked on all sides by the subtle guises of Satan, they identified with the poor dupe. Had not every man been gulled more than once into depending vainly on promises of help and sustenance and the more abundant life? The accounting, the "blynde reckonyng", came all too soon and unexpectedly: "Oh, Deth! thou comest whan I had ye leest in mynde!" (Everyman, l. 118). It wasn't so much that inexorable Death was the enemy, as trying to choose the correct issue from the dilemma of which way to life eternal.

So the audience sympathetically watched Man alone being tugged this way and that by clever wiles. It was not altogether his fault that he was betrayed also by his own recalcitrant flesh, which would consort with the World. "Blynde"

since birth, Everyman has been "deceyved ere he was 'ware'", Goods chides him, "This was ever my gyse/ Another to deceyve in this same wyse" (l. 448). So Everyman must now at the last moment learn to distinguish between his three sets of gifts, to tell the illusory material gifts received of Fortune and of Nature from the real, spiritual ones.

The conflict was not too rarefied, for the Daws and Maks and Gybs had recognized pretense and disliked "fair-spekinge". They had watched with narrowed eyes as Mankynde at first put up his guard against the congenial Nought, Nowadays, and New-Gyse--ingratiating companions, who only wished Mankynde to get a little fun out of life. And so they give the audience a little fun, too: "Tup! Whup! Hop! Hulla! Ho!" The action was lively:

As a hawke, I hoppe in my hende hole.
 I trette and tremle in my trew trone.
 (Perseverance, ll. 459, 469)
 (Backbytere): Heyl, dyngedeuyl in thi delle!
 Heyl, lowe in helle!
 (Perseverance, l. 1950)
 I nowre! I sobbe! I sye sore!
 (Perseverance, l. 11867)

A later morality play, Lusty Juventas, comments on Abominable Living:

What a hurly-burly is here!
 Smick, smack, and all this gear!
 You will to tick-tack, I fear.

The jingling jingo caught the ear:

We live by spoyle, by spoyle, we moyle and toyle;
 Thus Snatch and Catch doth keepe a coyle!

No immoral humor this, but an impersonal, objective "heightening" of the ribaldry which was a vital part of the average man's life. David Bevington deems the humor " . . . broad enough, but the rice is never presented as anything but grotesque and damnable. Even in its amusing scenes the play is offering serious morality to a widespread audience." Medieval man recognized Lust-liking, Perverse Inclination, and Placebo as the darlings of his own heart. And he found humor in subterfuges and practical jokes of that Flipertigibbet and the other minions of Belial who parodied his own weaknesses. The coarse descriptions and repartee were no more displeasing to him than the facts of the bas-court:

Flesh: I byde, as a brod bustum gutte,
 a-bouyn on these touris!
(Perseverance, l. 209)

And the ribaldry? "It is as if laughter intensified the power to pray, as if the sublime could best be apprehended by those who are open to the ridiculous, as if Christianity were a thing so strong that it can include all the explosions of laughter a dramatist can devise." (Neville Coghill, as quoted in Cawley, p. xvii).

There is also subtle metaphor at work in the hierarchical derivation of the vices: In Everyman, Goods derives from Avarice-Pride, which derives from World; Family and Fellowship and more respectable personifications of Flesh. But in the

guises of affinities which were well-entrenched in the heart of Everyman already, these Vices are the more insidious. In Perseverance, the guises of the Seven Deadly Sins are obvious enough, since each sin sits with its respective master on his scaffold, and since they are sent directly and visibly down to Man's "place" by their master. Neither angels nor the devil comes directly to men. The Good Angel in Perseverance sends Shrift to Humanum Genus to show him how he has been "begyled", and to bring him to confession, absolution, and into the Castle. Tityvillus is just a suggestive whisper into Mankynde's subconscious ear.¹ "Euer I go invysybull--yt ys my jett", but Tityvillus irascibly drives his henchmen, New-Gyse, Nowadays and Nought, to beguile named individuals of surrounding localities well-known to the audience (Mankynde, l. 522).

It is a poor vice that cannot pawn itself off as a pretty good fellow to live with: Avarice, disguised as Thrift; Pride, as Self-respect; Sloth, Patience; Selfishness, Practicality; Ignorance, Simplicity; Expediency, Common-Sense. But Mankynde has much of the peasant shrewdness for the audience to admire: Even after Mankynde has been assured that: "the Deull ys dede!" (l. 586) he does not jump directly into the hotbed of sin; first, he is seduced into impatience with

¹ Similar to Milton's Satan whispering into Eve's sleeping ear. Paradise Lost, IV, l. 800.

his fellows, not a bad sin and certainly justifiable in the case of New-Gyse, Now-a-days and Nought; next, laxity at prayer, which laxity can be rationalized away by the hardness of the soil (the devil puts a board under it); and thence, a decline into laziness; then scandal-mongering, a fairly universal weakness, which does not make him any worse than "the others" in the world; thence into the gross sins, until he is alienated from Hope and in danger of Despair. The matter was "crystal-clear".

Each vice treated the audience directly to a sermon describing his origin, his deleterious effect, and his clever plans for deluding the unwary Homunculus. Clowns these vices were, but the audience recognized them as vanities and mutabilities and falsities. The boisterous guffaws at their expense came readily, as a child's; so did Mankind's prayers, in a simple belief that God was not grim, that Christ was merciful, and that a little prayer availed much.

The attention of the audience was held also by a stage which "trembled and roared" (Marat/Sade, stage directions, episode 26). The various platforms, steps, levels suggested symbolic interpretation as well as balance of line, the unrestricted flow of movement and time, with "bold handling of large masses" to match the words. Further allegory was evident in the wealth of color, costume, and properties.

Mankynde's plow is symbolic of "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread", and at the same time: "He that putteth his hand to the plow amendeth his life"--a means of good works. Business for too-much busyness was in-written: The scurrying of Bakbytere in Perseverance, of Myscheff in Mankynde, of the Jew in Sacrament, emphasized the distractions of the busy world as threats to man's salvation.

Humanum Genus puts on the elegant robes of the World; Everyman dons the sackcloth robe of Contrition. The Devil carries a spear or a net. Myscheff has the rope and gallows-tree instantly ready so that Mankynde may hang himself in momentary despair. (For the delectation of the groundlings, a mock hanging of New-Gyse ensues.) Mankynde's coat of dignity grows shorter and shorter, thanks to the shears of Nought (Falsity), after Humanum Genus has given his "I wyll, ser" four times in assent to concupiscence (as his false god, and to the three N's as his priests). It was a point in dogma that it was necessary that man "lent his wyll" before the Devil could act. Goods, in a derisive laugh of farewell, flings a gold piece at Everyman; Penance is a jewel, but also a scourge to achieve victory over the body as the first step in penance. Mankynde has so many lessons taught by parody--on weddings, on courts, on the Last Judgment; so much allegory presented through negative examples;

and even direct homilies by Mercy that it seems a play within a sermon.

Illustrative of the presentational differences between the mystery and the morality are two plays teaching a similar lesson concerning the wickedness of slander. The Trial of Mary and Joseph is a Biblical episodic Mystery which points up the salaciousness of the Pharisees, the Jews, the elders, in slandering Mary. Perseverance has the abstraction, Bakbytere, bursting with news, slander, malice, and laughter, running, toadying to all the "great" from mansion to mansion: "No two can stand without I be there."

Both types of plays imposed an ethos on man's struggle against chaos. Such was the success of technique and text that the Judaeo-Christic-Humanistic ethos in morality plays has persisted either in vogue or at random down to and through modern times. In any of these plays, man learns to his sorrow or to his joy that he cannot ignore the spiritual hegemony of eternal time and space. Everyman, Mankynde, Macbeth, and Dr. Faustus, once out of harmony with nature or the universe, could well feel disoriented, alienated from the moral time-space continuum, for it was not the "time" that was out of joint, but they themselves.²

²

Death's one-day ultimatum sharpens the focus; time intersects with the timeless, and Man's space becomes spaceless. ". . . he has lost the good of his intellect which is knowledge of God. He . . . is cut off by his sins from the divine source of his being and the vision that gives meaning to life." (Speir, p. 81.)

It was the morality play which developed to fullest grace that paradox in balance which marked both theme and form. A rhythm of movement and balance, an assiduous attention to symmetry in the structural units of the morality bespeak the reverence which men paid to a Divine Harmony. (see appendix).

Patterned the morality play is, but in a qualitative and in an hierarchical sense dependent upon the idea and the action required to animate the idea. The reader cannot measure dramatic rationale by a check for the mechanically quantitative measures found in literary forms. A rhythm consonant with the theme moves in an emotively spaced "turn and return", or cycle involuted within cycle. Unexpected flashes of the mirror come dramatically, traveling inward from the largest unit of thought to the smallest ideological parallel in an iconographic word.

In Everyman, the three largest movements correspond to the Christie cycle: the Passion-struggle, the death, the exaltation. There is another, inner progression of seven episodes which suggests the seven different rhythms of the liturgy or the seven sacraments.³

³ A notion which occurs after reading a hazarded summary of the sequence in the lost Pater Noster of the twelfth or thirteenth century, a possible antecedent to one of Everyman's sequential patterns.

The regimen of the Church is mirrored in the episodic sequences of the soul in 1) innocence, 2) temptation, 3) fall, 4) the law, 5) the "dark night of the Soul", 6) contrition, and 7) salvation.

Everyman must come to comprehend his need of God's grace and mercy and the sacraments of the Church to see him through the dread journey-battle. In Mankind, Mercy cries, ". . . I wyll goo, and never sesse./ Xall I not fynde hym?" (l. 763). Because the last speeches of Mankynde were an appeal to Mercy, Mankynde is delivered. In Castle of Perseverance, Good Angel hears that "mercy" was the last utterance of the Soul before Death and promises that Mercy shall be its "socowre" (ll. 3047-3068). In Everyman it is Knowledge who comes to Everyman to guide him on the right road to the liturgical sequence of Confession in the house of Salvation (ll. 534-540). After the proper Sacraments he receives Grace, his life's climactic crisis is resolved, the pattern of his life becomes integrated with the external, and his need for direction and resolution is answered.

In Castle of Perseverance, there is a double regression or fall; in Everyman, a double reversal; in Play of the Sacrament, a triple Passion A-New of the Body of Christ. Mankynde three times confesses his unworthiness, and receives assurance from Mercy, before it is effectual; Everyman has three early,

almost involuntary "prayers", before the beautiful and dramatic soliloquy which brings him back to the ritual of penance (l. 581-604). Perseverance offers three exactly patterned attacks in the war between the Vices and the Virtues: one stanza each to the Henchmen of the Flesh--Gula, Luxuria and Accidia--as they confront their opposites--Abstinencia, Castitas and Sollicitude (whose cases are weighted in having two stanzas each in reply to the single stanzas of the Vices).

This technique of reversal combined with an overall-cyclic, yet onward, progression, suggests a spiral which closes in on a tight focus. The spiraling cadences of episodes, balanced equivalencies or antitheses, incantatory sequences of three to reinforce a point, the multi-meaning imagery do give unity, in a measure and harmony that is the very lesson of the morality plays.

Fall, death and ascent: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. There may be counter-movements of opposite sequences of ideas, but the effect of the whole is to substantiate or encircle the central thesis.⁴

⁴ For example, there are three sets of "gifts" lent to Everyman: those given by Fortune, those given by Nature, and the gift of Grace given by God, which is the gift of Life Eternal. In parallel episodes, the first two sets of gifts desert Everyman. He must learn that Fellowship, Kindred, Goods--all gifts from that strumpet Fortune--and her "felly" wheel of circumstance are a hindrance in this journey; they are

But curious though the contrapuntal rhythms and thematic fugues and "paratactic imagery--each word an image closed in itself--a discourse of mosaic" might be, and intellectually challenging though the distinction of the anagogical, tropological and eschatological levels of allegory might be, Everyman compels all audiences for two reasons: the concentrated attack on emotions and the ease of personal identification with the hero. The conflict argument is taut and single; the words and actions are virile and spare; Deathe's ultimatum has sharpened the focus. And the abstract play becomes real to the man who comes to the porch of the cathedral to hear: "Man, in the begynninge/ Loke well, and take good heed to the endynge." (Everyman,ll. 10-11).

⁴ (continued)

most likely to obstruct his judgment of everlasting values. The hope that Everyman feels with the second bulwark of Nature's gifts--Health, Beauty, Discretion, and Five-Wits--is as ironic as the hopes he had first had in his household gods; for in parallel and realistic order, they too desert him (in the climactic order of his dependence upon them, in both sequences). The ironic despair felt on the second descent brings him lower, to the nadir. Each step downward--from arrogance to blindness to flippancy, puzzlement, disbelief, defensiveness, obsequiousness, despair, fright--is matched on the ascending scale by recognition of need, hope, confidence, gratefulness, contentment, praise of his Maker, joy.

The purposes of art were served in the medieval theater: (1) high selectivity of conflict with greatest potential tension; (2) intensification by parallels, repetitions, antitheses; (3) familiarity through liturgical, Biblical encoding; (4) identification with the suffering "hero"; (5) excitement and anticipation from the cumulative pre-knowledge of the character and situation achieved by "distancing" the subject; (6) rapidity of action because of short scenes in quick sequence, in varied places; (7) variety of tempo, of tension strength and of diction; (8) enlightenment; (9) artful picturization.

William Shakespeare was heir to these theatrical conventions as well as to the argument of the medieval drama. As there was a remarkable cohesiveness between the medieval and the Renaissance thinking, conditioned by the centuries of Christo-humanistic ethos taught by the monks, so Shakespeare could well be termed a late medieval man, in whom the seed flowered. His great tragedies all push toward the Christo-humanistic redemption that must be bought at the price of the liberty that comes with willing submission to a larger "order", at the price of suffering, at the price of humility (Richard II, Henry IV, King Lear) and service and action of the chivalric creed. He affirmed that the truth of man's experience lay in that totality of

knowing the worlds of nature and of metaphysics inter-linked with his own. His patterns of progress were the guilt-atonement of the medieval drama (Macbeth, Winter's Tale, Tempest). The great constants of human nature were allegorized into men whose passions move the audience (Othello, Lear, Richard II, Macbeth).

To the medieval theater can be accredited almost every attribute of Shakespearean drama: (1) the allegorical, symbolic wealth of allusion; (2) the love of paradox and ironic contrast; (3) the symmetry and balance of "large masses"; (4) flexibility and suitability of form to function; (5) the conflict of good versus evil within the psyche and without; (6) the moral necessity of man's rapport with nature and a supernatural world; (7) the use of the vernacular and the familiar; (8) exaggerated assault on the sense and emotions. The acting that could out-Herod Herod, depict the visible hell to which "the sightless substances that wait upon Nature's mischief" led men; and the sweetness of the "lully, lulla, thow littell tine child" just before the slaughter of the innocents, are pieces of "elongated spiritual gothics" that conveyed the attenuated pathos and gusto of a real people. They were being taught a way to live.

There was more than purposeful theme and scheme that

struck the balance between Greek reason and religious passion: the informing breath of the morality play was the general belief that Modestia and Mesura could effect a tolerable issue from the dilemmas of this life and a triumphant entry into the next. The medieval playwrights pulled into one skein the divergency of man's existential experience, threading the rage and the consolation, the roguery and the gallantry. They spaced light with dark, the mean with the large, the cold against the warm; and they illuminated the high thread-line that men had to walk between pride and despair, between asceticism and licentiousness. To show man honestly in his "pride of life", his "imperial arrogance in full fleshe" was the means, not the end, of interesting the audience.

If being wise meant to externalize in full flesh, blood, and movement on the stage, the demons that motivate men so that even the most ignorant might know himself, Bertold Brecht was justified in looking to the past to find "what is wise". The defense of allegory is not just an "act of piety". If allegory can work to stimulate the imagination toward an ideal, if it can enlarge into being any modicum of spiritual value, it is a vital force in retaining drama as an educative medium. Modestia and Mesura--the modern world could use some

of those.

It's in old books what wise means--
To keep out of the world's strife,
To pass the short space without fear,
To survive without resort to violence,
To return good for evil,
Not to fulfill one's wishes but forget them:
This is what wise means.

("The Second Coming" by W. B. Yeats)

"Which is the justice, which the thief?"

King Lear, IV.vi. 158

The arguments of the medieval remained the arguments for the outstanding playwrights of the Renaissance and, in a limited interpretation, for some of the playwrights of the Restoration: (1) How could innocent Credulity protect itself against the "seemygness" or the "seemlynesse" of Untruth? (2) Was man's own reason and educated and willed choice of the better value enough to avoid evil? Or was there an Anti-Chance factor that operated against man's will? (3) How combat the evil that, inner and Outer, confronts men? (4) How conduct oneself in the paradox of guilt and justice that obtains in this world? Is suffering necessary to enlightenment?

The centuries succeeding the medieval developed individual character, and poetic lyricism within the format of the morality play: the battle of virtue versus vice, the debate between body and soul became inner conflict. But the outer world of Death and judgment, Heaven and Hell remained. From the mysteries, the heirs took the passion, the inscrutable violence, the marvel or the supernatural, and incorporated them into historical personages and events capable of dramatic projection. They took the distancing,

the presentational devices, the homilies, the sharp contrasts, the homely idiom and dear detail to make potent drama.

Except for a detour into the court masques and interludes which had preserved only the outward form and fashion of the balance, the circular structure, the music and song of the morality. Erudite, refined to effete-ness, symbolic, they had no meaning for the "general". That raison d'etre of didactic drama was abandoned for the spectacular poses, feerique banquets, and the measured dance and song of classic figures. Although the major themes of the masques were: "What is noble, should be sweet", and "What has no ground of good is hollow"; although the masques showed the dichotomy of Blackness and Light--gods opposed to Pan's crew of anti-masque revelers, the arguments lacked the passion of reality. The communal "agape", the redemption by young love was merely a visual recognition, offering no profound relationship or "emotional experience". Ben Jonson's moral purpose in Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue was to degrade "belly-worship" by farce, to show that Virtue is its own reward. But what meaning would this have to those who could expect neither leisure nor material reward? Ben Jonson's longer anti-masques Volpone and The Alchemist criticise and deride the whole world with

bestial nomenclature and metaphor for everyone in the former play and with medieval nomenclature and metaphor in the latter. No one is admirable. All are gulls or gullers, and laughable. Such devastating constant wit makes the unsubtle listener wary and bored. The entire anti-humane world of Volpone is stagnant. But the plays are medieval in allegorical idiom: Diablerie is brought up to date as Roguerie. The pretenses of the maskers form a sort of involuted "show". And there is a recognition of the author's busy cleverness at the end of the plays. The social malaise of his time is all too clearly revealed by analogies, but there is no boomerang inspired toward any medieval ethos of modestia, misericordia and mesura, perhaps because the author seemed to have exercised none in these two plays.

John Lyly's "masques" reflected the highly sophisticated language and manners of the late sixteenth century, but do not have any influence except to exclude the general audience. Allegorical and with highly structured balance, the plays used the classical or medieval themes, but were written for flattery and style.

William Shakespeare's "masques" were also for the intellectual court elite, representing an idyllic society as he thought court life was. The early Love's Labor Lost

was informed by an aristocratic chivalry: The Tempest later represented society as Shakespeare thought it should be, reformed by philosopher-white magician kings. In L.L.L., the symbolistic and ritualistic self-criticism of man's ceremonial self was the reversal-purgation, but the society was too weakly defined, and the style so affected that it seems immature.

By the end of Shakespeare's writing career, he attempted to tie up all the redemptive patterns of pagan-primitive, of Platonic and of Christian and humanistic myths in The Tempest. In both The Winter's Tale and Tempest, Shakespeare has abandoned effort to portray sinful man as an agent in his own redemption or perfection, and has turned this job over to the Supernatural; in cooperation with Nature; here is man's only hope for the regeneration of his lost innocence and grace, Perdita (W.T.); or through miraculous reconciliation of redemptive young love of a Miranda (Tempest). Miranda is the goddess-Eve-Virtue-Beauty. Ferdinand is the "brave form. But 'tis a spirit."--the man for whom she may bring regeneration--"A thing divine; for nothing natural I ever saw so noble". (I.ii. 414,421) But Caliban is the constant reminder that the "natural" man cannot produce perfection, for Prospero, in spite of his self-conquest which has

brought him the kingly graces¹, still confesses that Caliban is "this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine". (V.i. 275-6) Nor can Nature alone save him, for beside and within that "green world", are the ravening bear and the tumultuous wintry seas, through whose thunder is heard the screams of dying sailors. (W.T.)

This summation allegory carries character and conflict within its concept. Characters as static as those in masques represent on one level, pagan archetypal deities; the wise father Prospero; the king's young wanderer-son, unknown, from the sea; the fertility goddess: on the Greek level; the philosopher king, Venus, Caliban as Pan (re-inforced by the anti-masque of the satyr-dance) and the young man as any Theseus type who comes over the water-journey, surviving the "trials" that free his people-- Ariel, as divine or ethereal "Muse": on the Christian level; Prospero, at the top of his island hierarchy, suggests God; Miranda--Eve or Mary; and Ferdinand--the man redeemed by baptism of water, and the sacramental banquet. Each character operates on several levels as can be seen

¹ In Macbeth (IV.iii.), Shakespeare defines the "king-becoming graces"--a search and dialogue with which most Renaissance thinkers concerned themselves:

As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude, . . .

in Prospero, the ideal ruler who has learned to control his physical self (Caliban); who by this means has learned compassion. Prospero is also, then, the philosopher courtier; whose white magic of "art" in the service of intelligence and beauty, he achieves with the aid of Ariel.

The anti-masques or entertainments in both W.T. and Tempest offer a communion in an inner play--pastoral and of the folk in W.T.; of the enlightened rulers in Tempest. W.T. had asked and answered the means of man's renewal; it had supplied Proserpina-Perdita, rediscovered in the vigor and simplicity of pastoral and perhaps a pagan life. Her redemptive marriage with Apollo-Florizel would renew-atone for the sin of Leontes. But the later Tempest had another answer--the guilt-atonement rite necessary for Antonio's sin: A cleansing by sea water, a mystic resurrection through the agency of the civilizing art-spirit, Ariel. With these plays Shakespeare had returned to mystic didacticism and he had returned to the classic-Renaissance frame of the less flexible and more intense five-act formality. But the intellectual exercise of these plays was too rigorous for the mass.

Hewed more to the capacities of the illiterate populace, the Catholic autos sacramentales of Calderon de Barca were undisguised moralities. Dressed in truth and conviction, the allegory of The Great Theatre of the World

uses the simplest convention--mankind's momentary role on this world's stage, stripped of time or place. Their finery and their masks they must discard, their parts also: "What profits thee to have won robes of purple?" Biblical allegory and phrases and "The Song of the Law" tie the loose procession together. There are Dives, Lazarus, The Emperor, the Beggar nué, each given their talents by the Stage Manager Nature--the prototype of the Our Town (Thornton Wilder) stage manager. The hero in this play written by a conservative Catholic of the seventeenth century is the laboring class and the beggar. So strong is the side given the poor and the case for Charity that the play seems almost more social didacticism than religious didacticism.

Calderon's epic, Wagnerian Life is a Dream abandons the simple morality and the complete abstraction of time/place for a flexible, multi-locational, three-act structure. Characters assume allegorical dimensions with masks, vizards. There are three mystically coincidental interventions of the "good angel" Rosaura to aid the hero, Segismund; dreams within dreams, until the audience, too, is not sure which world is real; false oracles speak to the learned astrologer-king, but they are a false shadow of the truth, as is man's sense of the outer reality. The questions and the answers are those of The Tempest: Is

nature or nurture the stronger? Is it possible to sub-
due, to sublimate the physical brute? What sort of
education for the ideal prince? The answers begin with
a rigorous control of the passions during all of a prince's
youth;

Since Dreaming, Madness, Passion are akin . . .
One test, I think of waking sanity
Shall be that conscious power of self-control,
To curb all passion, but much most of all
That evil and vindictive, that ill squares
With human, and with holy canon less
Which bids us pardon even our enemies.²

The play is full of anti-types and glittering images
and long monologues, but because the action is vivid and
strong with attacks and reversals, the play is strong
drama, at the same time that it sells the humanistic-
stoic ideal, and the fallacy of the pursuit of Knowledge
and Human Science as guides for life.

A cosmic theme similar to those of Calderon's plays
is treated in Dr. Faustus by Christopher Marlowe: What
profits it to gain all knowledge, if it is not enlightened
by God's will rather than by man's will? Man's limited

² The English style of translation of Dream and some
of the metaphysical concepts resemble excerpts from
the Shah Namah, as translated by Sir Edward Arnold
in the Harvard Classics, V. 45, p. 801 ff.

The man-child breaking from that living tomb
That makes our birth the antitype of death.
(Dream, I.ii.)

knowledge fades and his myths vanish like dreams. In challenging the Universe for mastery over Nature, Faust commits the worst "sin" in the Greek or medieval moral system. To the extent that he is willful and arrogant about his place in the universe, Dr. Faustus becomes a definitive myth for his period and for the modern period of western man.³

The frame of the play, although using some Senecan features as the Chorus Prologue and Epilogue, has retained many morality supports: The "airy" conflict is still between the Good and the Evil of a man's life; time and space are disregarded in a loosely episodic and circular structure; there are several inner analogues; The Wagner-Robin parody of the main temptation plot, the Ralph-Robin farce and the Pope's privy-chamber analogy to the temptation of Christ on the mountain-top, with Faust pointing out his cities; the Gothic juxtaposition of farce with sensitive, soaring poetry; the "debate" with the scholars; the Seven Vices are opposed by seven efforts to repent;

³ The idea of Dr. Faustus is that if truth and virtue are limitations imposed only by man, then his society runs to chaos; if man tries to use might, then the world becomes absurd, and brute. As Faust becomes more "knowing", he becomes more unruly, less acute, more farcical; sees life only as a farce, an experience of "passions". (Lecture by Professor Vedder Gilbert, History of Drama, University of Montana, Summer, 1965.)

the Evil angel opposed to the Good Angel; the references to blood, culminating in the streaming of Christ's blood in the firmament, and the vial of grace offered by the angel; a parody of religion with a trivial Pope and the "sumptuous temple that threatens the stars"; the antithetical phrases, "All is Hell that is not Heaven"⁴, contrasted with Faust's "All is dross that is not Helena"; the old and the poor and the clowns are saved, but not Faustus; there is the same sort of structural and thematic unity as in medieval drama in the repetitions, in the incremental metaphors: the growth of the buds, the blossoms, the boughs, the trees, opposed to the uses of "glut" and "surfeit"; the medieval "vaunts", the descriptively-named devils--Baliol and Belcher. There is social satire on the trivial uses to which the wonders of the universe are put--the grapes which the Duchess orders, the Emperor's idle curiosity, the summum bonum of belly-cheer for friars; the universal wish for conjuring tricks.

Two elements, not medieval, make the play exciting to moderns: the new character of the Devil and of the man who is not a characterization of an abstract. For it is these two, and the wildly passionate speeches of Faustus

⁴ cf. Shaw's play, Man and Superman, is recalled with Marlowe's "In Hell is all manner of delight".

that make the play go. The freedom to use his will as he wishes is the dilemma of Faustus; he wishes his "ambiguities resolved", his mind unbridled. Like Lady Macbeth, Faustus it is who calls upon the Devils, "Veni, Veni". It is Faustus who repeatedly wills and vows stubbornly to hold to his contract and refuses adamantly to believe that he is able to call Christ as he had called the devils. Even as he admits his hardened heart, he wills to be damned. Faith can triumph over the Old Man's Pride, but not over this Will. The devil remonstrates with Faustus, tries to warn him. He speaks of man's "glorious soul", more wonderful than heaven itself; he suffers pain and regret, sympathizing with man's estate. He is so humanized and so ambiguous a devil that he could be the Flesh and the World, if not a conscience debating with the body-will of Faust. (Johann von Goethe makes his devil in Faust, end of Prologue to Part II, a not unsympathetic character--an accessory to God as a Hell-hound to lick up the filth of the earth.)

Increased emphasis on the effect of his moral choice on a human being's career had taken drama a long remove from the allegorical abstracts.

John Lydgate, however, had imposed moral precept upon the lives and falls of Princes. Rather than portray their vicissitudes as caused by Fortune, he used his Fall of

Princes (c. 1430) to teach rulers that:

It is nat she that pryncis gaff the fall
 But vicious lyvyng, pleynli to endite
 (Prologue, II, 40-42)

But it is not always a particularly vicious "mole of nature" which causes the downfall of a prince: it may be a lack as well as a too-muchness of a particular attribute. Through successive plays, Shakespeare explored the previous question. Reference to Fortune is constant through the great tragedies, and also in Richard II. Very much like Hamlet--young, fair, intelligent, sensitive, introspective, non-aggressive, and innocent--Richard is set upon by the Pretenders, the Manipulators, among the nobles, whose hatred he earned by decreasing their purse, and who feared his idealistic alliance with the common people.⁵ Following the linear development of the mystery-narrative, Shakespeare makes of many episodes, a measured "progress" of inexorable steps toward Richard's assassination. He invests his Richard with sincerity, the justness and the religious faith. Then Bolingbroke (whom the people despised) and the exigencies of war begin to press Richard. But "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought", taking

⁵ Froissart's Chronicles, "Wat Tyler's Rebellion", in Harvard Classics, V. 35, pp. 69-80.

Chesterton, Chaucer, pp. 42-45.

advice and flattery too seriously, Richard, like Hamlet, takes to the sword too late.

Richard's death dance is a torturous twisting to evade the inevitable (III. ii. passim):

God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel: then if angels fight,
Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.
(III. ii. 186)

Helpless against the desertions of his people, the equivocating thrusts of Bolingbroke, the ironic courtesies, Richard can be forgiven his self-pity:

Me rather had my heart might feel your love
Than my displeas'd eye see your courtesy.
(III. iv. 192-3)

Now is this golden crown like a deep well
That owes two buckets, filling one another,
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
That bucket down and full of tears am I.
(IV. i. 186-88)

With no more alternatives, "Must he submit?/ The king shall do it:" and "Let Richard live till Richard die." In prison, his frenzied lyric outcries subside to philosophy . . . but he is still "spurred, gall'd, and tired by jauncing Bolingbroke".

Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
How went he under him?
(V. v. 81)

In spite of the deluge of tear-drops, water-drops, the reader is held by the vehement passion of Richard, as, like Everyman, he goes down each step alone, brother only

to the "grim Virtue, Necessity".

Many medieval conventions heighten this drama of rich verbal imagery. True, the over-nicety of the balances, and echoes, and parallel structures, and Richard's conscientious use of them, and plays on words--even in his most broken utterances--puts one off occasionally; but the love of a verbal battle gives heat to the vaunts, and medieval vertu gives historical depth to the opening scene; and delicacy to one of the tenderest love scenes in Shakespeare's plays--the farewell between Richard and his Queen; the mirror convention wherein Richard reads the shadow of his sorrow "that swells with silence in the tortured soul". (IV. i. 297-8)

"Was this the face . . ." suggests Helen's doom-laden legend of Ilium--a tiny analogue within the glass. The concentric idea--a macrocosm within which is microcosm--the dimension of disorder that has broken into "the concord of his state and time" is paralleled by the breaking of Richard's mirror and his time by the onrush of a larger clock; the iconographic monologue is ended with another circle within a circle;

. . . and love to Richard
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.
(V. v. 168.)

Anticipation and suspense are heightened by the prophecies of the Bishop of Carlisle, of Mowbray, of John

of Gaunt, and of Richard. There are Biblical tags of "Judas" and "Pilate". But the poetic language, the depth of characterization of everyone except the Queen, arouses feeling even with those who are not concerned with the argument of where the responsibility for the tragedy lay.

Another of Shakespeare's plays that makes the same unrestrained appeal to pity is King Lear. It is shaped in the circular episodic timelessness of the morality. The major confrontation of Lear with the external, mystic world is on gray waste places, barren of civilization. Lear's particular mole--"that I did but slenderly know myself"--makes him "stumble when I saw".

Which world is real--Gloucester's: "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods/ They kill us for their sport". (IV. i. pp. 37, 38) Or Edgar's world, in which "The Gods are just"? Is it the world of "The stars alone govern our condition", (IV. ii. pp. 30-68) or a world in which, "we make guilty of our disaster, the sun, the moon/ As if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion?" The medieval-Renaissance playwright returned to the Augustinian precept of man's responsibility for bridling his will in submission to the Spirit. In Lear, the Outer Reality breaks in upon the human reality constantly, but the human is generally blind: "Get

thee glass eyes," says Lear, "And like a scurvy politician see/ To see that thou dost not." And Gloucester, too, sees that we do not see, and that those who do "see", are considered mad or blind: "'Tis the time's plague, when madmen lead the blind." (IV. i. p. 49)

Perhaps the blindness of men in Lear can be considered an analogue to the blind forces of Nature--screaming winds, blind fogs, random lightning. The worlds intersect, time-space continuums are broken by human infractions against Order. But at the end of Shakespeare's tragedies, and of Webster's Duchess of Malfi, an exemplum of stability and harmony restores equilibrium: "this hopeful young gentleman"--son of the Duchess, and Delio and Pescara; Edgar, Kent and Albany in Lear; Cassio in Othello; Fortinbras and Horatio in Hamlet; Malcolm and MacDuff in Macbeth. Inner worlds and outer worlds are revealed through dreams (Hamlet, Macbeth, Dream, Duchess of Malfi); through apparitions (Hamlet, Macbeth, Duchess); through Othello's fit; inner play and analogues or "revelations" (Hamlet, Duchess, Lear, Macbeth, Othello).

Other morality conventions carry the themes of the plays: Edgar and Kent must play the simpletons and mad, because "Good must go in disguise to do good." Bosola in Duchess wears a vizard, appears in at least three aspects--presenter of announcements and masques, reveler with the

audience, sympathizer and executioner, informer; ambiguous and ubiquitous, he might represent Common Man. Another medieval concept used by Shakespear in Lear, particularly, was that of doubleness--in structure and in character: Lear and Gloucester; Regan and Goneril; Edmund and Edgar; two fools--one real, one in guise. These reflections in a mirror may be antitnetical or complementary--perhaps both. Perhaps the coincidental "appearances" of Edgar to help at the various cross-roads of life suggest The Good Angel, and Edmund, the Bad Angel; or the two might represent dichotomies of the same personality, as in the Grail legend of the duel between the brothers--Bors and Lionel.

Some of the descendants of the Devil or the Vices seem more one-dimensional, static, as Goneril and Regan in Lear, or Flamineo in White Devil--undifferentiated evil. Others display the wit and the urbanity and sometime amiability of the Machiavellian family; Iago, Edmund, Claudius, Eosola. And the comic Vice, Falstaff, has the insidious corrupting capacity of Concupiscience. Other allegorical types are easily recognized: of course, the name-conventions used by Jonson, by Shakespear, by Moliere, by the Restoration comedies (and sporadically by modern authors in "new" moralities); Surface, Sneerwell; and by Shakespear--Doll Tearsheet, Shallow, Silence, Marina, Perdita,

Harpagon and LaFleche. The incidental old men and gentlemen are symbols of society and its point of view. Except for Macbeth, who is also a representative character, everyone in Macbeth is static and allegorical, because the play is a thorough-going morality of Good versus Evil. The evil is not just in men's minds; there are the "sightless substances that wait upon men's mischief", and the witches. However, The Duchess is an exemplum of the classic and Christian stoicism in the face of the insane horrors of the world, and the last lines of the play put responsibility into man's lap:

Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust,
Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust.

A P P E N D I X

INNER HARMONY OF EVERYMAN

A dichotomy of the material value versus the spiritual value marks the time-space separated halves of the play, Everyman; here one must consider the corresponding characteristic cadences and words of any two analogous ideas or characters; for example, Fellowship and Strength, both bluff, athletic, hail-fellow, types.

FELLOWSHIP.	I wyll not forsake thee to my lyues ende. (1. 213)
STRENGTH. we wyll not from you go Tyll ye haue done this voyage longe (11. 781, 782)

and

FELLOWSHIP.	I haue pyte to see you in ony dystresse. If ony haue you wronged, ye shall revenged be Thoughe I on the grounde be slayne for thee, (11. 217-219)
STRENGTH.	And I, Strength, wyll by you stande in dystresse, Though thou wolde in batayle fyght on the grounde. (11. 683-684)

and

FELLOWSHIP.	For from thee I wyll departe as fast as I may. (1. 296)
STRENGTH.	I wyll hye me from the fast. (1. 812)

We could follow the progress of idea and word of "reckoning", from the early pages of the play when the

combination of "sure rekeninge" or "rekeninge surely" is associated with Death or with God, and with Knowledge, (l. 610), to the pairing of "rekeninge" with "blynde" for Everyman:¹

This blynde matter troubleth my wytte. (l. 102)

GOODS. Thy rekenynge I haue made blotted and
blynde,
That thyne accounte thou can not make
truly-- (ll. 419-420)

GOOD DEEDS. There is a blynde rekenynge in tyme
of dystresse. (l. 508)

At the end of the play:

ANGEL. Thy rekenynge is crystall clere.
(l. 898)

The spacing of three separate meanings and uses of the "two hands" at liturgically climactic and psychologically progressive intervals bespeaks a sophistication above that generally accorded Everyman:

EVERYMAN. In almes halfe my good I wyll gyue with
my handes twayne. (l. 698)

FIVE WITS. (about the Priest) And handeleth his
Maker bytwene his hande(s).
(l. 739)

EVERYMAN. Into Thy handes, Lorde, my soule I
commende. (l. 880)

One can also trace echoes of God's first "lent thee":

Nor yet for theyr beyinge that I haue them lent.
(l. 57)

to Death's echo: Nay, nay; it was but lende thee;
(l. 164)

¹ "reckonyng" is used 22 times, without counting "ac-
counte"; "blynde", "tyme" are other ligaments firmly
holding the structure together; frequent references
are made to "forsaken", 12 of these within ll. 806-
811. Death negates 25 times within ll. 100-182.

to Everyman's recognition: In my tyme syth lyfe was me
lent (l. 341)

to his redemption: As thou me boughtest, so me defende
(l. 332)

Although the rhythms of God's words are consistent with His dignity and even sonorous with classic measure and rime, the rhythms of speech vary within the lines of each character, and between the lines of the various characters; for example, Death's response to God echoes the prolonged vowel sounds and the deliberate pace, but Death's injunction to Everyman is peremptory:

Everyman, stande styll! . . .
Hast thou thy maker forgete? (ll. 84-86)

A heavy predominance of one-syllable words, with abrupt end-consonants gives an ejaculatory, thrusting effect that could well be accented by gestures of the death-dart (as in Perseverance). The rhythm of Everyman's speech ranges from the curtness of arrogance, disbelief, and tension, to impassioned exaltation (ll. 580-604); from various lengths of soliloquies to single sentence sincerity; from unrhythmic despair (l. 438), to more lyrical alternate-rhyme cadence used in climactic stress: after the desertion of the last of Fortune's gifts (ll. 463-467); his appeal to the mercy of Kindred (ll. 339-342); at the entrance of his grave (ll. 778-791); and his commitment of his soul to God (ll. 880-886). Such qualitative

cadence, dependent upon the idea, suited the word to the action and provided the variety of pace to hold attention.

The light, dancing lines of Fellowship:

Tusshe! by thy thankes I set not a strawe!
Shewe me your grefe, and saye no more.
(ll. 222 ff.)

are in contrast to the measured sadness of the succeeding lines of Everyman. And Fellowship's expression of friendship is shallow:

But and thou wyte murder, or any man kyll,
In that I wyll helpe thee with a good wyll.

(ll. 281-282)

Beauty, who swears, as does Fellowship, by St. Johan (ironically) that she will leave Everyman, takes her leave with even shorter, more skipping, vowel sounds:

I crosse out all this! Adewe, by
St. Johan!
I take my cap in my lappe, and am gone.

(ll. 800)

Another ironic thrust occurs in the interplay of "mery" and "sad", first spoken by Everyman, then echoed by others:

Howe shoulde I be mery or gladde?
.....
I am deceyved; that maketh me sadde...
(l. 369)

It is followed by the mocking arrogance of Goods:

Whereof I am right gladde.
I must nedes laugh; I can not be sadde.
(ll. 455-456)

Still later, Knowledge takes up the echo:

Now, Eueryman, be mery and glad!
 Your Good Dedes cometh now, ye may
 not be sad. (ll. 623 ff.)

The variation from the brevity of tension to the expansive summary indicates that the rhythm varied according to three considerations: the idea, the character speaking, and the action required. As the life of the character depended on the interplay and movement of the idea, so the consistency of rhythm, meter, and style is subordinate to the exigency of the idea.

This was dramatic poetry that a skilled actor could bring to life, the sort of actor described by the medieval troubadour, Vidal:

(He) must be as wise as a serpent, as harmless as a dove, pliable as a willow, steadfast as an oak. He must have learning without pedantry, wit without folly, keen insight into character, (be) edifying without being tedious, his merriment combined with temperance, possessing all the qualities of every class in addition to his own.²

² Your Speech, (Harcourt Brace, 1960), p. 334.

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