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**MEDIEVAL ENGLISH DRAMATURGY**

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MEDIEVAL ENGLISH DRAMATURGY

J. W. Robinson

A Thesis Presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy to the Faculty  
of Arts in the University of Glasgow,  
April, 1961.



## PREFACE

Apart from a few casual notices, mentioned in their appropriate places, this dissertation is the first exposition, historical and critical, of the dramatic techniques favoured by medieval English playwrights. I have tried to strike a balance between the history and the criticism, and also between generalisations and particular conclusions. I attach equal importance to my general conclusions about, say, the form of certain kinds of play-opening, or the connection between Christ's direct appeal to the audience and the iconography of the late Middle Ages, and to my particular conclusions about, say, the Wakefield Master's dramatic methods, or Lupton's comic use of an old technique.

The investigation is based closely on the texts of the plays themselves. When a passage from a play is under consideration, and a piece of it is quoted, the line references refer to the whole passage and not merely to the quotation; in this way I have frequently indicated where, in my opinion, direct address ends and dialogue begins--a matter of some importance. I have had to abandon this difficult but necessary practice when quoting from facsimile reprints. In deciding what is and what is not direct address I have been guided by the contexts of the speeches. To facilitate reference, the titles given to medieval plays by their editors have been used, but different titles should not be allowed to conceal identical subjects; thus, the York Departure of the Israelites is largely the same play as the Towneley Pharaoh. Quotations from plays and other texts disregard the (for my purposes) unnecessary typographical complications.

I am grateful to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Glasgow for awarding me a Research Scholarship for two years; to the officials of the libraries at the University of Glasgow and University College, London, for their help; to Mr. J. F. Arnott of the University of Glasgow for his guidance; and to Mr. P. C. Bayley of University College, Oxford, for some helpful suggestions.

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They discussed stage illusion. "I mus' say," said Kipps, "I don't quite like a play in a theayter. It seems sort of unreal some'ow."

"But most plays are written for the stage," said Helen, looking at the sugar.

"I know," admitted Kipps.

--H. G. Wells, Kipps.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

The medieval drama has been intensively studied; some two thousand books, articles and theses about the medieval English drama alone have been recorded.<sup>1</sup> Despite this industry, the dramaturgy has not been the subject of much investigation. Professor Craig notices this, but does not attempt to supply the missing study. He writes:

Writers of medieval religious drama had no doubt their own ways (however simple) of presenting their religious themes effectively, but these techniques, originally merely liturgical, have no connexion with the vast body of doctrine usually referred to as "the technique of the drama".<sup>2</sup> Few studies of the techniques of playwrights and actors of the medieval religious drama have been made, except by persons who have not understood this aspect of the task, and perhaps for lack of definite materials none can be made, because we have here the strange case of a drama that was not striving to be dramatic but to be religious, a drama whose motive was worship and not amusement.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Stratman, Bibliography of Medieval Drama, pp. 75-250.
  2. Probably a reference to G.P. Baker, Dramatic Technique, a manual for playwrights and a repository of naturalistic theories.
  3. Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages, pp. 4-5.

Recently, there has been a fresh appreciation of the splendour and spectacle of the medieval stage.<sup>4</sup> There can be no doubt that much of the attraction and virtue of the plays resided in their spectacular and colourful presentation; further, it is largely from this point of view that the plays can still grip the modern imagination. However, it was certainly not only the spectacle that spoke to the medieval audiences, and it is the business of this present study to reveal and examine the dramaturgy of the plays and thus contribute, in a different way, to the process of filling the very extensive gap in the study of the medieval drama noticed by Professor Craig.

By examining the methods used to begin and to end the plays, and to present various significant episodes, it has proved possible to arrive at something approaching a coherent statement of medieval dramaturgy. The quality and effectiveness of the dramatic techniques are emphasised, and many of the particular merits of this dramatic movement are demonstrated. Apart from this general exposition of the dramaturgy of the plays (which involves some consideration of other popular medieval arts), the method used has enabled new distinctions to be made between the different ways in which various playwrights exercised their craft.

To this main purpose of the present study, the critical eval-

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4. Wickham, Early English Stages, i.

uation of medieval dramatic techniques, has been added the subsidiary purpose of tracing the history of medieval dramaturgy. An attempt has been made to show, on the one hand, how the shedding of the liturgical framework necessitated the introduction of various new techniques, and to estimate, on the other hand, the extent of the legacy of medieval dramaturgy to the Tudor interludes.

Although the technique of the medieval English drama has not been studied, critics and scholars have not hesitated to condemn it. This is the prevailing attitude. Apart from such general condemnations as: "one of the very dullest divisions of literature"<sup>5</sup> and, the "style was always homely, not to say banal,"<sup>6</sup> the more specific charge is that the plays are only imperfectly dramatic. Objection is taken both to their technique and to their frequent lack of gravity. The plays contain not only much "dramatic unconventionality" but also "incongruous horse-play".<sup>7</sup> It is not uncommon to speak of the "artless crudities of dramatized religion,"<sup>8</sup> which was "crude, stiff and incongruous."<sup>9</sup> Henry Medwall, apparently, had an "imperfect sense of dramatic objectivity;"<sup>10</sup> and

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5. Saintsbury, A Short History of English Literature, p. 223 (with especial reference to the moralities).

6. Grierson and Smith, A Critical History of English Poetry, p. 100.

7. A History of English Literature, ed. Buchan, p. 47.

8. Brooke, The Tudor Drama, p. 14.

9. Spencer, Corpus Christi Pageants in England, p. 208.

10. Boas and Reed, in Medwall's Fulgens & Lucres, p. xxii.

Shakespeare, the dramatist manqué, shows through his technique "traces of a more primitive time."<sup>11</sup>

These criticisms may perhaps be said to be summarised in the following sentence by Professor Sisson, who is speaking of the Elizabethan drama:

La puissance et la naïvete même de l'imagination du spectateur et la mise en scène élémentaire qui le contentait, ont été des obstacles au développement d'un véritable art dramatique.<sup>12</sup>

It is certainly the idea of a "véritable art dramatique" that has hitherto prevented the appreciation of medieval dramaturgy; the common attitude towards medieval dramatic technique, which is usually expressed in the form of a brief, unfavourable dismissal in a sentence or two, corresponds very closely to the attitude of such late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century dramatic critics as William Archer and A.B. Walkley to the early drama, and these critics are whole-hearted and often dogmatic exponents of the theories and practices of Naturalism. Naturalism is the "véritable art". Archer and Walkley, and more academic writers like G.P. Baker (see above, p. 7, n. 2), took their standards from the modern stage, and the best modern theatre, as far as England was concerned, was based

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11. Schücking, Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays, p. 30.

12. Sisson, Le Goût Public et le Théâtre Élizabéthain, p. 101. Professor Salter gives other examples of adverse criticism in Mediaeval Drama in Chester, p. 81.



squarely on the traditions of Naturalism nurtured by the Bancrofts.<sup>13</sup>

Thus it is possible to juxtapose criticisms of medieval dramaturgy and expressions of Naturalistic sentiment:

The projection of the characters on the apron stage is radically bad in more ways than one. It is artistically unsound. It is bad for the stage-illusion, because the proscenium-line is thrown out and figures come out into the auditorium, breaking down their fabled existence by intimacy of contact.

This was written of Granville-Barker's production of The Winter's Tale by the critic of the Morning Post.<sup>14</sup> A year earlier, the same indictment of the medieval drama was made by a scholar:

This use of direct address always weakens the dramatic force of the play, since it throws the listener suddenly from the world of fancy to the world of reality; but it is found very commonly among the Corpus Christi plays.<sup>15</sup>

When Professor Salter, otherwise a most sympathetic critic of the medieval stage, is compelled, as it were, to admit that

it is certainly unskilled workmanship that lets the characters of the plays step before us and say "I am God", "I am Herod", etc.,<sup>16</sup>

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13. Bancroft, The Bancrofts, pp. 72-143, 296-300; Disher, Melodrama, pp. 33-41.

14. Quoted in Marshall, The Producer and the Play, p. 153.

15. Spencer, op. cit., p. 192.

16. Salter, Mediaeval Drama in Chester, p. 105.

he is clearly bound by the same assumptions as Walkley, who writes:

The tragic villain, naively self-revealing and studiously self-advertising, tends to become comic, now that we have learned to understand that "people don't do these things", at any rate in this way.<sup>17</sup>

Again, the view that "there is much that is childish in these plays, and . . . there are many inaccuracies, historical and otherwise"<sup>18</sup> owes much to the theories of Naturalism, which in part echoes Aristotelean precepts; Archer, for example, declares that a play must manifest "verisimilitude of time, place, and circumstance."<sup>19</sup> The belief that "the fundamental trouble" with an aside is that "if spoken naturally, it would be too low for the audience to hear"<sup>20</sup> is obviously an obstacle to any sympathetic appreciation of early English dramaturgy, and so the soliloquies or monologues there are "crude"<sup>21</sup> or "curious".<sup>22</sup>

Now that Naturalism is no longer quite so firmly entrenched in the theatre or the study a reconsideration of the neglected techniques of medieval drama is possible and desirable. It is not only

17. Walkley, Frames of Mind, p. 17 (on Irving's soliloquies as Richard III).

18. Pearson, "Isolable Lyrics of the Mystery Plays," ELH, iii, p. 239.

19. Archer, The Old Drama and the New, p. 78.

20. Baker, G.P., op. cit., p. 396.

21. Spencer, op. cit., p. 191.

22. Ramsay, in Skelton's Magnificence, p. xciii.

that Dr. Faustus is no longer "merely a curio"<sup>23</sup> or that a performance of Everyman would not now, by common consent, be a "curious resuscitation"<sup>24</sup>--indeed, since William Poel's initiative in 1901, medieval plays have often been performed<sup>25</sup>--but also that successful working dramatists and producers have become emancipated from the limitations of Naturalism.

Modern productions of the medieval plays do not, naturally, attempt to imitate completely the original methods of production; they even sometimes seem to avoid the colourful and spectacular features of the presentations, preferring a kind of spare and solemn beauty.<sup>26</sup> However, the modern revivals are often popular and in their own ways successful. For a sympathetic understanding of the medieval drama there must be added, to the pleasure given by these revivals and also to the matters dealt with in Early English Stages, the considerations and fresh interpretations now offered.

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23. Walkley, op. cit., p. 24.

24. Baker, H.B., History of the London Stage, p. 505.

25. Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 165; Browne, in Religious Drama 2. Mystery and Morality Plays, p. 305.

26. The Harvard Dramatic Club Miracle Plays, pp. x, 210; "New Setting for York Mysteries," The Times, 2 March, 1960; "Medieval Plays at Canterbury," The Times, 30 June, 1960; Robinson, "The Play of Daniel Produced by the New York Pro Musica," Theatre Notebook, xv, p. 34.

## CHAPTER TWO

## The Opening of the Play and the Introduction of the Characters

## A. The Opening of the Performance.

Before the performance of mystery plays by the guilds in medieval England, the actors in their costumes were sometimes presented to the populace. They were sometimes on view in the Corpus Christi Procession<sup>1</sup> and in the case of those towns whose plays were announced publicly some time ahead by "banns", sometimes at the proclamation of the banns also.<sup>2</sup> Thus, a formal anticipation of the plays was indulged by the whole populace. The texts of the banns extant imply also that the plays were felt to be something of a community enterprise, for they consist mostly of instructions to the guilds to do their best.<sup>3</sup> The civic responsibility for the organization of the plays and the mayoral proclamations concerning their conduct underline the idea that they are a communal effort. It is, therefore, as a formal activity of the urban community that processionally-performed plays are to be considered; of "collective dramas" it has been said that "ritual, like drama in the medieval

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1. Spencer, op. cit., p. 81.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

3. Texts in Salter, "The Banns of the Chester Plays," RES, xvi, pp. 137-48.

city, is arranged for participants, who both see and do."<sup>4</sup>

Plays occasionally offered to the populace, by professionals perhaps or by clerical amateurs, also required some kind of announcement before the day of performance and three extant plays have gaudy harbingers in the form of vexillatores, or flag-bearers, who announce the plays due to take place a week or so in the future. In the case of this type of play there is not, of course, any sense of community effort, but there is an explicit statement of the connection between the themes of the plays and the lives of their prospective audiences. The moral is emphasised, and the listeners are admonished.<sup>5</sup> The three announcements are all very similar in form. The speakers begin with a blessing and then, in the *Ludus Coventriae*, ask to be heard. This is the usual opening for verse delivered orally.<sup>6</sup> They then narrate the story of their play and give the time and place of the performance. The vexillatores of the *Croxton Sacrament* and the *Castle of Perseverance* are accompanied by minstrels, and so were the banns of the craft plays. The *Ludus Coventriae* vexillatores have a particular method of announcing the subjects of the plays. Sometimes they just describe the story (like the Chester banns, for example), but at other times they

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4. Mumford, The Culture of Cities, p. 36.

5. *Ludus Coventriae*, p. 16, ll. 512-5; *Croxton Sacrament*, ll. 65-8; *Perseverance*, ll. 14 ff.

6. Crosby, "Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, xi, p. 108.

speak as though what they are announcing will actually soon take place, omitting the idea that it will be acted or pretended. Thus, on the sixth pageant,

Cryst xal be born  
of pat joy Aungelys xul synges.  
(ll. 191-2)

The actual opening of the performance was doubtless accomplished in various ways. In the case of the processional-performed plays the arrival of the wagon accompanied by its uniformed attendants,<sup>7</sup> whose presence helps demonstrate the formal and ceremonial nature of the performance, would itself probably have been enough to draw the attention of the audience. The pageant wagon was sometimes preceded by a messenger who announced its subject. The Chester Nuntius announces the arrival of the Sacrifice of Isaac, Balaam and Balak and of Octavian after the Nativity has

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7. See English Gilds, p. 138; Sharp, A Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries Anciently Performed at Coventry, p. 21; Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, ii, 331, 385, 400; Fitch, "Norwich Pageants," Norfolk Archaeology, v, pp. 28, 29. Stationarily-performed plays also probably had their attendants; a performance of the Castle of Perseverance has "stytlers". Royal Entries were regularly very orderly affairs, with guild members in distinctive uniforms, drawn up in ranks (Wickham, op. cit., i, 53).

commenced. He was perhaps borrowed from the folk-games,<sup>8</sup> being quite unlike the other introducers of religious plays (although attempts have been made to confuse him with the Chester Expositor<sup>9</sup>). His speech is a formula and clearly readily adaptable for all subjects. It is worth noticing that he introduces the characters and not the actors:

Abraham through Gods grace,  
he is comen into this place.  
(Chester Sacrifice of Isaac, ll. 5-6)

There is little evidence to show how a stationary performance actually began, but one method is attested by a stage-direction at the opening of the Ludus Coventriae Second Passion, which was at one time performed separately. This reads as follows:

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8. His speeches (Chester Plays, pp. 63-4, 84, 112) are most like The Droichis Part, which is an introduction to a May Game (Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ll. 455). Both characters are essentially merry, and the Dwarf introduces himself (l. 129) and speaks not of the actor, of course, but of the character (l. 141), like the Nuntius. If the name the Chester Nuntius gives himself, "Gobet on the grene", may be interpreted as "Little fellow" ("gobbet", a lump or fragment), then this suggests that the two characters belong to the same world.
9. Crosse, The Religious Drama, p. 83; Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans, p. 67. The confusion is probably due to a misreading of the apparatus on p. 84, where the Doctor speaks ll. 477-84 and the Messenger ll. 485-92.

What tyme þat processyon is enteryd in to þe place  
 [i.e., platea] and þe herowdys takyn his schaffalde  
 [i.e., a wooden, built-up locus] \* and pylat and  
 annas and cayphas here schaffaldys Also þan come  
 þer An expositour in doctorys wede þus seying. . . .

This passage is of considerable value, since it is the only extant original statement of how a medieval English play actually began. At the beginning of this play there was a procession of characters who then repaired to their respective places. Now this may well have been not uncommon for stationary plays, and a realisation of the significance of this direction might have helped Dr. Southern, who in his detailed study of the Castle of Perseverance could not make any suggestions about how the performance of that play began.<sup>10</sup> What were probably the usual arrangements of an open-air performance--a platea at ground-level with discrete raised loca<sup>11</sup>--suggest

10. Southern, The Medieval Theatre in the Round, p. 146.

11. The following English stationarily-performed plays show signs of this method: Perseverance, Digby Mary Magdalene, Digby Killing of the Children, Digby St. Paul, Croxton Sacrament, Pride of Life, Ludus Coventriae First and Second Passion (see Southern, Medieval Theatre in the Round, pp. 219-24, on the "technique of Place and Scaffolds"). Some of the remaining plays, such as the Brome Abraham and the Dublin Abraham, also were probably so staged. It is not necessary to assume that these were all played "in the round". The method of "Place and Scaffolds" is usually traced back to the method of performing plays in church, with sedes (loca) and nave (platea)--Craig, op. cit., p. 119; Shull, The Stagecraft of the Medieval English Drama, p. 67--and may well have been the usual method for biblical plays before they were performed processionally, and for lost plays, including miracle plays--e.g., "St. George" at Bassingbourne, for which payments were made for "setting up the stages", and at Chelmsford, where items include "for carrying of plonk for the stages", "for making the frame for the heaven stage and tymber for the same" (Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 338, 346); "stage" is a synonym for "scaffold" in the Croxton Sacrament and Digby Mary Magdalene.



that the actors had to get to their places in full view of the audience; this, together with the need for some kind of formal opening to fetch the attention of the audience, suggests that by parading onto the ground before going to their various loca the players could have made a virtue out of a necessity. That they did so once suggests that they might have done so at other times. Exactly this method of opening a performance was also achieved for some of the longer liturgical plays, and here, rather strangely, it was felt by Professor Young to be a "maladjustment".<sup>12</sup>

The system of platea and loca suggests another formal element of the performances. What happened when an actor forgot his lines? On the naturalistic stage the prompter is discreetly concealed in the wings, but evidently there would have been nothing particularly discreet about having a prompter concealed in, say, God's locus if the lapse of memory occurred in the Devil's locus. It is possible that, as in some modern open-air productions, there were several prompters concealed in various separate loca, but the circumstances of the performance probably forced the prompter out into the open, just as the actors were sometimes forced to make a formal and ceremonious beginning to their play by parading to their loca. The prompter, therefore, may well have been a formally recognised personage. Such a figure is known to have existed in France,<sup>13</sup> Corn-

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12. Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church, ii, 404.

13. Cohen, Histoire de la Mise en Scène dans le Théâtre Religieux Français du Moyen Age, p. 174 and pl. iii, opp. p. 86.

wall<sup>14</sup> and Germany<sup>15</sup> and so his existence may be inferred for English plays performed stationarily. There are also records of "book-holders" for plays performed processionally, but the more compact circumstances of this kind of presentation may not have required a formal type of prompter, although this was not necessarily undesirable.<sup>16</sup> Again, it seems probable that a virtue was made of a necessity and that the prompter, a recognised functionary, added to the formality and ceremony of the occasion.

Physical exigencies, therefore, coming into operation when the plays began to be performed outside the buildings and services of the Church, dictated a number of features connected with the performances, but there is nothing to show that the players were hampered by them; on the contrary, the best performances probably took advantage of them. Announcements about the play and the actual beginning

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14. He features, standing with the players during the performance, in Carew's anecdote (The Survey of Cornwall, p. 145). In the Cornish Creation, there is a "conveyour" or stage-manager who helped the play forward by his presence among the players (e.g., at l. 388).
  15. Nagler, A Source Book in Theatrical History, p. 52.
  16. At Bassingbourne, for an open-air performance of a miracle play in 1511, 2/8d. was paid "to John Hobarde Brotherhood Priest for the playbook" (Antiquarian Repertory, iii, 321); this has been plausibly interpreted as prompting (Lysons, D. and S., Magna Britania, II, i, 89). For the Hull Noah Play, there were payments for "kopyng the bok", 1521-1524 (Mall, "The Hull Noah Play," MLR, xxxiii, pp. 502-3). At Coventry payments "for kopyng of the booke" or "for berynge of be Orygynall" are recorded from 1494 (Sharp, op. cit., pp. 36, 39, 48, 65).

of the performance are conspicuous, ceremonial and full of anticipation. There is no secretiveness.

Some medieval plays have prologues, although the majority do not. The prologues usually call for order, bless the audience and narrate the story.<sup>17</sup> Two separate plays in the *Ludus Coventriae* have prologue-speakers dressed as Doctors of the Church,<sup>18</sup> as learned preachers, that is.<sup>19</sup> Contemplation, the prologue-speaker of a separate group of plays also in the *Ludus Coventriae*, is identified elsewhere in the manuscript (p. 271) with these Doctors and so was similarly dressed, and, of course, this costume or uniform may have been usual, although the prologue is spoken by the Poet before the Digby St. Paul and the Digby Killing of the Children. The form of the prologues usually follows the ordinary conventions found at the opening of orally-delivered verse;<sup>20</sup> these conventions and the ad-

17. *Ludus Coventriae*: the group of plays with a general prologue by Contemplation and with Contemplation also speaking for the individual plays (pp. 62, 71, 81, 97, 116, 121-2), Second Passion, by a preacher (p. 271), Assumption of the Virgin, by a preacher (p. 354); Digby Killing of the Children and St. Paul, by the Poet; Coventry Shearmen and Tailors' Pageant, by Isaiah (ll. 1-46), Weavers' Pageant, by the Second Prophet (ll. 155-76); Norwich Creation, Text B, by Prolocutor; Pride of Life; Unpublished Fifteenth-Century Prologue. There are prologues recorded at Coventry (Sharp, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 72). The few epilogues are noticed below, pp. 221-4, and the expositions during the course of the play, below, pp. 180-4.

18. *Ludus Coventriae*, p. 271, "An expocytour in doctorys wede"; p. 354, a "Doctor".

19. Owt, Preaching in Medieval England, p. 3. The preacher was thought of first as a prelate or "curate" and then as essentially a "doctor".

20. Crosby, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

monishing tone of the preacher give the medieval prologue its form. Only the Poet and Contemplation are at all apologetic.

The religion shared by the actors and their audiences governed the tone of the prologue; the prologue-speaker asks for a blessing on "us", on everybody. This common ground sometimes led to an interesting amalgamation of the personality of the character with the function of the prologue-speaker, and most of the work of a prologue is, in the medieval drama, done by characters. An example from the Coventry Weavers' Pageant may be cited: near the beginning of this play a Prophet urges the audience, or all those

That in this place here asemblde be,  
Unto this chylde for merce cawll,  
Whyche schall reydeme us apon a tre,

and concludes with a benediction (ll. 155-76). The historical character speaks directly to the medieval audience, exhorting and blessing them, yet, naturally, speaks of the Redemption as being in the future. This mixed tone is clearly in harmony with what is known of the way in which performances began: characters would appear before the play had opened, and costumed officials would share in the action of the play once it was under way.

As a general rule, therefore, it may be said that the actual beginning of a medieval play was in performance preceded by some rather elaborate conduct. The features of this preliminary activity were largely determined by the conditions of open-air perform-

ance and the mutual concerns of the actors and onlookers; these are the two factors initially responsible for what was evidently an exciting and perhaps complex overture of display, ceremony and formality. Such an overture would appropriately lead to a performance that made positive demands on the interest of the audience. The same two factors might be expected to lead to a play-opening that was grandiloquent and arresting. In addition, there was, as has been remarked in another connection, no convention of silence before a sermon or recitation,<sup>21</sup> and so some conspicuous address to the audience would have been appropriate.

#### B. Introductory "Boasts" and Self-Identifications.

##### Holy Characters.

Plays about the Creation begin with such grandiloquence and conspicuousness. They adopt the oratio recta recorded in the Bible, "Ego sum alpha et omega."<sup>22</sup> God begins the Towneley Creation like this:

Ego sum alpha et o,  
I am the first, the last also,  
Oone god in mageste;  
Mervelus, of myght most,  
ffader, & son, & holy goost,  
On god in trinyte,

and continues in this vein to proclaim the Creation (ll. 1-60).

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21. Coulton, Medieval Panorama, p. 577.

22. Revelations, i, 8 and 11; xxi, 6; xxii, 13; also Isaiah, xliv, 6.

The playwright of the Chester Fall of Lucifer, added to the cycle between 1467 and 1488,<sup>23</sup> expanded the device into elaborate aureate verse (ll. 1-24). The first York play is written in alliterative verse,<sup>24</sup> and if the modern ear finds the jingle of the simple metre or the pretensions of the aureate verse unsuitable for this episode, the style of this passage might be considered more fitting. It has grandeur and dignity:

Ego sum Alpha et O. vita via  
 Veritas primus and novissimus  
 I am gracyus and grete, god withoutyn begynnyng,  
 I am maker unmade, all mighte es in me,  
 I am lyfe and way unto welth wynnyng,  
 I am formaste and fyrste, als I byd sall it be.  
 (ll. 1-28)

This introductory method was widespread; it occurs in practically all the extant Creation plays. It was probably in use at an early stage in the development of the vernacular plays, and was never, in the medieval drama, superseded. It was employed as late as 1565 for a new version of the Creation, the Norwich Creation, Text B (ll. 1-4). Its use spread to other appropriate plays, and the Chester Last Judgment (ll. 1-12), whose opening lines are almost identical to those of the Chester Creation, and the Dublin

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23. Salter, "Banns of the Chester Plays," RES, xvi, p. 16.

24. Reese, "Alliterative Verse in the York Cycle," SP, xlviii, p. 649.

Abraham (ll. 1-21) begin in this way.<sup>25</sup> The familiarity of the device probably suggested the opening for the Chester Adulteress, where Jesus says;

Brethren, I am filius Dei, the light of this world;  
he that followeth me, walketh not in darknes,  
but hath the light of lyfe - the scriptures so record.<sup>26</sup>  
(ll. 1-14)

This opening was added in the sixteenth century, perhaps in 1575.<sup>27</sup> It may, of course, have taken the place of a similar opening. The speech is out of sequence,<sup>28</sup> and may therefore represent a conscious dramatisation. The device is very similar to that used for presenting God, and perhaps modelled on it.

This simple device for presenting God is a dramatic adaptation of a biblical text. Of course, descriptions of God's grandeur often preceded descriptions of the Creation and the Fall,<sup>29</sup> and this com-

25. Other plays which begin similarly are: Chester Fall of Lucifer, Creation, Last Judgment; Norwich Creation (both versions); Ludus Coventriae Creation of Heaven; Towneley Creation; York Creation, and the Fall of Lucifer, Creation, to the Fifth Day.

26. Cf. Norwich Creation, Text B, "my Apocalyps doth testyfy" (l. 1). These two speeches, both written in the second half of the sixteenth century, are the only examples of God giving the evidence for His claim at a play-opening. It is a sign of the Reformation.

27. Salter, "The Banns of the Chester Plays," RES xvi, p. 17.

28. "Ego sum lux mundi," (John, viii, 12) is spoken after Jesus has dismissed the adulteress, not before the episode.

29. E.g., Cursor Mundi, ll. 271-84.

bination would not have been due to the dramatists. However, the actual words from Revelations are by no means always found in this connection<sup>30</sup> and their universal adoption by the vernacular dramatists (there are no known liturgical plays of the Creation) is a clear indication that they were found to be especially desirable from the point of view of the dramatic performances. A play like the Mystère d'Adam, which retained a liturgical framework, did not begin like this, since here there was no need for an arresting opening speech by God because the play began with a Lesson (that for Septuagesima Sunday, probably) and the Responsary; after this sufficient liturgical opening, God calls immediately to Adam. The later English dramatists, however, needed the sacred words from Revelations as a play-opening; others had no especial reason to use them. They were holy and authoritative words and could scarcely be more in character. In this respect they exemplify that desire to be literal that led to realism on the medieval (and Elizabethan) stage (see below, p. 144 n. 13). The great majority of these introductory passages spoken by God begin with the Latin quotation, either spoken as a text or incorporated into the verse. Spoken aloud, therefore, the form of the speech would have been similar to that of a metrical homily shorn of its introductory matter. Cer-

30. The use of these words may have been suggested by the liturgy (Kretzmann, The Liturgical Element in the Earliest Forms of the Medieval Drama, p. 80). It was still, of course, an act of dramatisation to have God Himself speak these words in the plays.



tainly, it may be believed that a grand manner of declamation could have been learned from the medieval preacher.

However, the device did not consist of words alone, however sacred and authoritative or poetically expanded and however grandly proclaimed. To the spoken formula must be added the glorious setting for its delivery. The centre of the setting was God's throne<sup>31</sup> and sometimes around this were some symbols of heaven, such as clouds. The structure was high, and God would have been surrounded by His retinue of angels. The effect may be assumed to have been, in varying degrees, glorious. At the fifth pageant prepared at the Standard in the Cheap to welcome Katherine of Aragon to London in 1501, God began His speech in a way familiar to play audiences:

I am begynnyng and ende, that made iche creature  
Myself, and for myself, but man especially,  
Bothe male and female, after myn owne fygure,

and it is recorded by a contemporary that high up

there was a Trone, compassed about with many candelstikkys of golde, and wax tapers, and goodly bokks and flours sett, and these tapers were brennyng: And wthin this Trone there was the Godhed, sitting full gloriously, and about him in circute enumerable of Angells singing full armoniously, as it had been in a chirche, w<sup>t</sup> a swete and a solempne noyse. And in the hight of the hool pagent were many goodly pen-

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31. As is clear from stage-directions in the plays, and the texts themselves! Chester Fall of Lucifer, ll. 165, 192; Chester Deluge, at l. 1; Towneley Creation, at ll. 76, 121; York Creation, and the Fall of Lucifer, l. 25; York Judgment Day, l. 180, at l. 216; Ludus Coventriae Fall of Lucifer, l. 56; etc., etc.

acles, wyndowes, and fanys, right goodly besett; and  
in evry unche space of this werk were perlys of syl-  
vr counterfeted.<sup>32</sup>

Other accounts of Royal Entries also illustrate the symbolic type of structure representing Heaven<sup>33</sup> that would have been aimed at for the play productions. Clouds and angel-musicians are often mentioned. A heaven-setting was known in English Royal Entries before the end of the fourteenth century.

To this splendid setting must be further added the fact that the actor playing God was probably richly costumed--and sometimes masked.<sup>34</sup> There is a full description of what must have been very similar to God's costume at the beginning of Wisdom. The introductory speech here by Wisdom, which begins,

Yf ze wyl wet be propyrte  
Ande be resun of my nayme imperyall,  
I am clepyde of hem pat in erthe be,  
"Everlastynge Wysdom" to my noble egalle,  
(ll. 1-16)

was taken virtually line for line from the English Orologium Sapient-

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32. Antiquarian Repertory, ii, 274-5.

33. Withington, English Pageantry, i, 130, 135 n.3, 138, 146-7, 158, 178, 186; Wickham, op. cit., i, 93-7.

34. For the Norwich Creation, a "face & heare for ye Father" (Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 388); see also Chester Fall of Lucifer, l. 95 and Salter, "The Banns of the Chester Plays," RES, xvi, p. 148, l. 200.

tiae,<sup>35</sup> but the detailed directions concerning the costume are not found in this source. It was surely the dramatist's familiarity with the device used for presenting God that suggested to him that he should take these lines (really, Wisdom's reply to the disciple) as the beginning of his play; and the costume, "a Ryche purpull clothe of golde", "a cheweler with browys", a curly golden beard and a "Ryche Imperyal Crown", could have had the same inspiration. Wisdom, of course, was associated with the Creation.<sup>36</sup> The mask would have made for aloofness, and some stern beauty, perhaps.

There is, then, ample evidence that the dramatists evolved (during two centuries, increasing the spectacle, perhaps, but never changing the essence of the device) a formal type of opening for a certain class of play that was conspicuous for its dignity and aloofness, grandeur and colour, and authoritative simplicity. The speech, it may be assumed, was regally declaimed to all the on-lookers, both audience and angels. At a successful production, the effect of such a sudden and majestic opening must have been awe-inspiring to the devout and thrilling to those who felt the grandeur and beauty of the occasion; certainly, objections to the "I am God" formula fail to grasp this.

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35. Smart, Some English and Latin Sources, and Parallels for the Morality of Wisdom, p. 9.

36. Proverbs, viii, 23-30.

### Virtuous Characters.

It would be quite absurd to regard the technique of self-identification and self-description used for presenting God to the audience as naive, because it is unnatural. It would be equally absurd in the case of the presentation of Wisdom, who, at a Royal Entry, boasts,

"Kinges", quod she, "most off excellence,  
By me they regne, and moste in loye endure",<sup>37</sup>

since this is from Proverbs, viii, 15. The impossibility of applying naturalistic criteria to the plays is again apparent when a passage of self-description is spoken by a wicked allegorical character; when, for example, the King of Flesh in the Digby Mary Magdalene says,

I, Kyng of flesch, florychyd in my flowers,  
Of deyntys delycyows I have grett domynacyon,  
(ll. 334-5)

or when Satan boasts that he has many followers, the statements are literally true. This kind of transparent self-description probably entered the medieval drama from the various passages of biblical oratio recta and from allegorical literature;<sup>38</sup> it is commonly used for presenting both good and bad characters in the vernacular drama.

37. Lydgate, Minor Poems, pt. ii, p. 639.

38. Spivak, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, pp. 106-8.

Self-description is the regular method of presenting characters at Royal Entries also, where the first known certainly dramatic speeches delivered are those recorded at Coventry in 1456.<sup>39</sup> The composer of these speeches had to do two things. He had to introduce and name a number of characters who spoke in turn and once only, and he had to present their credentials for welcoming Queen Margaret. The form of the speeches is therefore a self-introduction and a brief self-description: Arthur says to the Queen,

I, Arthur, kyng crowned and conqueror,  
That yn this lande reyned right rielly;  
With dedes of armes I slowe the emperour;  
The tribute of this ryche reme I made downe to ly,<sup>40</sup>

and the other eight worthies speak in a similar fashion. At a similar occasion in Bristol, in 1486, Justice says:

I am Justicia the Kind and Nature  
Of God that hath me made and ordeignede,  
Over Realmes and over every Creature.  
By me Justicia, is sheddyng of Bloode refreynnyng,  
And Gilte punyshed whan it is compleynede.  
I, Justice, defende Possessions,  
And kepe People from Oppression.<sup>41</sup>

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39. Earlier Latin speeches are not dramatic in this way; the English in 1432 (Lydgate, Minor Poems, pt. ii, p. 639) may not have been spoken, and the English speeches in 1445 (Brown, "Lydgate's Verses on Queen Margaret's Entry into London," MLR, vii) which introduce the shows are not dramatic in this sense.

40. Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, p. 113 (appendix).

41. Beland, Collectanea, iv, 201.

The problem of introducing a large number of characters one after the other was thus solved in the simplest and most dignified way possible. Directly addressed to the Royal visitor, and spoken by a costumed figure surrounded by decorative symbols,<sup>42</sup> this kind of solemn declamation loses all suspicion of naivety.

This type of stylised and poetic self-identification also occurs in the plays, especially where the dramatist is faced with the same problem as the speech-writer--to introduce seriatim a number of characters who might speak once only, and who address the audience directly, just as speakers at Royal Entries addressed the royal visitors directly. There is a possibility that actors in the plays addressed themselves chiefly to that part of the audience composed of the higher ranks of society, and this was quite probably the case when there was royalty in the audience.<sup>43</sup> However, for this assumption there is no evidence; nor, indeed, is there any evidence, outside the plays themselves, that the audience was ever directly addressed--but this is the instinctive and logical way to read many of the speeches. It is possible that some of the speeches were directed simultaneously to both the audience and other characters; some of the majestic pronouncements about Himself by God, for example, may have included the angels as well as the audience in

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42. Wickham, op. cit., i, 104.

43. Royalty and other distinguished visitors saw plays at Chester, Coventry and York in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 355, 358, 399, 405).

their range.

These simple self-identifications are not found in the liturgical drama.<sup>44</sup> In the extant liturgical Prophetæ, for example, the prophets are either unnamed or are called upon by name by a vocator or some similar figure and therefore do not need to introduce themselves.<sup>45</sup> The vocator, however, disappeared from the vernacular English versions --he is not represented by the Chester Expositor, who speaks not before each prophecy, but after-- and other methods of introducing the prophets were consequently devised or adopted. The dissociation of the plays from the liturgy here, as in other cases, necessitated the introduction of fresh dramatic methods.

In the Chester Balaam and Balak, five of the prophets introduce themselves in the style "I, Ezechiell. . ." (ll. 313, 345, 361, 377, 393) and the same style, for the same situation, occurs in the Chester Prophets and Antichrist (ll. 49, 125, 173), Christ's Descent into Hell (ll. 38, 41, 65) and Last Judgment, where each evangelist begins his piece in the form "I, Matthew. . ." (ll. 677, 685, 693, 701). Occasionally, a single speaker will speak like this--a Cherub, for example (Chester Creation, l. 401). It is perhaps worth noticing, for it bears on the particularly consistent

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44. An exception is "Thomas dicor Didimus" (Young, op. cit., i, 449).

45. Texts in Young, op. cit., ii, 125-71.

tone of the Chester plays,<sup>46</sup> that this formula is employed in that cycle far more than the other types ("I am. . ." and "My name is. . ."). The Towneley Prophets uses the forms "My name is callyd moyses" (l. 89) and

Iesse son, yo wote I am;  
David is my right name.  
(ll. 97-8)

There are twenty-seven characters in the Ludus Coventriae Prophets. It begins:

I am þe prophete callyd Isaye  
Replett with godys grett influens,

and all the other speakers introduce themselves in turn in a similar fashion, although several different forms are used for the sake of variety. Read swiftly, of course, this may sound naive (Chambers found the style of an early German prophet play--"Ich bin der alte Balaem. . ."--"naïve"<sup>47</sup>), but this simple introductory technique is in harmony with the formality of these episodes.

The conjunction of this device with the method of direct address is a point of contact between the plays and the Royal Entries, and it may be supposed that the effect attained was similar in both cases. As in the case of God's self-introduction (which occurs in

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46. Wilson supposes it to have been completely rewritten at the time the revisions based on the Stanzaic Life were made (Wilson, "The Stanzaic Life of Christ and the Chester Plays," SP, xxviii, p. 414)--a supposition rejected by Craig (op. cit., pp. 197-8).

47. Mediaeval Stage, ii, 72.



both plays and Royal Entry) the method is dignified, unequivocal and authoritative. Against a background of some splendour, a slow and impressive dramatic display would have resulted. On these occasions the acting would have been stylised and restrained.

Apart from the passages of statements made seriatim, the elementary self-introduction is also used in passages of formal dialogue, and the sense of authenticity and dignity which lay behind the device can be seen in such scriptural lines as "Iacob, iacob, thi god I am" (Towneley Jacob, l. 13; Genesis, xxviii, 13) and God's reply to Saul, "I am thi savyour that ys so trwe" (Digby St. Paul, l. 185; Acts, ix, 5, xxii, 8, xxvi, 15). The stilted dialogue in Wisdom (ll. 181-276), therefore, the result of close adherence to the immediate source of the play,<sup>48</sup> did not sound strange on the medieval stage. The formal colloquies between God and His four daughters, and between the prophets and patriarchs in Hell are further occasions when the simplicity and dignity (not pomposity) of these simple formulae are appropriate. Such phrases as "I am pi dowero trewth" and "I, Ryghtwysnes am wele contente" (Ludus Coventriae Parliament of Heaven, ll. 57, 131) are welcome here; it is their repetition that, from the point of view of the technique, sets the tone that corresponds to the subject matter.<sup>49</sup> In the Chester

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48. Smart, op. cit., p. 29.

49. ll. 57, 75, 90, 120, 129, 131, 133, 153, 157, 181, and ll. 187-8, where Mercy recites the text from Psalms, lxxxv, 10, thus speaking of herself and her sisters in the third person; Castle of Perseverance, ll. 3131, 3182, 3191, 3196, etc.

Christ's Descent into Hell, the prophets and patriarchs speak out directly to the audience, but in the Ludus Coventriae play on this subject, and to a slight extent in the York and Towneley plays, there is here another example of a formalised dialogue. In the Ludus Coventriae the effect is to create a sense of long-awaited introduction that may not have been accidental (ll. 1361, 1368, 1376); the scene is not in this form in the Gospel of Nicodemus, but the same effect is attained in the Middle-English Harrowing of Hell (text L, ll. 158, 167, 184, 197, 207, 225), which is otherwise related to this play in the Ludus Coventriae. It is noticeable that these brief and simple introductory devices appear far more in the Chester plays and the Ludus Coventriae than in the York and Towneley plays, and this is one of the reasons why the former give an impression of being more ritualistic, more stylised, than the other two cycles.

#### Pagan and Wicked Characters.

The transparent self-descriptions by virtuous characters are also found as boasts by wicked characters; many plays begin with this kind of self-identification, which takes the form of the speaker vaunting his own power, dominions, and personal merit or beauty.

A number of these boastful speeches, uttered by Herod, occur in plays connected with the Nativity. In the Chester Adoration of the Magi, Herod's first speech (not the play-opening) warns the

three Magi and boasts of his power. He says,

There is none so great that me dare gaine,  
to take my Realme and to Attayne  
my power but he shall have payne  
and be punished apertlye . . .

For I am king of all mankinde,  
I byd, I beat, I loose, I bynde,  
I maister the Moone . . .

(ll. 153-204)

During the speech, the actor is instructed to flourish his sword and staff. He addresses the Magi primarily, but at the same time he may, in his enthusiasm, have spoken to the audience as well. Herod's chief concern is to establish his position as king and to guard against the rivalry of Christ, the "groome of Low degree" (l. 194). Herod also opens the Ludus Coventriae Adoration of the Magi with a boast. He apparently speaks on horseback, for he begins,

As a lord in ryalte in non Regyon so ryche  
And rulere of all remys I ryde in ryal a-ray,

and after boasting of his supreme power over heaven and earth and of his glittering beauty he dismounts, telling his minstrels to play while he goes to his chamber to change (ll. 1-20). The three Magi enter and speak to each other, and then Herod again speaks of his power and riches, expresses his determination to destroy heretics, shows off his regal costume, and says, "I am jolyere than þe jay." Further, he has heard of the "paphawk", the Christ-child, and is ready to "prune" Him. He then sends his steward to search for

signs of insurrection. Again, he fears a rival (ll. 69-102). The tradition established by the liturgical drama was that this play began with the entry of the three Magi,<sup>50</sup> and the opening speech on horseback is structurally quite irrelevant. It is clear that some dramatist has here felt such a fantastic, vain-glorious and jealous speech to be an appropriate opening to the episode. In this play can be seen what a playwright enthusiastic for a fashionable dramatic method might have made of the opening to the Chester Adoration of the Magi.

The Coventry Shearmen and Tailors' Pageant also exemplifies this method. Herod's herald begins the episode of the three Magi (which was once a separate play<sup>51</sup>) and then Herod himself pronounces a long boast. He says,

For I am evyn he thatt made bothe hevyn and hell,  
And of my myghte power holdith up this world rownd.  
Magog and Madroke, bothe them did I confownde,  
And with this bryght bronde there bonis I brak on-sunder.

He continues, at some length, to state his power over the elements and over all mankind, and to describe his splendid countenance, the spread of his fame and his resemblance to Mahound. He then orders his herald to tax all immigrants; this may show the influence of dramatisations of Luke, ii, 1. He goes to rest, to music (ll. 486-

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50. Marshall, M.H., "The Dramatic Tradition Established by the Liturgical Plays," PMLA, vi, p. 968.

51. Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, p. xxiii.

539).

Herod also boasts at the beginning of the *Ludus Coventriae* Massacre of the Innocents. His messenger tells him that the three kings have stolen away, and so he exclaims (again probably on horse-back) that he will cause blood to flow and have the male children killed (ll. 9-24). When the knights return from their mission he welcomes them and exalts in their obedience which is his triumph:

In sete now am I sett as kyng of myghtys most  
All þis werd ffor þer love to me xul þei lowt.  
both of hevyn and of erth and of helle cost  
Ffor dygne of my dygnyte þei have of me dowl.

He threatens any opponents, those who "blowe a-3ens my host", with his bright sword (ll. 129-41). The Digby Killing of the Children begins similarly. Herod speaks of his prosperity and good fortune and gives his name: "I Am kyng herowdes, • I will it be knowen soo." He says that with his "bronde bright" he is most feared, that he worships his gods, who have "sett me in solas", and that he will destroy rebels and tear the flesh of those who oppose him. He then orders his knights to slay the children, because the Magi have deceived him (ll. 57-96). In a cancelled addition, he sends his messenger to learn what rebels there may be, and the messenger reports the flight of the Magi.

Herod's sword certainly played a regular part in his boastful speeches, as his own references to it show. In the Chester Adoration of the Magi, besides increasing the violence of his language

by making menacing gestures with it, he has a "staff" also, and in other plays he may have carried some of the regalia of a king. His sword was probably not an ordinary one. In the developed examples of his boast at least it was probably particularly bright and awesome, since for a sixteenth-century performance at Leicester a sword had to be especially made and painted for him.<sup>52</sup> His emphasis on it and his pride in it take on extra meaning if it was an extraordinary sword (see below, p. 56 and n. 79).

Herod also had a painted mask at Coventry and a vizor at Chester,<sup>53</sup> and therefore perhaps for the plays of other cities as well. It is surely reasonable to suppose that since Herod was a most evil character, these masks were ugly, disfigured. If this is the case, then Herod's usual boasts of his beauty become much more meaningful; that is to say, they become something arrogant and untrue, to be denied in the hearts of the audience, and something ridiculous, an object of mocking laughter.

It is not only Herod who is presented by means of this device--and the device of the bragging call for order (discussed below, pp. 59-100)--but his character as it was conceived in the Middle Ages coloured the device, and therefore an exploration of his character is

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52. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 377.

53. Sharp, op. cit., pp. 28-30 (Herod's painted mask and "head" for the lost Trial, Condemnation and Crucifixion, 1477, 1516, 1547); Salter, Mediaeval Drama in Chester, p. 75 ("arrats vysar" for the Coopers' play in 1574 which was part of Christ's Passion, where, however, Herod shows no consciousness of his beauty: he only appears briefly, and has no bragging speech).

necessary. Firstly, Herod is afraid. The common assumption that his character, as portrayed in the English plays, "derives ultimately from Matthew ii, 16"<sup>54</sup> is a half-truth, for Matthew ii, 3, is equally relevant; he was certainly "iratus" but he was also "turbatus", and there is an emphasis in the plays on this, on the fear. The vernacular plays present a frightened and distressed Herod. This Herod is found to a certain extent in the surviving liturgical plays; Professor Young speaks of his "prevailing bewilderment" in the Bilsen Stellae, and his concern for his kingship is manifest in his demand to the Magi in this play: "Si illum regnare creditis, dicite nobis." In the Fleury Ordo Rachelis Herod tries to commit suicide on hearing that the three Magi have fled, and the line from Sallust which he sometimes speaks reveals his lordly despair: "Incendium meum ruina extingam."<sup>55</sup>

His fear and his jealousy of a possible rival are spoken of in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, xvi, and his anxiety is noticed in the Protoevangelium, xxi, xxiii. A popular hymn, "Hostis Herodes", asks Herod why he is so afraid of Christ's coming since He desires no earthly thing, thus implying that Herod feared for his kingdom. This hymn was incorporated into the liturgy and sung at Vespers on

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54. Cawley, in The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle, p. 115; see also Parker, "The Reputation of Herod in Early English Literature," Speculum, viii, p. 59, and McNeir, "The Corpus Christi Passion Plays as Dramatic Art," SP, xlviii, p. 613.

55. Young, op. cit., ii, 84, 77, 111, 68.

the Vigil of Epiphany (York Breviary, i, col. 160; Sarum Breviary, i, col. cccxix); and it would therefore have been familiar to the dramatists. It was translated into the vernacular by a friar in the fourteenth century<sup>56</sup> and there is at least one fifteenth-century version;<sup>57</sup> and there are many other fifteenth-century epiphany songs which emphasise this trait in Herod's character: for example,

and hom þis wente on here Iornay.  
 quan þis-of herowd hard say,  
 he sayd "alas! and welaway,  
     for I am schente;  
 þis chyld he wyll my kyndam hente."

þen erowd was both wode and wroth.<sup>58</sup>

A homiletic poem, the Stanzaic Life of Christ, places great emphasis on Herod's fear, analysing the reasons "quy he so gretly grevet was" (ll. 1813-1900; this part was certainly known to the Chester playwright<sup>59</sup>) and speaking of Herod's dread of rivalry (ll. 3261-72).

Secondly, Herod is angry. The idea of Herodes iratus is present, of course, in the liturgical plays, and can be traced in patristic writings.<sup>60</sup> It is to be noticed, however, that in the liturgi-

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56. Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century, no. 12 and note.

57. Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, no. 90 and note.

58. Ibid., p. 129; see also Early English Carols, nos. 124, 125, 129.

59. Wilson, op. cit., p. 422.

60. Parker, op. cit., pp. 64-5.



cal plays his anger is of a particular kind: mad, exasperated and extravagant. This is evident from the stage-directions in a number of the liturgical plays which instruct him to dash books to the ground, to wave his sword and even to throw swords about.<sup>61</sup> There is probably an unbroken line between these and, for example, the Chester Adoration of the Magi (which has similar stage-directions) in this respect; the menacing gesture with a sword is common in the vernacular plays. Really lunatic behaviour on the part of Herod is found in an episode called for at Padua during Epiphany,<sup>62</sup> and the suggestion that the wild antics of this ecclesiastical season may have influenced the characterisation of Herod in the liturgical plays is wholly acceptable;<sup>63</sup> it may also be suggested that there is a direct connection between the festivities of Misrule and the Herod of the vernacular plays.<sup>64</sup> Apart, then, from the fact that Herod's fear would naturally have led to a crazed kind of anger and that his jealousy is the mad logic behind the Slaughter of

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61. Young, op. cit., ii, 71, 77, 87, 88, for example.

62. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

63. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 56. The angry Herod was established in the dramatic tradition first, and was then subjected to these popular influences. Chambers' theory is that this was an ecclesiastical attempt to contain a popular institution.

64. Mill, Mediaeval Plays in Scotland, p. 27 (at Edinburgh in 1496, the "Abbot of Warent" had to furnish Herod and his knights for the Corpus Christi Procession). See also Gayley, Plays of Our Forefathers, p. 74.

the Innocents, the tone of very silliness and recklessness which often sounds in his speeches is probably partly due to this popular influence.

Thirdly, Herod is sometimes understood to have been a vain-glorious king, proud and sensual and in this respect similar to Satan. In the writings of the Fathers,

Herodes diabolum exprimit, vel gentes nomen Christi  
de mundo exstinguere cupientes, vel etiam regum  
luxuriam et superbiam.<sup>65</sup>

The pride, of course, is apparent in the plays, and it was perhaps the pride which Sir John Paston's correspondent was thinking of when he compared Lord Suffolk to Herod;<sup>66</sup> it is this aspect of Herod's character that agrees so well with the descriptions in some vernacular sermons of petty feudal tyrants.<sup>67</sup> Herod's sensual life, his wine and his minstrels, and his carelessness of the future are also depicted in some of the plays, and this, of course, is especially significant since there was a horrible death in store for him. His death is described in the History of Joseph the Carpenter, ix, and is stressed by some of the Fathers;<sup>68</sup> it was staged

65. Patrologiae Latinae, cccix, col. 262, and references there.

66. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 386-7.

67. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England, pp. 309-10, 493-4.

68. Young, op. cit., ii, 194-5.

in the Benedictsueren Christmas Play,<sup>69</sup> and in some of the English plays (see below, pp. 59, 174-5).

Two other features of the liturgical drama connected with Herod persist in the vernacular plays. Firstly, in the liturgical drama he often has a messenger who passes between him and the kings or reports their departure.<sup>70</sup> The messenger is found frequently in the English plays, and has there become attached to other evil and boastful characters; from the early association of a messenger with Herod probably come, for example, Belial's, Aristorius', and Tiberius Caesar's messengers (see below, pp. 49, 50, 84). Another reason for the ubiquity of the messenger is that the discrete loca (scaffolds or stages) of the stationary performances must have rendered such a mobile character useful as a link between the chief characters who were elaborately seated; the majority of the plays intended for stationary presentation employ a messenger in this capacity. Secondly, in most of the versions of the Officium Stellae there is a scene founded on Matthew ii, 4,<sup>71</sup> where Herod consults the scribes. This scene is common in the vernacular plays, and from this scene, originally associated with Herod, probably developed the many scenes of consultation and also

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69. Ibid., ii, 189.

70. Marshall, M. H., op. cit., p. 969.

71. Young, op. cit., ii, 53-5, 61, 65, 70, 77-8, etc.

the flattering assurances<sup>72</sup> that the boaster often receives; again other characters learned, as it were, from Herod, and Satan, Annas and Pilate, for example, consult their officers, and Pharosah, the World and others are flattered by their retinues.

The analogies between God's majestic self-description and the pagan boasts which are noticeable in the case of Herod are, of course, also noticeable in the case of Antichrist and the devils. Antichrist's boast which opens the Chester Coming of Antichrist is based firmly on the Bible. In Latin and then in English he claims to be Christ, and gives a description of his nature, explaining that Jesus was killed because of him. His tone is quite unmajestic. After this passage (ll. 1-56), which seems to have been addressed to the audience, he turns to speak to the kings. In Man-kind, the devil parodies God's usual self-introduction; at his first entry, Titivillus says to the audience, "Ego sum dominancium dominus, & my name ys Titivillus" (l. 468).

The parallel between the two types of "boast" (the holy and the wicked) is, naturally, most apparent in plays dealing with the Fall of Lucifer. In both the Chester and York plays on this subject it seems probable that Lucifer's boasting speeches were spoken to the audience as well as to the other angels (Chester Fall of

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72. The relationship of the flattering assurance to the consultation described in Matthew ii, 4, may be seen in the Chester Adoration of the Magi, ll. 233-48.

Lucifer, ll. 156-68: "Behould, Seigniours, on every syde"; York Creation, and the Fall of Lucifer, ll. 49-56, 65-72, 81-91). At Chester, l. 167, "behold my body, both handes and head", is certainly a blasphemous parody (unthought of, perhaps) of speeches made by Christ (see below, pp. 14, 15) and at York, ll. 80-91, show Lucifer's vain-glory--he will feel no pain, he says. His fulsome boast of his brilliance suggests Herod's similar boast of his "bright countenance" and beauty; both parody God's self-description. Lucifer's boast at this point is also, of course, the locus classicus of pride before a fall and in some of the boasting speeches by Herod and others there is an emphasis on this vain-glory, to be followed by death. The Devil's long introduction to the Ludus Coventriae First Passion, besides constituting an extended example of the unselfconscious wicked boast ("I am Norsshire of synne. . .") contains parodies of the words of Christ (ll. 11-12, 123; cf. John 11, 16, Matthew xxviii, 20).

Satan has a notable soliloquy, addressed to the audience, in the Ludus Coventriae Second Passion. While the Jews are clothing Jesus in white and leading Him to Pilate, Satan boasts,

Thus I reyne As A rochand • with A rynggyng rowth  
As A devyl most dowty • dred is my dynt  
Many A thousand develyys • to me do bel lowth . . .  
ho so serve me sathan • to sorwe is he sent.

As always, this self-description by a wicked character is honest and transparent. Satan goes on to say,

But þer is o thyng • þat grevyth me sore  
 Of A prophete • þat jhesu men call.  
 (ll. 466-97)73

This is the kind of boast followed by an expression of fear or anxiety so often uttered by Herod, and there is here a connection between the presentation of the two characters. The idea of Satan's fear is traditional and is not necessarily due to Herod's fear in the plays, but the manner of presenting it here--preceded by a vain-glorious boast--may well be.

Similar speeches by devils occur in various other plays. In the Castle of Perseverance Belial boasts and says that until Man is destroyed he is wretched (ll. 196-234); again, the boast is accompanied by some uneasiness. In the Digby St. Paul, at the beginning of the interpolated scene between the devils (ll. 412-502), which may have been suggested by the Gospel of Nicodemus, xxii, Belial cries,

Ho, ho, be-holde me, the myzte prince of the partes in-fernall,  
 Next unto luyfer I am in magestye;  
 By name I am nominate the god belyall,

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73. Withington ("Braggart, Devil, and 'Vice'," Speculum, xi, p. 128) misconstrues the stage-direction preceding this passage; he quotes the direction and then comments, "Satan's 'playing' was left to the actor, apparently, with such hints as are suggested by 'his most horrible wise'." Surely, however, the correct interpretation is that while Satan acts ("pleyth") ll. 466-542, which include his boast, the Jews lead Jesus around the platea ("A-bowth þe place") from Herod's sedes ("scafold") to Pilate's. Such simultaneous action is a feature of parts of the Ludus Coventriae and other plays.

and this is comparable to other pagan boasts which acknowledge the supreme authority over the boaster (e.g., Digby Mary Magdalene, l. 232). More significantly, however, Belial has here a messenger, and when the messenger approaches he brings news of a revolt against the Devil's law--while a moment previously Belial has exulted since

my law styll encreasyth wherof I am fayne.

It seems certain that the episode has been invented and dramatised on the basis of the common scene of a boast by Herod or another followed by some disturbing news. In the Digby Mary Magdalene, Satan boasts:

Now I, prynse pyrked prykyd in pryde,  
satan ower sovereyn, set with every cyrcumstans

and describes his efforts to "besiege" man's soul. He then calls his knights (allegorical ones--Wrath and Envy) to a council (ll. 358-76). Such a consultation is frequently a part of these grand-mannered boasts.

There must, therefore, have been some interaction between the technique of presenting Satan and that of presenting Herod. The same device is used in both cases. In some instances at least it is clear that the presentation of Herod affected the presentation of Satan; the form of the introductory scenes shows this. Conversely, Herod's boast of his beauty and his arrogance may owe something to the Devil. Satan, like Herod, is often masked; probably, too, the

features of his mask were hideous: the speeches under discussion, the stage-directions associated with them, and the account books show this.<sup>74</sup> In this important respect of their facial appearance, therefore, there was also a connection between the presentation of the two characters. Behind this popular portrayal of the close relationship between the two, there was the theological concept of Herod as representing the Devil (p. 44, above).

Other wicked characters, boastfully introducing themselves and their plays, have caught some of the aspects associated with the boast when it is used to present Herod. The opening of the Croxton Sacrament is an instance. Aristorius there boasts of himself as a merchant and names himself. He says he is rich and equal to a lord and that men dare not displease him. To this his priest agrees and then Aristorius sends his clerk to see if any merchant has come to the country (ll. 1-60). Apart from the general similarity of this boast to pagan boasts by biblical characters, the particular feature of the subservient attendant, the priest, is especially associated with Herod and others, and so is the idea of

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74. Ludus Coventriae Second Passion, at l. 465 ("in þe most orryble wyse"); Digby Mary Magdalene, at l. 962; Perseverance, l. 199 ("belyal þe blake") and l. 223; Sharp, op. cit., pp. 31 ("the devells hede"), 56, 69 (heads and hair coats); Chambers, Medieval Stage, II, 396 ("face or vizier for the Devil"). Perhaps at Chester and York the devils put on masks or different costumes immediately they had fallen (see Chester Fall of Lucifer, l. 230, York Creation, and the Fall of Lucifer, ll. 100-101, and Chambers, Medieval Stage, II, 391).



sending out a spy. In the same play, Jonathas "shall make hys boast" and this includes praise for Mahound (ll. 69-116). Both Aristorius' and Jonathas' boasts include alliterating lists, the former of places to which his trade reaches, and the latter of his precious stones. Such lists are frequently found in the dramatic boasts. Usually the speaker lists the lands and places over which he has power; presumably the writers were encouraged to include these lists by the availability of similar material in geographical treatises.<sup>75</sup> The dramatists adapted them not only for Herod and other tyrannical characters, but also for Satan and Mundus, and in the mouths of these two latter characters the list becomes an awful warning of the prevalence of sin and worldliness.

After two prologues, the *Ludus Coventriae First Passion* opens with a boast by Annas, who then instructs his doctors to report heretics to him:

As a prelat am I properyd, to provyde pes  
 And of jewys • jewge • be lawe to fortelye  
 I Annas be my powere • xal comawnde dowteles  
 Be lawys of moyses • no man xal denye  
 Hoo excede my comawndement • Anon ze certelye  
 Yf Any eretyk here reyn . . .

This appears to have been influenced by Herod's similar instructions in the plays; something which was originally associated with Herod in the Nativity is influencing a different character in the

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75. Suggested by Block, in *Ludus Coventriae*, p. lv, and Waterhouse in *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, p. lxi.

Passion. Annas goes on to ask his doctors' advice about what to do about Jesus (11. 1-20); this reflects Matthew xxvi, 4; Mark xiv, 1; Luke xxii, 2, whereas the searching for heretics is extraneous and due to the vernacular dramatic tradition associated with Herod. Annas' boast and concern over "errors" is repeated by Caiaphas (11. 45-52).

The opening of the Digby St. Paul is a boast by Saul. This was constructed on the basis of Acts ix, 1. Such a hint in the source material as this was able to be seized, it seems, because there was a suitable device already developed; or, at least, the source material was developed in a familiar way, following the dramatic fashion. That is to say that in the late fifteenth century, "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts ix, 1) can become

Most dowtyd man, I am lyvyng upon the ground,  
 goodly besene with many a riche garlement.  
 my pere on lyve I trow ys nott found,  
 thorow the world, fro the oryent to the occydent,  
 my fame ys best knowyn undyr the fyrmament;  
 I am most drad of pepull unyversall,  
 they dare not dyspease my most noble.

Saule ys my name, I wyll that ye notyfy,  
 whych conspyreth the dyscyplys with thretes and menaces,  
 (11. 15-35)

because of the influence of the vernacular dramatic device associated with Herod and other tyrants.

Wicked boasts by abstract figures in the plays exactly correspond to those spoken by persons in the plays. An example of this

may be seen at the beginning of the Castle of Perseverance where Mundus boasts of the extent of his worldly kingdom (giving an alliterating list of places) and threatens those who oppose him (ll. 157-95). Another example is in the Digby Mary Magdalene (ll. 305-25); here Mundus says,

I am þe word, worthyest þat evyr god wrowth,  
 & also I am þe prymatt portatur  
 next heveyn . . .  
 in me restyt þe order of þe metelles sevyn,

and then asks Pride and Covetousness for their opinion of his greatness. They flatter him. Clearly the allegorical boast (see above, p. 30) has come under the influence of the dramaturgy of the mystery and miracle plays; the threats and flatterers show this. A longer evil self-description is spoken by Detraccio in the Castle of Perseverance (ll. 651-702).

These wicked self-descriptions and boasts are composed of various elements. Essentially, they employ the same technique as that used for the presentation of God; God also describes His own power and majesty. The pagan's boast of his power over other kings and lands is faintly reflected in the speeches at Royal Entries, where the worthies frequently give a brief account of their great conquests so that their submissive welcome to the royal visitor may be the more pointed. Ebrauk, for example, says,

Of right I was regent and rewlid this rigion,  
I subdewid Fraunce, and led in my legence.<sup>76</sup>

The territorial boast is also given a semblance of reality by its distant relation to the form of medieval royal announcements; the king's proclamation begins with an enumeration, often curtailed, of his titles:

Maximilian, par la grace de Dieu, Roy des Romains,  
tous jours Auguste, Archeduc d'Autriche, Duc de  
Bourgoinge, de Lothrairie, de Brabant, de Lembourg. . .  
Conte de Flandres, de Thierol . . . Marquis de Saint  
Empire, Seigneur de Frise & de Salines, a tous ceulx  
qui ces presentes lettres verront, Salut. . .<sup>77</sup>

As he pronounces his boast, the wicked personage is usually seated on a throne (as God is), as numerous references in the text to his "sete" indicate. Many of the claims made by Herod, Satan and others are parodies of God's own properties; the boast of their power over the elements and of their supposed great beauty, the claim to have created the Earth and Heaven and to "loose" and "bynde" are certainly a kind of direct blasphemy against God the Creator; when Pilate is found boasting of his beauty in the York plays, for example, the influence of Herod and the Devil may be suspected. Herod

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76. At York in 1486. A Volume of English Miscellanies, p. 54; see also above, p. 31.

77. Rymer, Foedera, xii, 393. English kings were more modest: see ibide., vi, 2 and 267, xii, 399, etc., etc. A satirical proclamation, c. 1436, in Political, Religious and Love Poems, p. 12, may show the influence of the dramatic boasts.

also shares with the Devil vain-glory and pride; he is careless of the future and luxuriates in his rich clothes and minstrels. Herod and the Devil and possibly other characters, too, are at least sometimes horribly-featured in the performances. Some of the features associated with this device go back, through the character of Herod, to ecclesiastical sources anterior to the establishment of the vernacular drama. The mad anger, the fear and the jealous disposition, the vain-glory, the messenger and the consultation and flattery have here their origin; they spread to other characters, and the vernacular playwrights developed all these older features to advantage and combined them with the evil boast that they evolved.

They also introduced an oriental element, chiefly to be noticed in the allegiance of the wicked boasters to Mohammed, or "Mahound", and in less usual things, such as the "sarazyn" in the *Ludus Coventriae Council of the Jews*, at l. 1. It seems certain that popular portrayals of Sultans and their champions coloured the characterisation of pagans and infidels in the plays. Many of the romances describe fights and battles between Christians and Saracens, and between Christian knights and giant Saracens. "English and Germanic", "Arthurian" and "Charlemagne" romances as well as many others describe such incidents,<sup>78</sup> and Saracens and their sultans regularly swear by Mahound. Oriental features, such as scimitars and turbans, are sometimes found in representations of Herod in other

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78. Wells, *A Manual of Writings in Middle English*, pp. 1-157.

kinds of popular medieval art,<sup>79</sup> where they may reveal the influence of the stage, and there can be little doubt about the influence of this literature on the dramatic boasts, even if it was of a most general kind. The descriptions of the Sultans' giant champions may also have had an influence. A great, broad and ugly "blake sarzine", like the Fiend, fights for the Sultan in Guy of Warwick and other romances,<sup>80</sup> and the resemblance between the exaggerated monstrosity of these infidels and the evil boasters in the plays--like "Blak Herod"<sup>81</sup>--would probably be more obvious if more were known precisely about the presentation of the plays. Herod's special sword (see above, p. 40), for example, may sometimes have been a scimitar. Of course, "Blak Herod" may be the result of the black devils in the plays, just as the giant pagans in the romances are sometimes compared to devils--Astrogat lay

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79. Scimitar-shaped swords: Woodforde, The Medieval Glass of St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, p. 27 and pl.; Hildburgh, "English Alabaster Carvings as Records of the Medieval Religious Drama," Archaeologia, xciii, pls. xv, b, xvi, b. Turbans: Rushforth, Medieval Christian Imagery, pp. 68-9 and fig. 17; Hildburgh, op. cit., pl. xvi, c. These fifteenth-century examples of alabaster-carving and stained-glass have all been put forward, for various reasons, as showing the influence of the stage.

80. Guy of Warwick, ll. 7757-64; Sowdane of Babylone, ll. 346-59; Rouland and Vernagu, ll. 465-84.

81. The Mercers at Beverly produced "Blak Herod" (Chambers, Medieval Stage, ii, 341), probably the Trial before Herod.

oryande at the grounde  
Like a deuelle of Helle,<sup>82</sup>

--but the context of these boasts is clearly this popular conception of infidels. Mirk, who had been impressed by performances of mystery plays, spoke of a devil "lyke a man of Inde, blak alto-gedyr as pich."<sup>83</sup> Mahound himself was a character in a pageant at Hereford.<sup>84</sup> Another similarity between Herod and the Emperors in the romances is the conventional desperation:

Full sory he is, and wrothe therfore!  
All-moste he hath his witte forlore.<sup>85</sup>

The dramatic channel of this influence was probably the miracle or Saints play (see below, p. 96).

As an introductory device, the pagan boast has the loudness, conspicuousness, and directness of approach (being spoken straight to the audience) desirable at the opening of a performance or the introduction of a new character. The extravagance and fanaticism

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82. Sowdane of Babylone, ll. 434-5.

83. Mirk's Festial, p. 238. That Mirk was impressed by the plays has been suggested by Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 525, and Marshall, M.H., op. cit., p. 999.

84. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 369.

85. Guy of Warwick, ll. 2307-8. Compare the poem quoted on p. 42 above, and Chester Adoration of the Magi, ll. 374-7, York Massacre of the Innocents, ll. 136-8, Chester Christ's Passion, l. 193, etc.

of some of the boasts would have produced the opposite effect of God's restrained self-introductions, the former inviting a certain amount of active opposition or derision from the audience, the latter inviting reverence. The pagan boast is, however, from the point of view of the technique, essentially the same as God's opening speech. Both are straightforward claims and self-descriptions, God knowing no modesty and Herod manifesting no shame.

Besides their suitability as play and scene openings, the arrogant and ridiculous (see above, p. 40) or merely evil boasts have another dramatic virtue. In the traditional exposition of Herod's character, his fear of rivalry comes naturally when he learns of the new-born Christ. The vernacular playwrights evidently had the dramatic instinct to increase the effectiveness of their scenes by giving Herod a speech boasting of his unassailability before hearing the news from the kings. A fanatical boast by a pagan character in the medieval drama, therefore, is often a piece of strong dramatic irony; this certainly added to the reasons why such boasts would have evoked a positive response from the audiences. This element of dramatic irony is clearly present in all those English plays which present a boast by a character followed by some fresh information being given to him that gives him reason to fear. Further, the boaster's own desire to discover opponents by sending out a messenger (besides being an excellent way of forwarding the action of the play) is ironical; those examples which represent the boaster as jealous of his power before he knows of any special reason to be



so are particularly ironical.

There is, too, a suggestion of the de casibus tragedy and of the sudden horror of Death--the pervading tragedies of the Middle Ages<sup>86</sup>--about some of the boasts. This, of course, is especially true in the case of those plays which show Herod's death. It may well have been the desire to attain the effect of a de casibus tragedy or to demonstrate the unexpectedness of death that first led to the introduction of scenes of eating and drinking, of luxuriating in worldly pleasures. Certainly there is this kind of tragedy in, for example, the Chester Slaughter of the Innocents (see below, p. 175), the Ludus Coventriae Death of Herod, the Digby Killing of the Children, where soon after boasting of his alliance with Fortune, Herod dies (ll. 365-88), and the Digby Mary Magdalene, where Cyrus dies horribly after boasting of his prosperity (ll. 265-76).

### C. Calls for Order.

#### Braggart Characters.

The addition of a common medieval device to the pagan boast seems to have occurred early in the development of medieval dramaturgy and to have spread rapidly. The speaker prefaces his boast with some lines calling the audience, and perhaps his retinue as well, to order. It is usually clear that he is addressing the aud-

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86. Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy, pp. 41-2.

ience, although sometimes this is open to doubt.<sup>87</sup> He then backs up this call to order with a threat, based on his boast. The linking of some usual medieval ways of demanding or asking for attention (such as the "Listen, lordings" of verse meant for oral delivery) to the extravagant boasts opened the way to the development of a specially medieval dramatic technique and pretence. From the speaker's proclaiming his power and the violent punishment ready for his opponents to his threatening the audience if they do not attend to him properly was a fairly easy transition, but one full of possibilities for the medieval drama.

This braggart call for order occurs thrice in the Chester plays. The Slaying of the Innocents is opened by Herod saying, in a regal manner,

Princes, prelates of pryce,  
barons in blamner and bisse,  
beware of me all that be wise,  
that weldes all at my will. . . .

My subiectis all that here be set,  
Barons, burgeis, and baronet,  
bees bane to me, or you is let,  
and at my biddinge be!

He then swears to kill Christ, "that misbegotten marmoset", and announces the massacre of the innocents because of his usual jealousy and fear of rivalry--because "that shrew wold have my Sover-

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87. It may be mentioned here, to mitigate the doubt that may arise about this in the Chester plays, that patently obvious examples occur at the beginning of Dux Moraud, the Castle of Perseverance, the Towneley Resurrection and other plays.

aightie". He sends his messenger to fetch his knights (ll. 1-48). If his speech, as seems likely, was addressed to the audience as well as to those on stage, it was pretended that they were Herod's subjects; they were commanded to be obedient to him.

This opening device is also employed for Christ's Resurrection. Pilate first addresses the bishops in French, in one rime couée stanza. He then says,

You lordinges and ladys so lovely and leere,  
 You kempes, you known knights of kynde,  
 herkens all hitherward my hestes to here,  
 for I am most faryrest and freshest to fynde,  
  
 for I am Prince pereles most Royall man of Riches,  
 And moste highest I am of estate;  
 I may deale and I may dresse,  
 my name is Sir Pilate.

After these two quatrains, Pilate explains how he gave the Jews leave to crucify Jesus, and that he is afraid of the consequences. He then turns to address Caiaphas (ll. 9-32). The logical relationship between the call and the boast, which renders the device much more significant than the simple boast, is expressed in the conjunction "for": this is the dramatic pretence. These two quatrains alone contain the charge to listen and obey and the boast of power and beauty; in all probability they were added in the late fifteenth century by a reviser who added "popular elements" to some other

Chester plays and who wrote the Chester Fall of Lucifer.<sup>88</sup> He was following a dramatic fashion when he added this device.

The Chester Nativity consists of a Nativity play and a play about Octavian. Perhaps these were at one time separate plays, the surviving form representing the result of an amalgamation; this is suggested by the survival of the messenger's speech introducing the play of Octavian (Chester Nativity, ll. 177-84). Octavian's speech would then have been the opening of a play. As the play now stands, it first deals with the Annunciation, and Octavian's arrival is a boisterous contrast to the quietness of this preceding episode. His speech consists of a pagan boast:

I, preeved prynce, most of power,  
under heaven highest am I here,  
fayerest foode to feight in feare,  
no freak my face may flee,

and an address to the several degrees of the community, calling for quiet:

King, coysell, Clarke or Knighte,  
sandens, senators in sighte,  
princes, preistes here now dighte  
and present in this place!

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88. Salter, "The Banns of the Chester Plays," RES, xv, p. 453. The "popular elements" include such things as a scene between the devils and another between Noah's wife's "gossips" and also passages of great interest from the point of view of the dramaturgy: this call for order by Pilate, an appeal by Jesus to Mankind (p. 149 below), a shepherd's remarks about wives in the audience (p. 119, below).

peace, or here my truth I plighte  
 I am the manfullest man of might  
 takes maynde of my manace.

He also utters a warning and a boast in French. He continues to speak of the greatness of his empire and then, "to prove my might and my postie", he determines to list all his subjects and have them taxed one penny. He then begins to give instructions to his messenger (ll. 185-257). The opening device here is noticeably similar in form to that in the Slaying of the Innocents. Just as Herod follows his boast with instructions to his messenger, so does Octavian. A similar situation clearly received similar treatment.

The device could have been, but was not, introduced at the beginning of the Chester Christ's Passion and Adoration of the Magi. Apart from these plays, the way in which the cycle was divided up for processional performance excluded any great use of this popular opening device. However, it was certainly thought to be a suitable and interesting play-opening at Chester, since in the early sixteenth century (the period of the Chester plays' greatest popularity), it should be noticed, each day's performance opened with a boastful address (at that time, the Slaying of the Innocents began the second day and Christ's Resurrection the third<sup>89</sup>). Another indication of the tastes of the Chester men in this matter is the style of the device as it is found in the Chester plays; it is

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89. Salter, "The Banns of the Chester Plays," RES, xvi, pp. 4-5.

there a regal address to the various degrees of the community, and while the boast was not without its silliness, the openings were probably found to be more poetic and dignified than fatuous, since Royal Proclamations often enumerate the members of the community,<sup>90</sup> as Herod and Octavian do at Chester.

At York the use of the device differs, both in tone and frequency, from the use at Chester. It is very common in the work of the York Realist, but is found also in earlier York plays. Thus, Herod opens the Massacre of the Innocents by crying,

Powre bewsheris aboute,  
 Peyne of lyme and lande,  
 Stente of youre stevenes stoute,  
 And stille as stone ze stande.

He says they should fear and worship their "lovely lorde" who is the "lordlyest" king alive. He will kill those who do not worship Mahound, and he forbids anyone to seek help from any but Mahound and himself. Mahound is his "cheffe helpe". He asks an officer what

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90. For example: 1515, "Henry by the Grace of God Kyng of Englonde and of Fraunce, and Lorde of Ireland, to all Archebisshoppes, Bisshoppes, Dukes, Marquesses, Erles, Barons, Knyghts, Squiers, and all other oure true and lovyng subjectes of this our Reame of Englonde . . . gretying . . ." (Ellis, Original Letters, i, 268-9); 1486, "Rex universis & singulis Christianis Regibus, Principibus, Ducibus, Marchionibus, Comitibus, Nobilibus, Proceribus, Dominis, Capitaneis . . . Salutem" (Rymer, op. cit., xii, 283); 1359, etc., ibid., vi, 132, 504, etc.; 1421, etc., ibid., x, 67, 508, etc.

he can say about this, and the officers promise their active support. Herod expresses his annoyance at the three kings and at his potential rival, the "gedlyng" they were seeking (ll. 1-69). Pharoah begins the Departure of the Israelites with these words:

O pees, I bidde þat noman passe,  
 But kepe þe cours þat I comaunde,  
 And takes gud hoede to hym þat hasse  
 Youre liff all haly in his hande.  
 Kyng Pharo my fadir was . . .

Therfore als Kyng I commaunde pees  
 To all þe pepill of þis Empire,  
 That noman putte hym fourthe in prees,  
 But þat will do als we desire.  
 And of youre sawes I rede you sees.

One of his officers assures him of their support. He then asks for information about rebels against his power and is told of the Israelites and of their increasing (ll. 1-36).

The similarity between these two openings is clear: that is to say, both plays open with the bragging call for order, and the device is used in exactly the same way in each case. Both Herod and Pharoah boast of their power over other people's lives and both command order and quiet. Both consult their officers, are angry at people rebelling against them, and order the slaughter of male infants as the answer to this challenge to their power. Pharoah also seems to have caught some of Herod's distress, as distinct from his anger.

Pilate begins the Resurrection:

Lordingis, listenys nowe unto me,  
 I comaunde you in ilke degre  
 Als domesman chiffe in pis centre,  
 For counsaill kende,  
 Atte my bidding you awe to be  
 And baynly bende.

He then asks Caiaphas for his opinion (ll. 1-10). To the ordinary opening technique of oral verse is added the dramatic pretence that the speaker is calling for obedience in virtue of his office "als domesman chiffe"; in the same way, Pharoah commands order "als Kyng".

Now the York Realist exploits this device, and it seems that it was the combination of the call for order with the boast that he found which drew him out. His Trial Before Herod opens with Herod crying,

Pes, ye brothellis and browlys, in pis broydenesse in brased,  
 And frekis pat are frendely your freykenesse to frayne,  
 Your tounge fro tetryng of trifillis be trased,  
 Or pis brande pat is bright schall breste in youre brayne.  
 Plextis for no plasis, but platte you to pis playne. . . .  
 Or by pe bloode pat mahounde bledde, with pis blad schal ye blede . . .  
 And ye pat luffis youre liffis, listen to me,  
 As a lorde pat is lorned to lede you be lawes.

He then addresses his duces and they promise to obey him (ll. 1-31). His call for order is couched in severe and insulting terms and he also apparently flourishes a sword ("pis brande"). His boast is, among other things, that dragons hide in their dens when he is angry and that he has delicious swans to eat. He then becomes more reasonable (as the text stands) and demands to be heard "as a lorde



pat is lerned". The device has here assumed a grotesque quality, and the alliteration lends it ferocity ("And lusshe all youre lymmys with lasschis").

Five of these opening speeches by the Realist are spoken by Pilate. He begins the Conspiracy with a great boast, grandiloquent and fanatical:

Undir þe ryallest roye of rente and renowne,  
Now am I regent of rewle þis region in reste.

He claims that bishops and brave warriors all show obedience to him, that he is first among philosophers and "as bright as blossome on brere". The boast of his beauty (how irrelevant!) he probably learnt from Herod or the Devil. He announces his own name and threatens those who grieve him: he ends his introductory speech by saying,

For sone his life shall he lose,  
Or left be for lame,  
þar lowtes noȝt to me lowly,  
Nor liste noȝt to leere.

He then calls for cases to decide (ll. 1-28). In this example he does not directly call for silence, but in the Dream of Pilate's Wife he calls upon the "cursed creatures" to restrain themselves or else his sword shall smash their brains in and break their bones; traitors need not hope for mercy, for he is Pilate, son of Pila and Atus, great prince and ruler by the authority of Caesar. He then introduces his wife ("Lo! sirs, my worthely wiffe"). She speaks to him in his praise and then boasts of her station, her beauty and

her rich clothes (ll. 1-42). Similarly, at the beginning of the Second Accusation Before Pilate, Pilate bids "Pees, bewsheres" and commands order and silence, threatening with his sword. He then announces his identity and his supremacy and describes his own beauty in conventional romance similes (ll. 1-28). After this, he consults the high priests. Again, at the beginning of the Second Trial Before Pilate he charges the "Lordinges, pat are lymett to be lare of my liaunce" to obey him, and the "lusty ledes" to keep silence; traitors, quarrellers, chatterers, grinners and screamers are threatened. Annas and Caiaphas flatter him. (ll. 1-40). Fifthly, the Mortificacio Cristi opens with Pilate saying,

Sees, Senlours, and see what I seio,  
 Takis tente to my talkyng enteere . . .  
 Sir Pilate, a Prince with-owten pere,  
 My name is full nevenly to neven,  
 And domisman full derworth in dore,  
 Of gentillest Jewry full even  
 Am I.

He threatens death to transgressors and rebels, and says,

Who pat to gone hill will take heede,  
 May se per be soth in his sight,  
 Howe doulful to dede pei are dight  
 That liste nozt owre lawes for to lere.

Thus, he says, shall all criminals be treated, but he confesses himself unhappy about Jesus' crucifixion, which Caiaphas and Annas defend (ll. 1-48). Pilate's reference here to Calvary in support of his power to punish is an appropriate variant on his usual fero-

cious threats; in fact, although these openings are very similar to each other, the details are varied with some skill.

Caia-phas also opens a play by the York Realist in this manner. He says, at the beginning of Peter Denies Jesus,

Pees, bowshers, I bid no jangelyng ze make,  
And sese sone of youre sawes, & se what I saye,  
And trewe tente unto me bis tyme pat ze take,  
For I am a lorde lerned lelly in youre lay;  
By connyng of clergy and casting of witte  
Full wisely my wordis I welde at my will.  
So semely in seete me semys for to sitte.

It is noticeable here that the playwright does not use the system of accumulated threats indiscriminately; he adapts the device to suit the character. This is especially clear here since the play is so similar in construction to the two succeeding plays. In this instance there are no threats, no savage remarks, and Caia-phas' boast is primarily of his clerical wisdom and only secondarily of his power. His attitude is really one of sweet reason. After the boast, he sends his soldiers to capture Jesus (ll. 1-25). The association of Caia-phas with the device here is unique among the extant plays.

The fondness of the York Realist for this device is apparent when it is noticed that out of the eight plays reasonably ascribed

to him,<sup>91</sup> seven employ it; it is irrelevant at the beginning of the remaining play (no. xxviii), which is devoted to the Agony in the Garden and begins with Jesus addressing His disciples. Further, it was probably the same playwright who used the device to improve the beginning of another play in the same series, Christ Led Up to Calvary.<sup>92</sup> The play seems to have begun at one time with the soldiers calling for room, but the playwright, since there is no important tyrannical personage in the piece, has given one of the soldiers an opening speech vigorously calling for order!

Pees, barnes and bachillers pat beldis here aboute,  
 Stirre nozt ones in bis stede but stonde stone stille,  
 Or be þe lorde þat I leve on, I shall gar you lowte.

He gives Pilate as his authority, and then orders no one present, on pain of imprisonment, to support the "traitor" and commands everyone to help increase His sufferings (ll. 1-15). This is clearly an improvement on the simple call for room, demanding as it does a positive response to Christ's sufferings.

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91. I follow Craig, op. cit., p. 228, who on the basis of Reese, op. cit., p. 649, and the generally recognised fact that the plays associated with the Passion have been handled by one dramatist (Chambers, English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages, p. 30) distinguishes plays xxvi, xxviii, xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii and xxxvi as being the work of the York Realist, who was a writer of alliterative verse. There are other plays in the York cycle in alliterative verse, and other plays with realistic tendencies. The relationship between these three groups is undecided.

92. The first stanza is in alliterative verse (Reese, op. cit., p. 649).

The York Realist, in fact, was a whole-hearted employer of this device, using it for virtually all his own plays; and the York cycle as a whole barely misses a chance to use it. It must have been enormously popular. It could have been used, but was not, for the opening of the Crucifixio Cristi; if in fact the York Realist was the last to touch these plays, then it could be said that he knew also that there can be too much of a good thing and so left the rare and realistic opening to the Crucifixio Cristi untouched. On the other hand, while the writer of an earlier play, the York Departure of the Israelites, attached the device to the play because (since Pharoah was a tyrant) the opportunity presented itself, the York Realist not only took the opportunities offered for use of the device, but, in the case of Christ Led Up to Calvary, made an opportunity for it.

From the dramatic point of view his use of the braggart call for order is largely conventional. The dramatic features of the device as he uses it mostly occur also in, for example, the earlier instances in the York cycle; the call for silence, the threat, the self-identification, the boast and the flatterers are conventional. Apart from keeping in mind the characters of the persons who are delivering the opening address (compare Herod to Caiaphas in this capacity, for example), he does not, therefore, manifest any special dramatic skill in his use of the device, and his practice is

in strong contrast to the realism of his plays, once begun,<sup>93</sup> and to the dramatic dexterity of the play-openings written by the Wakefield Master (see below, pp. 82 ). However, the play-openings of the York Realist have a literary flavour, and his special contribution is chiefly connected with the language. It was mainly as a poet that he was addicted to the device; he accepted the obvious invitation to alliterate issued by the grandiloquence of the occasion. In this way he added savagery ("pis brande in youre braynes schalle brestis and brekis") and variety ("for pat gome pat gyrnes or gales/ I myself sall hym hurte full sore"). He sometimes prefers to abuse the audience, calling them "brothellis and browlys" rather than "beaux sires" or "lordings". Certain passages in the opening speeches suggest that he was conscious of the poetry of the romances as he wrote (pp. 220, 292-3, 308). On the whole, it is clear that the York Realist, either single-handed or as a represent-

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93. In a way that no other English medieval dramatist--as far as is known--cared about, the York Realist (see above, p. 70, n. 91) is concerned with the detailed realisation of situations; he is able to visualise each moment of an episode. This extraordinary quality, justly described as "an intimate realisation of the stories he tells" (Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 231), may be seen at work when Pilate's servant brings the basin of water and says, "Will ze wasshe whill be water is hot?"; when a soldier, taking Jesus, gets "a loke on hym"; when there is a pause after the crown of thorns has been thrust on to Christ's head, before the blood begins to appear; or when Annas, Pilate and Herod are laid to rest in ways similar but finely varied. This is the highest achievement of one tendency of the medieval drama, for on the stage "il fallut représenter les faits dans leur continuité" (Mâle, *L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age en France*, p. 29); it was this aspect of the dramaturgy which had the greatest effect on other popular medieval arts. The York Realist also had a gift for the right expression, and a "sense of the theatre", seen in, for example, the accumulating frustration of Herod in the Trial before Herod--a truly theatrical development of Luke xxiii, 9 or of the Northern Passion, ll. 993-1000.

ative of a Northern school of dramatists, gave the boastful call for order, richness, savagery and style.

The Realist or another alliterator (perhaps the author of the Creation, and the Fall of Lucifer) added a beginning to the Coming of the Three Kings to Herod (play xvi). This is a splendid boast with an emphasis on Herod's claim to control the planets and the elements as well as on his dominions and beauty. A rare feature connected with the boast is the polite apology for it, "þe soth yf I saie sall" (l. 18), which must have had a comic effect.<sup>94</sup> There is no call for order, but the line "Lordis and ladies loo/ luffely me lithes" is probably in the imperative mood, although the verb could be third person.<sup>95</sup> The writer in any case was thinking more of the boast. After the boast, Herod asks his soldiers' opinion of what he has said and they give their assent. He advises them to arrest rebels; there is here dramatic anticipation, or irony (ll. 1-39).

The braggart call for order is employed extensively in the Towneley plays, by the Wakefield Master and by earlier dramatists. Pharoah was borrowed from the York Departure of the Israelites, and the introductory device is the same, except for the addition of a quatrain adding the threat of hanging (due, apparently, to the playwright's mistaking the stanzaic scheme). Caesar Augustus also

94. Compare the Dream of Pilate's Wife, l. 45.

95. York Plays, p. lxxii.

begins with this device. The emperor says,

Be styll, beshers, I commawnd yow,  
That no man speke a word here now  
Bot I my self alon;  
And if ye do, I make a vow,  
Thys brand abowte youre nekys shall bow,  
ffor thy be styll as ston. . . .

ffor all is myn that up standys,  
Castels, towers, townys, and landys  
To me homage thay bryng. . . .

Cesar august I am cald,  
A fayrer cors for to behald,  
Is not of bloode & bone.

He goes on to say that he is troubled and needs loyal counsel. His Counsellors advise him to send his messenger to cry his "gyrth & peasse" (ll. 1-59); the consultation and the messenger often succeed the boast. Since this play, short and in a simple metre, is considered to belong to "the original didactic cycle",<sup>96</sup> it is worth noting that the opening speech contains all the elements, except the abusive style of address, that occur in the more ambitious examples, such as those by the York Realist. The command for silence, the threat (with a sword), the blasphemous boast of power, the show of personal beauty, the reference to Mahound, the exaggerated and alliterating language are all found here.

The Offering of the Magi begins with Herod crying,

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96. Pollard, in Towneley Plays, p. xxv.



Peasse, I byd, both far and nere,  
 I warne you leyf youre sawes sere;  
 who that makys noyse whyls I am here,  
 I say, shall dy.  
 Of all this world, sooth, far & nere,  
 The lord am I.

He boasts of his dominions and warns everyone to acknowledge "mahowne & me". Whoever opposes him shall be slain, and he is determined to

. . . dystroy those dogys in feyld and towne  
 That will not trow on sant Mahowne,  
 Cure god so swete;  
 Those fals fature I shall fell downe  
 Under my feete.

He is, moreover, he says, "clenly shapen, hyde and hare", as Caesar is. To prove his power, he determines to send his messenger to discover if any living in his realm will not pay allegiance to himself and his god; and so he turns to address his messenger (ll. 1-50). The threatening call for order and the boast of power and beauty associated with other tyrants, and the dramatic expectation which arises from Herod's jealous disposition are all present, as is the pattern of the messenger following the boast.

The Towneley Crucifixion begins with Pilate saying,

Peasse I byd everich Wight!  
 Stand as styll as stone in Wall,  
 Whyls ye ar present in my sight,  
 That none of you clatter ne call;  
 ffor if ye do, youre dede is dight.

He waves his sword and, by Mahound's blood, threatens those who will not keep quiet with hanging and original tortures. He says

he is a great lord, called Sir Pilate (ll. 1-28). This opening, which is usually thought to have been added to the original cycle, could have been copied from similar openings in the simpler parts of the Towneley cycle (e.g., Herod's opening to the Offering of the Magi) or from elsewhere. The play (or episode) may have originally begun with the entry of the Torturers, crying "Peace"; as it stands the opening obviously represents the fashionable style.

The Resurrection is largely the same in the York and Towneley cycles, but the openings, while employing the same device, are different. In the Towneley play, Pilate says:

Peasse, I warne you, woldys in wytt!  
 And standys on syde or els go sytt,  
 ffor here ar men that go not yit,  
     And lordys of me[kill] myght;  
 We thynk to abyde, and not to flyte,  
 I tell you every wyght.

He threatens hanging, and asks,

wote ye not that I am pilate,  
 That satt apon the Iustyce late,  
 At calvarie where I was att  
     This day at morne?

He is pleased with the "lothly losell"'s death and says that others who follow Christ's words will be hanged. He tells the prelates to keep a look-out for all such (ll. 1-36). Why, it may be asked, does Pilate advise the bishops to "aspy" if the reason is not that Herod also, in the dramatic anticipation of his jealousy, does so?

The Wakefield Master not only used the device, he also manipulated it. He fell in with the intentions of the mind behind the selection of plays intended to characterise Pilate as wholly bad, and furthered this idea.<sup>97</sup> He contributed a long opening to the Conspiracy. It is at first an ordinary braggart call for order-- though more voluble than is usual. Pilate begins:

Peas, carles, I commaunde/ unconand I call you;  
I say stynt and stande/ or foull myght befall you.  
ffro this burnyshyd brande/ now when I behald you,  
I red ye be shunand/ . . .

ye wote not wel, I weyn/ what wat is comen to the towne  
So comly cled and cleyne/ a rewler of great renowne.

He gives his name and says,

ffor I am he that may/ make or mar a man;  
My self if I it say/ as men of cowrte now can.

This last line shows the social satire of the Wakefield Master, of course; the words "My self if I it say" also show an appreciation of the relationship between the technique and the character (compare above, p. 73 and n. 94). In the same stanza Pilate speaks of his duplicity and of his reliance on false accusers and bribed jurors; the device is here being put to an unusual use, for explanations by a character of his own dishonesty do not normally occur at this point. Of course, other braggarts proclaim their wickedness, but

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97. Williams, The Characterization of Pilate in the Towneley Plays, p. 73.

that is different. This is an example of the technique of the confidential explanations to the audience of his purposes by a villain, which are spoken by Satan or Judas in other contexts (see below, pp. 166-71) being adapted to the device of the braggart call for order. The Wakefield Master is, then, perhaps more aware of the possibilities of this fashionable bragging technique than are other medieval dramatists. In the next stanzas Pilate gives an account of Jesus, wonders whether He may not be speaking the truth, and is afraid. This last sentiment seems to have been taken over either from Herod or from Satan, who was supposed to have tried to prevent Jesus' death because he feared His efficacy (ll. 1-53).

Within this play, the Conspiracy, there is a call for order by Pilate in simple quatrains, evidently an early passage. This may once have been the opening to a play, but it is also a perfectly good way of redirecting the attention of the audience (Jesus has just bid His disciples sleep). It begins:

Peas! I commaunde you, carles unkynde,  
to stand as styll as any stone!  
In donyon depe he shalbe pynde,  
that will not sesse his tong anone. . .

ffor I am governowre of the law;  
my name it is pilate!

As is sometimes the case with Pilate, there is no boast (ll. 560-75). The threat is spoken with a sword held aloft (l. 575).

The Wakefield Master also contributed an opening to the Talents. His work here is distinguished by a literary use of Latin

and his gifts of expression. Pilate's call for order, boasts, and threats are in a mixture of Latin and English. He commands the people to fall down on their knees to him and to bare their heads. He has a sword (ll. 1-46). The next four stanzas are not in the Wakefield Master's stanzaic form; they also constitute a threatening call for order, but the Master probably felt there was room here for his particular verbal virtuosity and so added a fresh, more terrible and imposing opening. Then Pilate commands his servant to lay him down softly and to see that he is not disturbed; this may be a gift from the York Realist (the episode occurring in his plays xxix, xxx, and xxxi). After this the three torturers come running in, crying "War! War!".

The language of this opening device is usually composed of alliterating phrases, a few of which may have been called into being by the device itself. In the case of the York Realist it seems that the device grew under his hands because of its attraction to itself of rich alliterative lines. It is rather different with the Wakefield Master. The linguistic demands of the device and his chosen stanzaic form must have been a real challenge to his resources. He turned this challenge into an opportunity. From this point of view, the device may be compared with the "flytyng": they both challenged the skill of the poets by requiring them to fit as many colloquial and conventional terms of abuse as possible into difficult stanzaic patterns.

The Wakefield Master's use of this device is not only marked by his volubility and skilful use of language, however, but also by an extremely dextrous use of conventional dramatic techniques. His full grasp of the nature of the pretence underlying this device is revealed in the opening to his Herod the Great. Here Herod's Messenger begins by blessing the audience in a pagan fashion and calling for their attention, on pain of injury. He then commands them to obey Herod, and describes Herod's misery and confusion "ffor a boy that is borne her by", for Christ; because of Herod's distress, he commands them to speak of no other king, and enlarges on his might as "Kyng of Kyngys, . . . lord of lordyngys" (one of the many blasphemous parodies of descriptions of God<sup>98</sup> and Jesus and of other biblical passages and Christian expressions--"St. Mahound", "by Mahound's blood"--that are used in the presentation of evil personages in the medieval drama). He orders them to kneel before him when they see him and then announces his arrival (ll. 1-70). The messenger's speech itself is more explicitly related to medieval customs of proclamation than is usual, for he speaks of having read Herod's "letters" (l. 73).<sup>99</sup>

Now the opening device is here arranged to coincide much more closely with the plot of the play than is usual. For after the Messenger has spoken his proclamation, he tells Herod that he has

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98. I Timothy vi, 15.

99. His Royal Letter Patent, as Cawley, in Wakefield Pageants, p. 114, points out.

not been obeyed. The audience is still murmuring, and he says,

Thay carp of a kyng,  
they seasse not sich chateryng.  
(11. 78-9)

To Herod, who fears for his kingdom, and fanatically desires to hear of no kings but himself; this is anathema, and so he himself undertakes to harangue the crowd. Herod's usual fear, therefore, is here supposed to be aggravated by the murmuring of the audience; in no other extant play is the dramatic pretence of this device so closely integrated in this way with the call for order spoken to the audience. In addition, Herod's speech itself is a prime example of the dramatic irony that often accompanied these openings, for (after threats to chop up interrupters "small as flesh to pott" with his sword) he says that if the three kings have avoided him, he will create turmoil (11. 82-135 or 144). The Master is intelligently improving the fashionable technique at more than one point.

The opening of the Towneley Scourging is similar in content to the Wakefield Master's opening of the Conspiracy. Brandishing his sword, Pilate calls for order and then says he is a dishonest judge, and that at the trial he will pretend to be Christ's friend, but really intends to crucify Him (11. 1-52). This statement by Pilate of his duplicity is found elsewhere in this connection only at the Wakefield Master's beginning of the Conspiracy. The opening of the Scourging may, of course, be by the Wakefield Master or he may have found it already in the play when he came to revise it--in which

case he shows no originality by displaying Pilate's duplicity through the boasting call for order at the beginning of the Conspiracy. This possibility must be allowed. It may also have been composed, after the Master had worked on the play, by a writer with dramatic insight who borrowed four lines from the Master (ll. 23-6 from Conspiracy, ll. 24-7), and a method of ending a braggart call (cf. l. 52 with Herod the Great, l. 64) also from the Master. If this was the case (and in support of the priority of the Master's Conspiracy it may be urged that he was not the kind of person to borrow four lines), Pilate's expression of his duplicity in his opening speech is the contribution of the Master and another instance of his ability to see through the conventional device to its logical basis and then extend its application. This dextrous craftsmanship, seen also in his handling of the opening of Herod the Great (and below, pp. 121, 132), together with his volubility, distinguishes him, from the point of view of the dramaturgy, from the other playwrights.

The medieval cycle of plays, of course, needed a large number of opening devices for its separate units, and the fact that the bragging call for order proliferated under these circumstances, and was the chosen instrument of two master dramatists, proves that it was found to be appropriate by the writers, and popular. The same device occurs at the beginning of a number of plays, both biblical and non-biblical, designed for stationary performances, and



in the longer specimens it is repeated as one method of introducing a new character and opening a new scene.

The Ludus Coventriae Second Passion begins with this device. After a prologue spoken by Contemplation, Herod steps forth on his stage and cries,

Now sees of your talkyng • And gevyth lordly Audyence  
Not o word I charge your pat ben here present  
noon so hardy to presume • in my hey presence  
to on-lose hese lyppys Ageyn myn intent  
I am herowde of jewys • kyng most reverent  
be lawys of Mahownde • my powere xal fortifye.

He goes on to state that he will kill and torture all Christians who defy his god, as he killed John the Baptist. It pains his heart to hear of traitors to Mahound (ll. 1-25); the pained Herod clearly comes from earlier Nativity plays. His soldiers, sent to search out "crysteyn doggys", agree with him and flatter him, thus following the established pattern. His language is extremely violent and his threats are wild. The speech can be said to imitate the fanatical savagery which seems (to judge from the extant documents) to have accumulated around this device in the North earlier in the century; or, if not to imitate earlier examples, to reflect the same impulse to adorn the device with the most horrible threats.

The Ludus Coventriae Assumption of the Virgin (once an independent play) begins with a rude call to order; a soldier (ms. "mi [. . .") cries,

Pes now youre blaberyng in the develis name  
 what lousy begchis mow ye not se  
 owre worthy prynsis lo are gaderid . . .

He will kill that "boy bragge outh" with his "craggyd knad"; the club here takes the place of the more usual sword (ll. 1-13). A bishop then asks the chieftains if there are any who pervert the people (ll. 14-26)--the question often asked by Herod and others as their plays begin.

The Digby Mary Magdalene begins in exactly the same way as a number of Nativity and Passion plays. Instead of Herod, Tiberius Caesar opens it, saying,

I command syllys in þe peyn of forfeitur,  
 to all myn audyeans present general.

He says he is chief ruler of heaven and hell, the incomparable Tiberius; all lands obey him, all lives are in his power, all grace comes from his goodness. An officer agrees. He then sends a messenger to discover any disobedient people, "preachers of Christ's incarnation". His retinue again flatter him, and he calls for wine (ll. 1-48). The first part of his speech (ll. 1-19) is addressed to the onlookers and perhaps also to his followers. The technique developed for opening certain types of biblical plays has here been applied, in an appropriate situation, to a play using legendary material. The threat, the blasphemous boast, the vain-glory, the fawning officer and the messenger show this clearly.

This play applies this device a number of times at the opening of a new "scene", that is to say, when the attention of the audience requires to be re-focussed onto another "scaffold" or "stage" at the first appearance of a new character. Cyrus, on his first appearance, commands all degrees of nobility and beautiful women to listen and obey. He introduces himself, glittering in gold--"Cyrus is my name"--and emphasises his power and possessions and then introduces his two amiable daughters and his handsome son (ll. 49-78). His speech is perhaps addressed to both the audience and the occupants of his stage, his followers. Later in the play, Cyrus (like Herod) suffers a horrible death (ll. 265-76) and this is the point of his self-satisfied boast: there is de casibus tragedy here. The first appearance of Herod (unlike Cyrus') is extremely undignified. It is one of the wildest braggart calls for order:

In þe wyld wanyng word, þes all at onys!  
 no noyse, I warne yow, for greveyng of me!  
 yff yow do, I xal hourle of yower hedes, be mahoundes bones,  
 as I am trew kyng to mahond so fre,  
 help, help, þat I had a sword!  
 fall don, ye faytours, flatt to þe ground!  
 Heve of your hodes and hattes, I cummaund you alle!  
 stond bare hed, ye beggars! wo made you so bold?

Showing his rubies and pearls, he asks what king is equal to him. He gives a short alliterating list of his dominions and then asks his "philosophers" if he is not the greatest of governors (ll. 140-66). They reply that Scripture tells of a Child Whom all the world will worship. At this, Herod goes frantic with dismay. His brag-

gart call is an example of how this episode in the Nativity plays was effectively dramatised by ironically developing Herod's vain-glory first in order to turn the arrival of the three kings and their news into a tragic blow to his self-esteem. The outrageous demands made to the audience have their counterparts in the works of the Wakefield Master and the York Realist. Is the command to fall "flatt to þe ground" meant to reveal Herod's association with the Muslim religion?

The next scene opens with the first appearance of Pilate, who says, "Now ryally I reyne In robys of rych[e]sse." He warns "yow all" to obey the law, for he will not spare judgement--"for I am pylat pr[o]myssary and pres[e]dent". He asks his "serjeauntes" (i.e., sergeants-at-law) for their opinion; they support him, and he expresses his relief at their reply (ll. 229-48). Pilate has not here caught any of the wildness exemplified by Herod in the play, but his seeking support and advice from his counsellors is an example of the extension of a practice originally associated with one character to another--Pilate's Lawyers performing the function of Herod's "duces", for example.

Some of Herod's wildness has, however, been caught by the King of Marseilles, who "be-gynnyt hys boste" (cf. Croxton Sacrament, at l. 68, where Jonathas "shall make hys bost") later in the play. He cries, in contemptuous language,

A-wantt, a-want þe, on-worthy wrecchesse!  
 Why lowt ȝe nat low to my lawdabyll presens,  
 ye brawlyng breeles, and blabyr-lyppyd byecchys . . .  
 I am kyng of marcylle, talys to be told;  
 Thus I wold it wer knowyn ferre & ner.

He then says he has a beautiful wife (like the York Pilate) (ll. 925-49).

In this play, in fact, all the tyrannical characters speak a braggart call for order on their first appearance, at the openings of new scenes. The characters known in the mystery plays act, in this respect, as they do there; and characters not usual in the mystery plays (e.g., Cyrus and Marseilles) also act in this manner.

The Digby Mary Magdalene is usually thought of as a miracle play (a miracle play, according to the conventional and convenient use, is a play dealing with the life of a saint); one of the earlier English miracle plays, the Croxton Sacrament, begins with a pagan boast, and the other, Dux Moraud,<sup>100</sup> with a braggart call for order: the Duke addresses "Emperoures and kynges be kende" and the degrees of the community, and commands them to sit "alle semly in plas", says he is happy, famous and rich, and

Semly þer I syt up on sille,  
 My wyf and my mene by my syde.  
 I ȝow tende me tylle,  
 Or ellys I xal bate ȝowre pride  
 Wyt dynt,

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100. It is not certainly a miracle play; see Craig, op. cit., p. 329.

And þer for I warne ȝow infere  
 þat ȝe mak neyþer crying ne bere.  
 If ȝe do, with outyn duere,  
 Strokes at ȝow xal I mynt.

Duk Morawd I hot be name,  
 Korteysse lord may be none.  
 (11. 1-39)

The opening of this fourteenth-century text is, of course, identical in technique in many respects to the bragging calls for order in the mystery plays, sharing some of the dignity of the instances at Chester and some of the tyranny of the early Towneley examples, but it would be unwise to assume that the presence of the device in the miracle plays is due completely to the influence of the mystery plays. The device suits any play with a tyrannical character among its dramatis personae, and miracle plays are such and are recorded early in England--and France. However, it is not so unwise to suggest that this device was taken over by writers of morality plays. Apart from the general consideration that a technique for dramatising abstract qualities would naturally depend to a large extent on an established technique for dramatising persons, the morality plays developed only after the mystery and miracle plays were established.

The openings of the Pride of Life and the Castle of Perseverance reveal this influence; in fact, from the point of view of the dramaturgy the moralities are in no sense independent of the mysteries. The Castle of Perseverance opens with a speech by Mundus, beginning,

Worthy wytis, in al þis werd wyde,  
 Be wylde wode wonys, & every weye-went,  
 Precyous in prise, prekyd in pride,  
 þorwe þis propyr pleyn place, in þes be 3e bent!  
 Buske 3ou, bolde bacheloris, under my baner to a-byde,  
 Where bryth basnetis be bateryd, & backys ar schent,  
 3e, syrys semly, all same syttyth on syde,  
 For, both be see & be londe, my sondis I have sent.

His name, he says, is known everywhere, and he gives an alliterating list of countries which are devoted to worldly concerns. He says he is prospering; better be hanged than oppose him by word or deed; who speaks against him shall be cast into prison (ll. 157-95). There is nothing here that does not occur in the biblical plays: Mundus' exultation based on his enjoyment of power, his having dispatched messengers, and also perhaps his threat of hanging are significant in this respect. After Mundus' opening speech, Belial and then Flesh introduce themselves on their scaffolds, with pagan boasts. The call for attention occurs at the beginning only of this play.

The Pride of Life also uses the device for its opening. The King of Life calls for order:

Þes, now, 3e princes of powere so prowde,  
 3e kinges, 3e kempes, 3e knightes i-korne,  
 3e barons bolde, þat beit me o bowte;  
 Do schal 3u my sawe, swaynis i[s]worne.

Sqwieris stoute, stondit now stille.

He threatens his hearers, proclaims himself ruler of the world, and says that none can withstand him (ll. 113-26). He also carries a bright sword (l. 277). The alliterating address to the degrees

of the community recalls Dux Moraud and the Chester plays (see above, pp. 64, 88). The beginning of the Fourteenth Century Fragment is somewhat similar; the speaker here, typically, also calls a council and addresses his messenger.

The grandiloquent and menacing opening is found for the last time in The World and the Child. Mundus begins the play:

Syre sease of your sawes what so befall  
And loke ye bow bonerly to my bidding  
For I am ruler of realmes, I warn you all . . .  
Prynce of powere and of plente  
He that cometh not when I do hym call  
I shall hym smyte with poverte.

He is sitting "somely in se" (Aiv). Later Mundus repeats his boast and says he is a prosperous prince, worshipped by other kings (Av). As in other bragging calls for order the command is made dependent on the boast by the use of the conjunction "for". The boast is similar to earlier boasts, and includes the blasphemous claim to have created the sea and the land and to control the stars. Of course, there are some new expressions (his eyes "shyne as lanterne bryght"), for there is room for a large number of variations on the standard themes. One fascinating thing which appears in the call for order for the first time is the allegorisation of the threat; for Mundus threatens to strike not with a sword, but with "poverty". Immediately after Mundus' second boast, Manhood, a newly-created knight, cries,



Peas now peas ye felowes all aboute  
 Peas now and herken to my sawes  
 For I am lorde bothe stalworthy and stowte,

and says he is bold, beautiful and cruel ("I have done harme on hedes") and magnificently appparelled in purple and gold. He gives a long alliterating list of his dominions, and the kings who worship him are the kings of Pride, Lechery, Envy and other allegorical kingdoms; this moralisation of the boast is also found in the Digby Mary Magdalene. Manhood is also sitting in a "sete" (Av-vi). This is the latest example of the boastful call for order and the only extant instance of its occurrence, in its full medieval form, in a moral interlude.

An imitation of this device appears at the beginning of the Ludus Coventriae Betrothal of Mary (that is to say, at the opening of a new scene in the Contemplation group of episodes). It is here adapted for a virtuous character. Abysakar says:

Listenyth lordyngys bothe hye & lowe  
 And tendyrly takyth heyd on to my sawe  
 both buxom & benyngne your busshopp to knowe  
 Ffor I am that lord pat made his lawe.

You must, he says, bring your daughters to be married (ll. 1-13).

The incident in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, viii,<sup>101</sup> has here

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101. "Now when all the people had met, Abiathar, the high priest, arose, and ascended to the upper step, so that he could be heard and seen by all the people; and when great silence was made, he said, Hear me, O Children of Israel and receive my words in your ears."

been dramatised in the fashionable way.

The component parts of this device are clearly the pagan boast with all its features (see above, pp. 53-9), together with various methods of calling for attention. The fact that the call for order was made dependent on the boast meant that the two parts developed hand in hand: the more extreme the boast, the louder the call for order. The calls for order were originally of two types. The first depended on the usual opening of verse (both secular and religious) meant for oral delivery. This was generally "Listen, lordings" or a similar expression,<sup>102</sup> and it also sometimes included a request that the hearers should keep still;<sup>103</sup> these two elements often formed part of the dramatic device. The address to exalted social ranks is sometimes found at the beginning of minstrel verse, as in Robert of Sicily:

Princes proude þat beþ in pres,  
I wol ou telle þing not lees.  
(ll. 1-2)

A milder form of this is probably more usual, such as the opening of Sire Degarre: "Lysteneþ, lordinges, gent and fre!" The origin, and the plausibility, of this part of the device, therefore, are not in doubt.

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102. Crosby, op. cit., pp. 100-2.

103. E.g., at the beginning of a sermon quoted in Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 227; of another in Brown, "An Early Mention of a St. Nicholas Play in England," SP, xxviii, p. 595; of the Middle-English Harrowing of Hell, p. 2; of The Song of Lewes, l. 1.

The other kind of call for order was that associated with the public reading of proclamations and other public announcements, by heralds and municipal authorities, and in law courts. Heralds would call for quiet before making their announcements on ceremonial occasions,<sup>104</sup> and other officers would have to call for attention before speaking. Officers of the King would cry "Peace!" as the braggarts in the plays very often do. Maundeville says,

Thei seyn to certeyn Officeres, . . . Mak-  
eth Pees. And then seyn the Officeres, Now  
Pees! lysteneth!<sup>105</sup>

In some situations, such as in a law court, a threat would accompany this call;<sup>106</sup> proclamations spoken to enemy peoples would also contain threats. In its formative stages, the dramatic device must have borne some relation to these customs; the address to all the degrees of the community (see above, p. 64, n. 90), for example, is a sign of this. However, the device implies dramatic adaptation

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104. E.g., Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, A, l. 2533; Piers Plowman, B, Passus xviii, l. 15.

105. For this and other examples, see NED sub. "Peace" sb. 14(a) and "Peace" v. 1 and 2.

106. At the beginning of a trial in the Court of Minos,

Then was there made a proclamacion,  
In Plutoys name commaundyd silence  
Uppon the peyne of strayte correccion,  
That Diana and Neptunus myght have audience.

(Lydgate, Assembly of the Gods, ll. 43-6). The "criers" at medieval courts perhaps did much the same.

and not simple copying, for in the plays the kings and tyrants make their own announcements to the crowd, and Pilate himself calls for order in his own court. Two exceptions are the opening of the Wakefield Master's Herod the Great (see above, pp. 80-1) and a scene in the Coventry Shearmen and Tailors' Pageant. These represent a re-dramatisation of the incident in terms of contemporary society, and in the case of the Wakefield Master, the scene is in line with his general awareness of society. At Coventry the speaker is called a herald (l. 521), and speaks in French (ll. 475-85); in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries heralds were "much employed on embassies and messages between sovereigns both in war and in peace".<sup>107</sup>

Whatever its pre-history, the device clearly had sufficient possibilities in it, once it had been taken into the dramaturgy, to develop on its own, especially since it was usually spoken in conjunction with a boast. This meant, for example, that swords, dashed to the ground in anger in the liturgical plays, held up against imaginary traitors in the vernacular boasts, can now be brandished at the audience and waved over their heads. Again, while the brag-gart calls for order spoken at Chester and in the Pride of Life are addressed to the degrees of the community, more ambitious writers changed this, and the "bewshoris" and "lordings" of other brag-gart calls, into insulting terms: "ye brothellis & browlys", "cursed creatures". This development may have been popularised by the York

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<sup>107</sup>, Wagner, "Heraldry", in Medieval England, ed. Poole, p. 379.

Realist or a writer of the same school; the more dignified and regal style is rare in later plays, where the braggarts shout at the "blabber-lipped bitches" and "lousy beggars". With contempt for the audience went less dignified kinds of threats; the unspecified "menace" at Chester is gruesomely precise in other plays. To the demands for silence were added other extravagant demands--for obedience and worship. The Wakefield Master's Pilate orders the audience to take their hats off to him, and a similar demand is made in the Digby Mary Magdalene (l. 146) by Herod (cf. Ludus Coventriae Trial of Joseph and Mary (l. 120), where a summoner orders the same). The command to fall down and worship the speaker reflects the braggarts' affinity with the presumptuous Lucifer and also perhaps with the wrong-headedness of the Sultans. The Wildmen with their clubs, and Whifflers who, in the sixteenth century, cleared a way for the Lord Mayor's Show and other processions by tossing swords and throwing fireworks,<sup>108</sup> may have caught some enthusiasm from the zealous and energetic bragging calls for order.

Of the braggart call for order there is no sign in the liturgical drama. It usually precedes a pagan boast in the vernacular plays and this is often followed by a scene with a messenger or a scene in which the speaker's officers are consulted. The messenger and the officers are found in the liturgical drama, where they are associated with Herod, but the preceding calls for order and boasts

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108. Withington, English Pageantry, i, 71, 72, ii, 13-14.

are clearly the contribution of the vernacular playwrights. One of the influences affecting the widespread addition of the braggart call for order to the traditional liturgical dramaturgy was no doubt the removal of the plays from church services and their performance in the open air where striking openings were desirable. The device may have first occurred, therefore, at any time after this change of setting; from perhaps the thirteenth century, certainly the fourteenth century, onwards (see below, p. 106, n. 119) it may have been used to open individual vernacular plays, especially Nativity plays, and also miracle plays. Bearing in mind the kind of subject treated in the miracle play,<sup>109</sup> it is possible that sultans or pagan emperors braggingly called for order in these plays and that the oriental features entered the device, as it is found in the mysteries and moralities, through this channel; this influence may have been continuously at work throughout the lifetime of the plays. The device may have occurred in any combinations of the religious plays performed stationarily, either as a beginning, or as a method of introducing new scenes (as it is found employed at a later time in the Digby Mary Magdalene, for example). The development of the processional performance of the cycles of the biblical plays in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, seems to have encouraged its spread. Biblical characters other than Herod were concerned in it, and while this involvement may have taken place at an early

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109. Manly, "The Miracle Play in Mediaeval England," in Essays by Divers Hands, pp. 152-3.

stage, a plausible conjecture is that the need or desire for a large number of distinctive openings for the separate units of the processional performances accounts for this; it certainly facilitated the development. These other characters, notably Pilate, seem to have caught some of their extravagant ferocity from Herod, just as in their boasts they speak of their beauty under the influence of Herod or the Devil, and consult their officers or send out messengers under the influence of Herod. The two most gifted dramatists are enthusiastic about the braggart call for order, the York Realist being especially literary in his use of it, and the Wakefield Master especially understanding.

The developed device is used in the long morality play, the Castle of Perseverance, and the simple, dignified form occurs at the beginning of the Pride of Life. There is no reason to suppose that this does not represent the influence of the mystery and miracle plays. The device is also found, in its most mature form, in one moral interlude early in the sixteenth century. In its usual medieval form, it disappeared with the medieval plays from the provincial stage in the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>110</sup> Either through the moralities, or by direct influence of the mysteries, it found a footing among the players of moral interludes, and it can occasionally be found, mutilated or nicely adapted, in the

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110. As a matter of interest, it has found its way, in a brief form, with other English words and phrases, into the otherwise Celtic text of St. Meriasek (ll. 3369-70).

Tudor interludes (see below, pp. 237-53).

When an evil character, such as Herod, opens a play or scene by calling the audience to order, he does so in such a way as to make it appear that he assumes they are, or ought to be, his subjects; Pilate, the judge, assumes that the people in the audience are subject to his jurisdiction. The braggarts call for order in the way that braggarts might be expected to speak; they challenge the audience to keep quiet. The speaker both characterises himself and at the same time (and was not this a true dramatic instinct?) performs the function of a prologue. He does not explicitly recognise the audience, as a prologue-speaker does,--he explicitly recognises the subjects of his empire, potential victims of his wrath.

Now, the force and popularity of the pagan boast in a performance was evidently due to two chief factors. Firstly, the speaker's claim, sometimes jealous, to be supreme is, in view of what is known to be in store for him, splendidly ironical; this boast, trumpeted to the audience, invited a certain knowing attitude of condemnation on their part. Secondly, the speaker's blasphemous claim to have, for example, created the world, and his claim to be most beautiful, are in such stark contrast to known facts and sometimes immediate appearances that they could only be received with incredulous and powerful scorn (see above, pp. 40, 58). The bragging call



for order, which is much more common than the boast by itself, usually incorporates these dramatic effects, and the form that it takes means that the incredulity and scorn are even further provoked; an even more direct emotional contact with the audience is established.

As the speaker addresses the audience, shouting aggressively or grandly expostulating according to the type of play, they, finding themselves so patronised or assaulted, are drawn immediately into the dramatic pretence by being forced to react. The alien and often grotesque speaker is not only vain, ready for disaster and ludicrous, but directly arrogant and impudent as well. It is difficult to imagine the audience not reacting strongly to all this, and the hissing and noisy response of audiences at Elizabethan plays<sup>111</sup> and Victorian melodramas<sup>112</sup>—in the latter case sometimes a calculated and expected hiss—suggests that the medieval audience responded vocally to the ridiculous insolence of, say, Herod in the Digby Mary Magdalene. There may have been jeers and catcalls; the participation of the audience at this point in the medieval drama would have consisted of a joyful and spirited condemnation, done in terms of the play itself. The prevalence of exaggerated forms of this device was, it may be conjectured, largely

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111. The Winter's Tale, I, ii, l. 189; Dekker, If It Be Not Good The Devil is in it, Prologue, l. 3; Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, ii, 549.

112. Disher, op. cit., pp. 92, 100; "Strong and Effective", The Times, 15 February 1960.

due to the fact that the audience would have expected to take part in this game. If, at these moments in the medieval drama, some feeling of real fear was added to their dramatic experience, then that experience would have been even richer.

The Boisterous, Cheeky, Scornful and Official Calls for Order.

The Dwarf's speech that introduces a May Game (The Droichis Part) is in many ways similar to the bragging call for order and may show the influence of the religious plays on folk-games. The Dwarf begins like this:

Hiry, hary, hubbilschow! 113  
 Se ze not quha is cum now,  
 Bot git wait I nevir how,  
     With the quhirle wind?  
 A sargeand out of Sowdoun land,  
 A gyane strang for to stand,  
 That with the strenth of my hand  
     Beiris may bind.

This, of course, is one long comic mis-statement; the Dwarf's boisterous approach, and the contrast between what he says he is and what he clearly is may be the result of the absurdly boastful play-openings; his assumed connection with the Orient may also be significant.

In the Croxton Sacrament, the Doctor is introduced by his Boy, who tells the audience "in counsel" that he dislikes his master. He "makes a cry" for him, giving an unfavourable description (11.

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113. These words "express hurry and confusion", according to the editor.

445-92). This disobedience and cheekiness occur also in the *Ludus Coventriae Noah*, where Lamech's boy mocks the pretensions of his master (ll. 154-7), and in the Towneley *Killing of Abel*, where Cain's Boy damagingly misrepeats the proclamation given to him by his master (ll. 417-38). There is no clear connection between these cheeky boys and Jack Finney in the Folk Play;<sup>114</sup> but if there were cheeky boys in the lost folk-plays of medieval England, then the dramatist of the Towneley *Killing of Abel* has very cleverly assimilated this figure to the tradition of the braggart call for order when at the beginning of this play (usually thought to be partly by the Wakefield Master<sup>115</sup>), Cain's boy says:

All hayll, all hayll, both blithe and glad,  
ffor here come I, a mery lad;  
be peasse youre dyn, my master bad,  
Or els the dwill you spede,  
Wote ye not I com before?

The scornful question is followed by a coarse and devilish threat, the statement that he is a "grete wat", and a command to welcome his master, who is a good yeoman; some of the audience, he says, are Cain's men (ll. 1-24). This opening speech seems to be an imitation of the bragging call for order, with the threat coarsened. The accusation that some of the onlookers are followers of Cain is, of course, a gross insult. The command to welcome him when he

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114. Chambers, *The English Folk Play*, p. 162.

115. Cawley, in *Wakefield Pageants*, pp. xx-xxi.

approaches suggests the Wakefield Master's Nuntius. The boy's surly attitude to the audience characterises his master and himself.

A boisterous cry, such as "Room!" or "Peace!", uttered by some minor character, occurs a few times in the medieval plays. In the imperative mood, "Room!" was often cried before some kind of procession or performance; the kind of person who would wish to make room in the sense of clearing a path would be some official, like a herald or attendant, and this is the use of the word which is found in the speeches of the Chester Nuntius and at the beginning of some of the English folk-plays.<sup>116</sup> Alternatively, the cry might be uttered by a fighter or boisterous person,<sup>117</sup> and it is the boisterous persons in the plays who utter such cries. The soldiers in the York Christ Led Up to Calvary, who cry,

. . . make rome and rowle you nowe right,  
That we may with pis weried wight  
Wightely wende on oure way,  
(ll. 16-18)

and the knaves in Mankind who enter crying for Room (ll. 324, 605, 689, 694) are examples. Rather similar dramatic moments occur in the Towneley Crucifixion (l. 29), the Towneley Scourging (ll. 62-3), the York Dream of Pilate's Wife (l. 229) and at the beginning of the York Temptation, where the Devil enters crying,

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116. Chambers, The English Folk Play, pp. 16-22. See also below, p. 240 n. 14.

117. See NED sub "Room" sb<sup>1</sup> 3(a) and 3(b).

Make rome be-lyve, and late me gang,  
 Who makis here all bis prang?  
 (11. 1-2)

In the Towneley Talents the three torturers rush in one by one crying "War! War!", and Spill-pain's speech is a kind of underling's version of the great braggart call for order, including a threat and a comic treatment of the usual expression of despair:

war, war! and make rowme,  
 ffor I will with my felose rowne,  
 And I shall knap hym on the crowne  
     That standys in my gate;  
 I will lepe and I will skyp  
 As I were now out of my wytt.  
                                     (11. 113-44)

Since a play performed on a movable wagon used the wagon itself and sometimes the ground in front of it as the platea,<sup>118</sup> there is no difficulty in imagining that these bolsterous characters pushed their way through a part of the audience, although there is no proof that they did. Like the messengers and officials who open plays, these rough and familiar persons establish a direct relationship between themselves and the audience, and by their peremptory behaviour characterise themselves.

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118. The preservation of the common idea that the Magi arrived on horseback (Réau, Iconographie de L'Art Chrétien, II, ii, 244) in the Chester, Coventry, and Towneley plays together with the mounted expositor in the Chester cycle, the action in "the strete" at Coventry (Shearmen and Tailors' Pageant, at 11. 539, 783), the apparent entry of Cain driving a plough in the Towneley play, Christ's entry into Jerusalem, and other episodes support this view, which has been expressed by Chambers, Medieval Stage, ii, 138, Nicoll, The Development of the Theatre, pp. 70-1, and others. For a reservation, see Wickham, op. cit., i, 169.

During some of the bragging calls for order the speaker asks his hearers a scornful, perhaps fractious, question. Having explained his lineage, Pilate says, "Nowe renkis, rede yhe it right?" (York Dream of Pilate's Wife, l. 16); again, he menacingly asks, "Say, wote ye not that I am pylate, perles to behold?" (Towneley Scourging, l. 5, and Resurrection, l. 13). Another example is in the Digby Mary Magdalene (l. 155). The scorn in the braggart's voice meant that this kind of self-introduction consorted well with his character. It is found a number of times on the lips of less forbidding characters in a lighter mood and it is especially suitable for those rude and insinuating characters, Backbiter, Solace and others. After the Summoner's prologue to the Ludus Coventriae Trial of Joseph and Mary, "intrabit pagetum" and the first Slanderer says,

AA • serys god save 3ow all  
 here is a fayr pepyl in good ffay  
 Good serys telle me what men me calle  
 I trowe 3e kan not be bis day.  
 (ll. 1-18)

Such a silly challenge sets the mood for the foolish gossip. Again, the folly and immorality of Curiosity is exactly caught in his opening speech in the Digby Mary Magdalene:

Hof, hof, hof, a frysche new galaunt,  
 ware of thurst, ley pat a-doune!  
 what! wene 3e, syrrys, pat I were a marchant.  
 (ll. 491-506)

The Norfolk Fragment preserves a similar kind of introduction, by  
Delight:

Lo here is a ladde lyght,  
Al fresch I zou plyght,  
galant & Ioly.  
Wyl ze knowe what I hyght?  
My name seres is delyght  
I hope not ful holy.  
(ll. 1-6)

The Friar's self-introduction in Robin Hood and the Friar is on the  
same lines:

Deus hic, Deus hic, god be here  
Is not this a holy worde for a frere  
God save all this company  
But am not I a iolly fryer.  
(ll. 24-7)

The Friar, of course, is a merry lecher in this play. A rather more  
vicious version of this approach of the character to the audience  
occurs in the Chester Slaying of the Innocents, where Herod's two  
knights adopt an insolent attitude (ll. 201-2, 225-6).

This is, then, another method of expressing a speaker's character through his relationship with the audience; the jovial or fractious rhetorical question sets up the all-important rapport between the character and the audience. It is found in the several kinds of popular play extant. Its presence in the mystery plays does not especially suggest the influence of the Robin Hood plays or the popular moralities, for it could easily occur to any dramatist working in the medieval type of drama. It is often found in Tudor interludes.

If the Thirteenth Century Fragment is not the introduction to a play,<sup>119</sup> it nevertheless shows the kind of fictional public announcement that could easily be assimilated into the medieval dramaturgy. The speaker, evidently an official, commands the listeners to sit still and pay attention, and swears by Mahound that the emperor has ordered punishment for those who do not. If this was spoken to an audience as a play-opening, it gives an early date for the method of calling the audience to order by addressing it as though it belonged to the play-world; this was the method used by the braggarts. Other messengers who employ it are Herod's Nuntius and Herald (see above, p. 94) and the Summoner who begins the Ludus Coventriae Trial of Joseph and Mary by crying,

A-voyd Serys • And lete my lorde be buschop come  
 And syt in be courte • be lawes ffor to doo  
 And I xal gon in bis place • them for to somowne  
 tho pat ben in my book • be court ze must com too  
 I Warne zow here all abowte.

(ll. 1-32).

In the process of preparing for the business of the play to begin, the audience is taken up into the dramatic pretence. When Sir David Lindsay wrote the beginnings of the two parts of the Thrie Estaitis he followed this old method; his dramaturgy, like the open-air staging of his play,<sup>120</sup> was in some ways old-fashioned.

119. "The piece could be a pronouncement at a feast or game, a fragment from a narrative poem, or almost anything." (Salter, Mediaeval Drama in Chester, p. 121).

120. Lindsay, Ane Satyre, iv, 153-5.



Diligence opens the performance with a stately and alliterating benediction and continues,

. . . heir be oppin proclamatioun,  
I wairne in name of his magnificence,  
The thrie estaitis of this natioun  
That they compeir with detfull diligence,  
And till his grace mak their obedience . . .

Als I beseik zow famous auditouris  
Conveinit in this congregatioun  
To be patient the space of certaine houris  
Till ze have hard our short narratioun.

He is both an officer, delivering an open proclamation to the citizens,<sup>121</sup> and a prologue-speaker (ll. 1-77). The archaic dramaturgy is again seen in the speech of "Correction's Varlet":

Sirs stand abak and hauld zow coy.  
I am the King Correctionis boy,  
Cum heir to dres his place!  
So that ze mak obedience  
Untill his nobill excellence,  
Fra tyme ze se his face.

This speech (ll. 1474-507) clearly belongs to exactly the same school of dramaturgy as, for example, the introductory speech by Cain's Boy.

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121. A common formality neatly adapted for a play-opening. See Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, i, 27 ("statute and ordanit that lettres be direct to all Sheriffis, Stewartis, Ballies and their Deputis . . . to pas to the mercat croces of the heid burrowis of the schiris, and there, be oppin proclamatioun, command and charge all and sindry our Soverane Ladyis liegis of quhat degre that evir tha be . . .", 1546) and similarly, 39, 40, 74, 103, etc. The Wakefield Master made exactly the same adaptation more than a hundred years earlier (see above, p. 80 n. 99).

## D. Sermons.

The Ludus Coventriae. Baptism opens with John the Baptist preaching a sermon. He begins,

Ecce vox clamantes in deserto  
 I am þe voys of wyldirnese  
 þat her spekyth and prechyth yow to  
 loke ȝe for-sake all wrecchidnesse.

He is addressing the audience. He speaks as it is recorded that he spoke in the narrative of the Bible, which has been translated into direct speech. When Jesus approaches and John, pointing with his finger, says,

Ecce Agnus dei qui tollit peccata mundi  
 Be-holde þe lombe of god is this  
 þat comyth now here be-forne,  
 (John i, 29)

it is as though the audience were seeing Christ for the first time (ll. 1-52). John is described as a preacher in the Bible, and so it is dramatically appropriate that his speech should be adorned with gobbets from the Vulgate, and introduced by a Latin text, for that is one characteristic of medieval sermons. John also preaches a sermon as a prologue to the Ludus Coventriae. First Passion. He there begins:

I, johan baptyst to ȝow þus propheseye  
 þat on xal come aftyr me • and not tary longe  
 In many folde more • strengere þan I  
 Of whose shon • I am not worthy to lose þe thonge.



reports what he has said to God's people. The opening of the *Ludus Coventriae Baptism* has a much greater sense of immediacy than this.

A third variation occurs at the beginning of the Towneley *John the Baptist*. Here John first blesses the audience and then describes himself and his mission (ll. 1-50). He addresses the audience as though they were his contemporaries (e.g., ll. 14, 42, 47) but he does not begin by preaching to them. The method here used has much in common with the other virtuous self-descriptions that begin plays, and, based squarely on the Scriptures (John i, 19-27; Matthew iii, 11; Mark i, 7-8; Luke iii, 2, 16), it shares with them the virtue of directness; but there is not that vividness which must have resulted from the *Ludus Coventriae* play opening in *medias res*.

There is, however, in the Towneley cycle, a play which seems to make use of the same device as that employed by the *Ludus Coventriae* playwright. This is the Towneley *Prophets*, which begins with Moses reciting a text and then expanding it in the vernacular (ll. 1-30). As in the case of the *Ludus Coventriae Baptism* (and also in the case of self-descriptions by God) the Latin text is from words actually spoken by the character, recorded in the Bible (or liturgy). Moses has, then, the manner of the medieval preacher but also the most direct dramatic characterisation. In this case, also, his first address to the people in English is biblical. After the text (Acts iii, 22-3; also Mark vi, 4, and

especially Sermo Contra Judaeos<sup>123</sup>), Moses says,

All ye folk of israel,  
herkyn to me! I will you tell  
Tythyngis farly goode.

(Moses addressed his people beginning, "Hear, O Israel", of course-- Deuteronomy vi, 4; v, 1, etc.). Like the Baptist in the Ludus Coventriae play, he seems to have addressed his prophecy directly to the audience, for there is no sign here of the actor who at Chester represented the Israelites (Balaam and Balak, stage-direction at l. 24).

The Ludus Coventriae Woman Taken in Adultery opens with a speech by Jesus, delivered directly to the audience, which is partly a sermon and partly an appeal by Christ to mankind--

Man I cam down all ffor pi love  
Love me agoyne I aske no more.  
(ll. 19-20)

As a preacher, Jesus exhorts his hearers to repent and promises mercy. The New Testament, of course, frequently describes Jesus' preaching; it is probable that for this play-opening the dramatist found some suitable material among contemporary pious lyrics, or modelled his opening on one of the poems in which Christ speaks to man of His mercy.<sup>124</sup>

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123. Sarum Breviary, i, cxxxviii.

124. E.g., Early English Carols, nos. 266-8; cf. also Towneley Resurrection, l. 295.

These sermons (another, by Mercy, occurs at the opening of Man-kind) are, as it were, character-sermons. That is to say, they are not especially interesting because they show the influence of the technique of medieval preaching on the drama,<sup>125</sup> but because they show the playwrights naturally characterising persons known for their preaching, as preachers. These opening sermons that were spoken directly to the audience involved the audience in a dramatic pretence, for the tacit assumption was that they stood for the preacher's congregation. This, of course, is exactly the same kind of pretence that was promoted at, for example, the braggart play-openings. Those must sometimes have demanded a positive response from the audience, and the sermon openings also would have lent the occasion an atmosphere of immediacy more, or less, vivid. The preachers who open the plays probably spoke with the urgency of the medieval pulpit, and their manner was, it may be conjectured, as concerned and compelling as the medieval homilist's. The excited gestures of the menacing tyrant were probably replaced by more pointed and intelligent gestures; John the Baptist, for example, points to Jesus when he mentions Him,<sup>126</sup> and other relevant movements may be assumed. It is the enthusiastic and personal tone, as well as the sense of immediacy bestowed on the occasion by

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125. Owsst, Literature and Pulpit, pp. 486-8.

126. Ludus Coventriae Baptism, at l. 39: ". . . Johannes dicat digito demonstrans Jhesum." "Digito demonstrans" does not occur in the gospel account of this episode (John i, 29).

the dramatic pretence, which makes this kind of opening so suitable.

### E. Confidential Speeches.

#### Holy Characters.

A number of plays are set in motion by an important character, such as God, proclaiming his intentions and motives. These explanations seem always to have been addressed to the audience, and in this respect they are an extension of the self-descriptions that begin many of the plays. In fact, such a self-description often leads into such an explanation. This is the case at the beginning of the Norwich plays and the Chester Last Judgment, for example. In the York cycle, however, the first two plays having been opened by God majestically identifying Himself, the third play, God Creates Adam and Eve, opens with a straightforward statement by God of His reasons for creating Adam, omitting the self-identification (ll. 1-34). Similarly, while the Chester Last Judgment opens with a self-description by God, Who then decides to call a great reckoning, the York Judgment Day omits God's description of Himself and of His power and launches directly into a summary by God of the course of events and a statement of His determination to bear no longer the wickedness of mankind. His speech (ll. 1-64) has a lyrical quality--

For þame he shedde his harte and bloode,  
 What kyndnesse myght I. do þame more?  
 (ll. 51-2)

It is clearly addressed straight to the audience, and at its conclusion, God turns to His angels (as at Chester) and commands them to blow their trumpets.

The York Building of the Ark opens in a way very similar to the York Judgment Day; in fact, one borrowed from the other (Building of the Ark, ll. 1-2, 6, Judgment Day, ll. 1-2, 6). Both plays are in double quatrains, and do not belong to the latest stages of composition at York. The opening of the Building of the Ark (ll. 1-36) follows the pattern of the first verses of Genesis vi. God first explains how He created the world and mankind and was in "endles blysse", but now He repents doing this and will destroy mankind for their sins. He will cause a flood, but exempt Noah from it. Having addressed this speech to the audience, He then addresses Noah. This is precisely the arrangement in Genesis, where it is recorded that God "said" (vi, 3, 5-7) and then that He "said to Noah" (vi, 13).

This also is perhaps the way in which the Chester Deluge begins, although a stage-direction suggests that the whole of God's speech is addressed to Noah and his family, rather than the latter part of it only. Such a seemingly-precise stage-direction does not, however, preclude the possibility that God, speaking from the heaven-setting ("in aliquo supremo loca sive in nubibus"), addressed not only Noah but also the onlookers (ll. 1-16). The Newcastle Noah opens with a speech of explanation by God, addressed to the audience and perhaps to His angels as well; after the explanation



and expression of His intention, God turns to give instructions to an angel (ll. 1-14). The same arrangement occurs at the beginning of the Towneley Annunciation, which is thought to be part of the original, simple cycle. God here explains that He intends to release man from the bondage of sin and then, to that end, He addresses Gabriel (ll. 1-52). The angel messenger himself explains his errand to the audience at the beginning of the York Adam and Eve Driven from Eden (ll. 1-17) before turning to address Adam and Eve.

The pattern of an opening statement followed by an address to a messenger (here angelic), which is so similar to that often used when a bragging pagan character opened a play, is for most occasions firmly based on the biblical narrative (Matthew xxiv, 31; Luke i, 26); it is not found in the liturgical drama, as it is now known, but it is found on a biblical occasion in the simplest kind of vernacular play--the Towneley Annunciation. At a late stage in the development of the plays, it is adapted for the opening of a Noah play. It has the qualities of directness and clarity, and the great virtue of any dramatic exposition: it promises action and raises expectations.

A rather different kind of direct statement is found at the beginning of some of the dramatic versions of the Harrowing of Hell. At the beginning of the York play, Jesus speaks directly to the audience, appealing to them:

Manne on molde, be meke to me,  
 And have thy maker in þi mynde,  
 And thynke howe I have tholid for þe,  
 With pereles paynes for to be pyned.

He goes on to say that He has fulfilled His Father's promise and that He is about to release mankind from bondage (ll. 1-36). The Towneley Deliverance of Souls, which was derived from the York play and runs nearly parallel to it, opens with the explanation but omits the appeal (ll. 1-24). The Ludus Coventriae Descent Into Hell begins,

Now all mankende in herte be glad  
 with all merthis þat may be had  
 ffor mannys sowle þat was be-stad  
     in þe logge of helle  
 now xal I ryse to lyve agayn  
 from peyn to plays of paradyse playn  
 þerfore man in hert be fayn  
     in merthe now xalt þou dwelle.  
 I am þe sowle of cryst jhesu.

Christ's Soul says that His body is rent and torn but will rise in three days; now He will release His friends (ll. 971-93). In this example the direct appeal is rather more sustained than in the York play.

In the Gospel of Nicodemus, the ultimate source of the legend, Christ's first words are a command for Hell's gates to open, and so these beginnings are dramatic additions. The idea of Christ's speaking at this moment was not an especially new one--the Middle-English Harrowing of Hell, for example, contains a similar speech at this point. However, these three dramatists had the instinct

to use this type of appeal and statement of purpose to begin their plays, whereas the Chester Christ's Descent into Hell opens in a much less effective way, with Adam speaking. Clearly, the playwrights usually preferred to provoke an immediate emotional response from the audience and to clarify the situation.

Satan.

The explanations by God and Jesus at the beginnings of the plays have their evil counterparts, for some plays begin with Satan stating directly his evil motives and intentions. The Chester Temptation begins with such a passage of direct address; Satan says,

Now by my soverayntie I sweare  
and principalitie that I beare,  
In hell payne when I am there,  
a gammon I will assay.

He then describes his plan to tempt Jesus (ll. 1-56) and so turns to address Him. This play was heavily influenced by the Stanzaic Life of Christ, but the poem did not supply the idea of opening the play with a soliloquy by Satan. The York Temptation also opens with the same kind of soliloquy. Satan begins with a boisterous cry for room and goes on to say that ever since he fell through pride he has tempted mankind and that now he is about to tempt the "swayne" who is supposed to redeem mankind (ll. 1-54); then he addresses Jesus. A third play, also with its action centered around a temptation, the York Man's Disobedience and Fall, begins similarly. Satan describes his distress, and announces that he is

going to try to alter God's purpose by visiting Eve in "a worme liknes" (ll. 1-24).

Virtually all the plays in which Satan appears contain passages of villainous soliloquy by him. This particular technique, while not occurring in the liturgical drama, occurs in early vernacular plays, and it would seem that for these three play-openings the soliloquy within the play suggested a technique for the beginning of the short processional play. As an opening device (neglected or rejected by the *Ludus Coventriae* playwright), a long and deliberate statement by the Devil would perhaps have created a chilling and expectant atmosphere; it also sometimes had the boisterous comic effect connected with the entry of wicked, flippant and scornful characters (see above, pp. 100-105).

#### F. The Friendly, Sentimental and Prayerful Approaches.

Such simple-minded, homely, and friendly characters as Joseph and the shepherds often speak directly to the audience, complaining or worrying or speaking about themselves. Their tone is intimate and friendly. This technique is used to open the *Chester Adoration of the Shepherds*, where the first shepherd speaks of his wanderings and of his great skill with sheep-medicines. He is proud and knowing--"here be more hearbes, I tell it yoo." He decides to call his fellow, "but first will I drinke yf I maye". He takes a seat (ll. 1-44). His two fellows also have short soliloquies before they meet, both complaining of the way they are treated by their

wives. The third shepherd, indeed, is busy scouring an old pan so that his wife will not know he has been boiling herbs for the sheep; he adds familiarly,

For, good men, this is not unknown  
to husbendes that bene here about,  
that ech man must to his wife bowne,  
and Commonlie for feare of a clout. 127  
(11. 70-92)

This method of introducing the shepherds was accepted as so satisfactory by the Wakefield Master that he used it twice; and if he composed Shepherds' Play, II after the first, then he might be said to have improved his handling of the device. At the beginning of Shepherds' Play, I, the first shepherd complains of the vicissitudes of this world and laments the death of his sheep. He is on his way to buy more. His tone is familiar, "as I say" and "hark ye what I mene" (11. 10, 19) lending his approach intimacy (11. 1-45). The second shepherd then speaks in soliloquy (the other still on stage), blessing the audience:

Benste, benste/ be us emang,  
And save all that I se/ here in this thrang,  
he save you and me/ overtwhart and endlang,  
That hang on a tre/ I say you no wrang.

He then complains of boasters and proud fellows; and then greets the first shepherd (11. 46-83). Later (1. 127), the third shepherd

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127. Although it is possible that the third shepherd's speech (and Noah's similar speech in the Chester Plays--p. 155 below) were addressed to other characters on the stage, the numerous other speeches of a similar kind discussed in this section and on pp. 155-9 below that were clearly directed straight to the audience render this possibility unlikely.

enters directly into the conversation; it was fairly certainly the Master's intention to have him standing silently watching the foolishness of the first two. Shepherds' Play, II opens in exactly the same way, with the first shepherd complaining (as before) "Lord, what . . .". The subject of his complaint is different; it is the weather and then oppression. There is the cordial parenthesis, "as ye ken" (l. 14) and, further, a clever use of the actual device of the soliloquy for the purpose of characterisation:

It dos me good, as I walk/ thus by myn oone,  
Of this world for to talk/ in maner of mone.  
(ll. 46-7)

The second shepherd then complains of the weather and of married life (ll. 55-108). At this point, as in the Chester Adoration of the Shepherds, there is an especial address to the audience:

Bot yong men of wowyng/ for god that you boght,  
Be well war of wedyng/ and thynk in youre thoght,  
"had I wylt" is a thyng/ it servys noght.

While the second shepherd is warming to his subject, the first shepherd, after some previous attempts,<sup>128</sup> finally succeeds in attracting his attention--a piece of original business. The third shepherd also has a coming-on soliloquy in this play, and his complaint is of the weather and of the vanity of things (ll. 118-38). As with the first shepherd, there is also a rationalisation, in

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128. Cawley, in Wakefield Pageants, p. 106.

character, of his soliloquising:

Now god turne all to good/ I say as I mene,  
ffor ponder.

The recognition that this kind of soliloquy is a cogitation, a talking aloud "by myn oone" or "ffor ponder", occurs only in this play. The Wakefield Master is here again distinguished by his insight into the nature of the forms of medieval dramaturgy, and his ability to fit the technique to the occasion more closely than was usual (see above, p. 82).

Joseph, of course, was a simple labourer, like the shepherds; like them he had many complaints, and he too was troubled by his wife. He begins the York Joseph's Trouble in these words:

Of grete mornnyng may I me mene,  
And walk full werily be þis way.

He explains how he came to marry Mary and how he is now beguiled by her (ll. 1-74). The lines beginning "Nowe lorde. . ." (ll. 14, 18) should probably be read not as imprecations but as exclamations; Joseph was a religious man, so it is appropriate that in his distress he should turn to God, and the York Journey to Bethlehem (ll. 1-19) and the Flight into Egypt (ll. 1-24) open with his praying to God, asking Him for succour. In the former, he is worried because of the condition of the stable, and in the latter he becomes weak,

his eyes become heavy, and he lies down to sleep.<sup>129</sup> Joseph also begins the *Ludus Coventriae* Birth of Christ with a troubled soliloquy. He says,

Lord What travayl to man is Wrought  
Rest in þis word be-hovyth hym non,

and complains of the taxation, but as "a pore tymbre wryth" he must obey (ll. 1-8). He then addresses Mary.

Also in the *Ludus Coventriae*, Simeon begins the Purification with a similar lament. He first states that he has been a priest for many years, and that he is waiting for Christ's appearance on earth. He then says,

Ffor I wax old and wante my myght  
and be-gynne to fayle my syght  
þe more I sorwe þis tyde,

and afterwards prays to God. His address to the audience contains the personal phrase "as I telle ȝow ryght" (ll. 1-20). In the *Ches-ter* and *Towneley* plays about the Purification the prayer precedes the complaint spoken directly to the audience. Simeon's opening speech in the *Towneley Purification* may be compared with Abraham's opening speech in the *Towneley Abraham*. Both are simple in form and metre (the former in rime couée and the latter in double quatrains)

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129. Journey to Bethlehem, ll. 1-7 (to God), 8-19 (to audience or Mary or both or to God), 20ff. (to Mary); Flight into Egypt, ll. 1-16 (to God), 17-24 (to audience or God).



and both introduce their theme with the same reflection:

Mercy, lord omnipotent!  
 long syn he this world has wroght;  
 Wheder ar all oure elders went?  
 This musys mekill in my thought.  
 (Abraham, ll. 9-12)

Bot yit I mervell, both evyn and morne,  
 Of old elders that were beforne,  
 wheder they be safe or lorne  
 whar thay may be;  
 Abell, noye, and abraham.  
 (Purification, ll. 9-13)

The Chester opening is similar (Purification, ll. 1-24). In the York play also (after an opening by a priest), Simeon complains of his old age and wishes to be dead, but to see the Christ-child first (ll. 87-164); and in the Coventry Weavers' Pageant he meditates on man's mortality in a tearful and sorrowful manner (ll. 177-97) and then prays.

Another character who mixes a prayer with his rambling soliloquy is Abraham. He is found praying to God at the opening of the different versions of the Abraham and Isaac episode (except the Dublin version, which has adopted the stately opening by God), and in these plays, after the short prayer, he addresses the audience directly. At the beginning of the Chester play Abraham gives thanks to God for victory and then repeats to the audience the substance of what he has said to God (ll. 17-40). In the York play Abraham gives a long account of himself and of God's mercy to him, with a brief prayer (at ll. 7-8), and the prayer and the soliloquy seem to

merge; in this passage there is a warm approach to the audience, revealed in the line, "Gyff I were blythe, who wolde me blame?" (1. 48), (11. 1-64). In the Towneley play Abraham plays first and then ponders the fate of his forefathers (11. 1-9, prayer, 10-48, soliloquy) and his speech has a lyrical quality:

lord, when shall dede make me his thrall?  
 an hundreth yeris, certis, have I seyn;  
 Ma fa! sone I hope he shall,  
 ffor it were right hie tyme I weyne.

In the Ludus Coventriae play the break between the prayer and the direct address is sharp; after the prayer comes a matter-of-fact explanation beginning, "Abraham my name is kydde. . ." (11. 1-20). In the Brome Abraham the soliloquy and prayer are virtually indistinguishable (11. 1-25), and for this reason preferable, perhaps, to the Ludus Coventriae version.

In three of the plays about the Flood, God opens the performance with a grand statement of His intentions addressed to the audience. In the Towneley, Ludus Coventriae and York (no. ix) plays, however, Noah opens the play by first praying to God before turning to the audience, to address them familiarly. At York, Noah worships God (11. 1-4) and then says his "cares aren keen as knyffe" because he knows what is coming. He speaks of his father, Lamech, and says, "Syr, by his wele witte may ye . . ." (1. 33). His speech is not a complaint in the way that, say, the Towneley Sim-

eon's is; it is more a statesmanlike message (ll. 1-44).<sup>130</sup> In the *Ludus Coventriae* Noah Noah first prays for salvation and then says;

Noe serys my name is knowe. . .  
In me Noe be secunde age  
in dede be-gynnyth as I zow say,

and adds that because of the prevalence of sin God will take revenge (ll. 1-26).<sup>131</sup> The Towneley Noah, which is by the Wakefield Master, opens in a similar way; the difference in quality is due to the Wakefield Master's command of language (ll. 1-64).

It was a true dramatic instinct that associated this type of character--an old man with anxieties--with this type of rambling soliloquy. The speeches are often very long. The more religious characters naturally mix prayers with their complaints, for they instinctively turn to God in their hour of need; there are few exceptions<sup>132</sup> to this usual restriction of prayerful play-openings to these persons--Joseph, Simeon, Noah and Abraham. The merging of the prayer and the soliloquy was surely deliberately contrived for these distressed old men, although dogmatic Naturalism might

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130. The "Syr" at l. 33, I take to be the audience; at l. 45 Noah turns to address his sons and daughters.

131. The abrupt transition from prayer to direct and simplified self-explanation occurs also in the *Ludus Coventriae* Abraham (l. 9); both Noah and Abraham also introduce their families to the audience.

132. E.g., Towneley Jacob, *Ludus Coventriae* Parliament of Heaven, Day of Pentecost.

find this kind of play-opening strange.<sup>133</sup> For the simple-minded characters there is friendliness in their attitude towards the audience, and for the less sacred persons, the shepherds, there is a comical note. The dramatists very suitably appropriated the kind of old man's complaint which was a type of lyrical poem in the Middle Ages (see below, p. 154, and n. 34); the lyrical quality is present in some of the speeches by Simeon and Abraham. The rambling soliloquy is a quiet opening, attractive in virtue of its informality, friendliness, comicality, or dignity and prayerful sentimentality.

#### G. Lamentations.

A number of plays begin with a lament by a biblical character. The York and Ludus Coventriae versions of the Appearance to Mary Magdalene, for example, both open with Mary's complaining. In the Ludus Coventriae play Mary says she weeps, for her Lord has been stolen away (ll. 1-8), and is then addressed by an angel. The York opening is similar. Mary says,

Allas, in pis worlde was nevere no wight  
Walkand with so mekill woo,  
Thou dredfull dede, drawen hythir and dight  
And marre me, as pou haste done moo,

and explains that the Jews crucified Jesus; then she prays God to give her grace to see her Lord (ll. 1-21). Although spoken directly

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<sup>133</sup>. Spencer, op. cit., pp. 193-4.

to the audience, these laments do not, of course, have the same friendly tone as, say, the laments of the shepherds. Grief in these lyrical laments, as always in the plays, is stated and not insinuated, just as a man's character is described, often by himself, rather than hinted at or suggested.

A York dramatist writing in alliterative verse, almost certainly after the composition of the York Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (which is in a simple and quite regular stanzaic form), may well have taken from this play the idea of opening his analogous play, the Appearance of Our Lady to Thomas, with a similar lament by Thomas; at the beginning of this play Thomas' theme is the same as Mary's, a lamentation for the death and sufferings of Jesus (ll. 1-95). The episode in Transitus Mariae does not begin like this, but paragraph 18 (p. 120), where Thomas laments, may have provided a hint. The language of this opening is more ornamental; it would have needed a true artist to interpret it on the stage.

Yet another play which centered around an appearance, the Peregrini, also begins with a lamentation. In all the versions, this lamentation is in the form of a dialogue between Luke and Cleophas, but in the York and Towneley versions, there is some direct address to the audience before the dialogue begins. The opening of the Towneley version has a lyrical quality similar to other laments associated with this part of the gospel story, and the Wakefield Master was interested enough to add two lines. Cleophas first laments Jesus' death and then says,

I ken it well that thou was slayn  
 Oonly for me and all markynde;  
 Therto thise lues were full bayne.  
 Alas! why was thou, man, so blynde  
 Thi lord to slo?  
 On hym why wold thou have no mynde,  
 bot bett hym blo?

The appeal to "man" was presumably a direct appeal to the audience (11. 1-16). John and Peter at the beginning of the York Ascension also mourn for the absent Jesus (11. 1-14).

What do all these plays that begin with expressions of despair have in common? The answer to this--that they are all concerned with the sudden appearance of Jesus or the Virgin--makes it clear that the medieval playwrights felt for such things as dramatic surprise and dramatic irony. That is why the traditional lyrical laments furnished those responsible for the arrangements of the separate units in a cycle of plays with the best method for opening these episodes. As an opening, this kind of soliloquy is solemn and moving, and above all arresting because it is dramatically ironical.

Two other plays open with laments--the Bodleian Burial of Christ and Christ's Resurrection. The first of these lyrical plays has a remarkable opening. Joseph of Arimathia, in a messenger's speech unusual in the medieval drama, first laments the Crucifixion to the audience and then says,

From the hyll I com but now down,  
 Wher I left the holy women in dedly swoun.  
 O ye pepull of this cetye & of this town,  
 Herd ye not the Exclamation  
 And the grete brunte which was on the h[il]l,  
 "Crucify hym! Crucify hym! slo hym & kill!"  
 Peace! now harkyn! I pray you stand still;  
 Methink I here lamentation.

(11. 16-55)

Then the three Maries speak. This play was not at first composed with the idea of its performance, and it may be suggested that the form of the opening was derived from those religious chansons d'aventures fairly common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries<sup>134</sup> in which the speaker sorrowfully relates what he has just seen. However that may be, the effect obtained in a performance would have been a striking sense of immediacy and actuality, the last two lines being especially dramatic in the medieval manner.

#### H. Dialogue.

None of the plays which are intended for stationary performance begin with a passage of dialogue, and it may be assumed that such an opening was undesirable since it lacked the necessary clarity and forthrightness. A minority of the plays in the mystery cycles do begin with dialogue, but this is often of a well-known and important kind, and it is in any case usually based fairly closely on the Scriptures. For instance, the Chester Nativity begins with Gabriel's announcement to Mary (Luke i, 26-38), a

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<sup>134</sup>. Wells, op. cit., pp. 498, 508.

celebrated piece of dialogue. Other plays contain this episode, but there is usually some preliminary explanatory material. The York Death of Mary also begins with Gabriel's salutation to the Virgin Mary, based on Transitus Mariae, pp. 114, 125, and perhaps this opening was suggested or made acceptable by the dramatisation of the earlier episode.<sup>135</sup>

Again, a number of plays open with Jesus addressing His disciples, and His opening remark is nearly always taken either directly or indirectly from the Gospels. Thus the Towneley Lazarus begins with John xi, 7, and the Chester Christ's Betrayal with Luke xxii, 8, together with a sermon-like exhortation. The beginning of the York Agony and Betrayal is from Matthew xxvi, 36, 38, and Mark xiv, 32, 34; that of the Chester Christ's Ascension is from Luke xxiv, 36-9; of the Ludus Coventriae Ascension from John xx, 19, xxi, 5, and Acts i, 4-5; of the York Entry into Jerusalem from Matthew xxi, 2-3, and Luke xix, 30-1 with an explanation. For the York Transfiguration the opening is made from the indirect record of Jesus' address to His disciples, Matthew xvii, 1, Mark

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135. This play is in alliterative verse, and its opening is a "hail" lyric; the Chester play-opening is very simple. Of more specifically dramatic interest is the stage-direction in the Ludus Coventriae play--after the Annunciation "þe Aungel makyth a lytyl restynge and mary be-holdyth hym" (at l. 260). The dramatist has realised the theatrical value of the moment of Mary's silence described in the pseudo-Bonaventuran Meditations (Love, The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ, pp. 26-7), which fits between ll. 228 and 236 in the play, and transplanted it to the stage; another silent look, from Luke xxii, 61-2, is preserved in the Ludus Coventriae Second Passion (see below, pp. 161-2).



ix, 2, Luke ix, 28. The beginning of the York Last Supper is not speech recorded here in the Gospels, but "Peace be unto this house"--a formula occurring at Christ's later appearances to His disciples.

Other passages of dialogue at play-openings are also formed from the Gospel narratives. Peter's speaking to the disciples at the beginning of the York Descent of the Holy Spirit and Chester Sending of the Holy Ghost is from Acts, i, 15-22; for the York Incredulity of Thomas, dialogue was written, since the "assembled" (John xx, 19) disciples had to speak; similarly, before the Towneley The Lord's Ascension they talk among themselves. Addresses from God to characters at play-openings also rely on the form of the Bible story; the opening of the Chester Balaam and Balak on Exodus xx, 1-17, of the York God Puts Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden on Genesis, i, 29-30, ii, 15. The angel warning Joseph at the beginning of the Towneley Flight Into Egypt is from Matthew ii, 13, with explanations (and a self-introduction by the angel) added, and the angel who instructs Cain and Abel at the beginning of the York Sacrificium Cayne and Abell is due to somebody's imagination, working on the basis of the many angelic appearances in the Bible--a good kind of dramatic exposition, and here, as often, a clarification of the issues involved. At the beginning of the Towneley Thomas of India, Mary Magdalene addresses the disciples; this traditional dramatic moment was taken originally from Matthew xxviii, 7, Mark xvi, 10, Luke xxiv, 10 and especially John xx, 18.

Invented dialogue of a different kind is to be found at the beginning of the York Crucifixio Cristi. This play, which contains a very realistic--lengthy and detailed--depiction of the act of crucifixion, begins with the torturers talking among themselves, the first one taking the lead. They decide to get on with their job with resignation. This is a very rare realistic kind of opening for a medieval play. The Wakefield Master's opening to the Buffeting consists of the torturers speaking contemptuously to Christ. In the first line a torturer speaks to Him as though He were an animal, as he enters driving Him before him. This opening establishes the whole cruelty of Calvary in the first few words spoken, and it shows the Wakefield Master to be once more dextrous, imaginative and (most probably) original in this matter of beginning a play (see above, p. 82). Usually, however, if a playwright composed a play-opening, instead of following the scriptural text he utilized one of the several striking forms of direct address suitable for the purpose.

#### I. Summary.

The opening of a medieval performance was characterised by colourful formalities. Owing originally to the circumstances of open-air performance, only a minority of the plays break immediately into a conversation between a number of characters; usually something more arresting was required. Altogether, only about one quarter of the plays--individual units of the larger cycles--

begin with dialogue; the vast majority open with other suggestive and extraordinarily dramatic devices. These devices were usually the contribution of the vernacular playwrights to the older and now inadequate traditions of the liturgical drama: the link between the liturgical and vernacular plays is often extremely tenuous, especially in those devices that are most characteristic of the vernacular plays.

The presentation of God was arranged by adapting the authoritative oratio recta of the Bible and adding an element of spectacle, thus producing a play-opening of stern beauty and awful majesty. Other passages of oratio recta, together with an influence from allegorical literature, probably suggested the dramatic device of self-presentation, which became necessary when the plays were released from their liturgical contexts; the device was applied to the presentation of the prophets and other characters who addressed the audience seriatim (as well as to the more momentous presentation of God), and also in passages of formal colloquy.

Many evil characters also begin plays with a conspicuous self-description. Their boasts came under the influence of Herod, as he was presented in the liturgical plays and conceived in popular and learned scriptural lore: fear, mad anger, vainglory, a messenger and officers to advise or flatter the potentate come from this source. From Lucifer or the desire to parody God's majestic self-description came the fantastic trumpetings and blasphemous claims;

from the romances came an oriental touch. The vernacular dramatists combined all these elements in the boasts that they put into the mouths of many different villains in such a way that the opening to a play or scene was very often loud and ludicrous and dramatically ironical, so that the audience would be encouraged to join in with a spirited condemnation. Their participation was further promoted by the usual addition to the boast of a call for order, which was sometimes regal (as in the Chester plays, which were in other respects also restrained and dignified), but often savage, presumptuous and insolent; the presumption and savagery were added by the dramatists to conventional medieval methods of calling for attention. The York Realist contributed richness and style to the device and the Wakefield Master brought to it intelligence and dexterity. Combined with the folly and dramatic irony of the boast, the presumptuous call for order was, as it were, the last straw. Other, minor, characters also sometimes affront the onlookers with their scorn, boisterousness and insolence.

Less flamboyant, less awful and less irrational opening speeches are spoken by various other characters; in their different ways, these manifest the good dramatic sense of the playwrights and provided effective methods of beginning a play. There was a common sense of what kind of play-opening was appropriate for the various different characters (for example, long, sentimental or prayerful soliloquies for the simple-minded or aged) and the various different

situations (for example, a dramatically ironical lament for plays containing a posthumous appearance of Christ or the Virgin).

Whether the play-openings are majestic and divine, ludicrous and insolent, urgent and homiletic, evil and secretive, sentimental and neighbourly, or pathetically appealing, they all establish a direct relationship (either of sympathy or of enmity and alienation) between the audience and the actors. The audience is drawn into the play-world. There is a real intimacy, which was expected by the audiences and encouraged by the playwrights. They both prepared for this dramatic experience, and sometimes it seems that the performance became not so much a play in the usual sense of the word but actually a game.

## CHAPTER THREE

## The "Open" Technique in the Play

## A. The "Open" Technique.

The common methods of opening a play made use of direct address to the audience. There were also certain moments in the course of the performance where direct address was again felt to be suitable; the immediate emotional involvement of the audience established at the beginning of the play was usually re-established at various points of the presentation. These are all examples of the "open" technique, that is to say, of a technique more suitable for the "open stage" than a stage with a proscenium arch. The chief physical characteristic of the open stage is that the stage is "in" the audience and not separated from it, so that greater intimacy between actors and audience results.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the precise details of any one performance, the internal evidence is sufficient to show that the medieval stage was an open stage (see above, p. 18, n. 11 and p. 103, n. 118); the various devices of the medieval drama which directly involve the audience may therefore be said to constitute the "open" technique.

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1. Southern, The Open Stage, pp. 31-6, 41-2.

## B. God.

## Intentions.

God's announcement to the onlookers of His intentions, which is found at the beginning of some plays, also occurs within some plays, in the Chester Sending of the Holy Ghost, for example. This scene (ll. 159-238) is in any case interesting, for it shows that while an actor speaks on one part of the stage, there is "stage-business" in another part:<sup>2</sup> "Tunc omnes Apostoli contemplabunt vel orabunt quousque Spiritus sanctus missus fuerit." While they pray, God, speaking in a Heaven-setting, ostensibly addresses Christ and then the patriarchs, prophets and angels, describing His accomplishments, and His intention to send the Holy Ghost Whom His disciples and all believers shall receive. Such a majestic summary and clear prospectus for mankind reads as though the actor playing God spoke first to Christ on His right-hand and then to His retinue and also spoke out to all His creatures below--His disciples fervently praying meanwhile. Clearer instances of God's direct address to the audience occur in the Towneley and Ludus Coventriae Noah plays. In the former (ll. 73-117) the Wakefield Master puts into God's mouth the kind of long and grand speech that was sometimes used to begin plays about Noah, but in the latter (ll. 92-5) God gives not so

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2. This is shown several times in the plays where there are adequate directions, most obviously in the Ludus Coventriae Passion plays. See p. 48, n. 73 above; p. 182 below; also Digby Killing of the Children at ll. 232, 280; Perseverance, ll. 781-817.

much a reasoned explanation as an impassioned exclamation:

Ow what menyht this mys-levyng man  
 whiche myn hand made and byldyd in blysse  
 Synne so sore grevyht me za in certayn  
 I wol be vengyd of pis grett mysse.

He then gives instructions to His angel. A more grandly phrased statement of purpose occurs in the Ludus Coventriae Parliament of Heaven (ll. 49-56). A series of scenes in the Digby Mary Magdalene open with Jesus giving a general statement of His intentions, before addressing His angels (ll. 1349-67, 1587-90, 2004-6, 2074-7); a number of plays begin like this (see above, pp. 113-15). The tone of the sermon has entered the speech which God speaks in Heaven in the Ludus Coventriae Baptism (ll. 92-104) and in the Brome Abraham (ll. 45-6).

The explanatory speeches helped, of course, to clarify the action and make the scenes more intelligible to the audience. Like many of the statements at the beginnings of plays, especially those by God or the patriarchs, they also sometimes refer back to the preceding episodes and to the general scheme of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Judgement. In the Towneley cycle, for example, such recapitulations of the narrative are delivered, mostly, to the audience, by important characters in Noah, Abraham, The Prophets, The Annunciation, The Conspiracy, The Deliverance of Soules, and The Judgment. It is these and similar speeches that hold the cycles together and give them their structural unity.



God also speaks out to the audience in the plays showing the Creation. The York Creation, to the Fifth Day is a monologue by God. He bids the dry land appear and the birds fly; the Ludus Coventriae Creation of the World (ll. 85-95), Towneley Creation (ll. 13-60), and Chester Creation (ll. 5-80) are similar. It may be suggested that these speeches were sometimes accompanied by the kind of appropriate stage-effects that are mentioned in stage-directions in the Cornish Creation ("Lett flowres apeare in paradise," etc., at ll. 362, 397); for the existence of some suitable mechanical devices there is evidence in the descriptions of pageants prepared for Royal Entries.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Of the York Creation, to the Fifth Day, Davidson says, "The parallel to the pageants of royal entry with one speaker, who explained the tableau, is sufficient" (Studies in the English Mystery Plays, p. 145). The connection between the methods of staging these two types of dramatic spectacle has been noticed by a number of writers (e.g., Withington, English Pageantry, i, 151; Salter, Mediaeval Drama at Chester, p. 11), most recently and most fully by Wickham, op. cit., i, 174. Some direct pieces of evidence for the connection between the various types of stage in the provinces (where, as has been supposed, it was most likely to exist) can be cited: for example, the Smiths' pageant was used at Royal Entries at Coventry in 1456, 1460 and 1474 (Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, pp. 113-15); again, for a Royal Entry at Norwich in 1469 "one Parnell, of Ipswich, a great man at subtilties, plays, and pageants, was sent for; and he and his servants came over for twelve days to assist in the preparations" (Harrod, "Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Visit to Norwich," Norfolk Arch., v, p. 34). (This is the earliest record of a travelling theatre man in England. Parnell was also probably a member of what is the earliest known English family of theatre men, for John Parnell was hired at Ipswich in 1504-5 for twelve years, at 33/4d. per annum, "to find the ornaments" for the Corpus Christi play (Wodderspoon, Memorials of the Ancient Town of Ipswich, p. 170; cited most obscurely by Harrod, op. cit., p. 34), and furthermore, it was a Parnell who "made the pagantes on corpus crysti daye" at Great Dunmow in 1527 (Clark, "Great Dunmow Revels, 1526-1543," Essex Review, xix, p. 194). Another traveller connected with the theatre, also in East Anglia, was Burles, who was boarded at Chelmsford for three weeks and paid not for "suinge the play" (Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 346) but for "s[er]vinge the play", as the Church Wardens' Accounts preserved in the Essex Records Office, Chelmsford, reveal. For professional theatre men see Wickham, op. cit., i, 298-9.)

At York in 1486, for example, it was ordered that at the entrance to the city there

shalbe craftely conceyvid a place in maner of a hev-  
on, of grete joy and Angelicall armony; under the  
heven shalbe a world desolaite, full of treys and  
floures, in the which shall spryng up a ricall, rich,  
rede rose, convaide by viace.<sup>4</sup>

That God in His act of Creation sometimes at least suited the word to the deed is clear from the Norwich Creation, Text A, where He says, "A rybbe out of mannys syde I do here take" (l. 13, and Text B, l. 12)—in an inventory of properties belonging to the guild responsible for the production of this play "a Rybbe colleryd Red" is included.<sup>5</sup>

An analogous scene is that in which Noah builds his ark. In all his plays, except the *Ludus Coventriae* Noah, he pretends actually to construct the ark on the stage, and his speech, addressed to the audience, provides a kind of running commentary on his action; this is the method of the Creation plays. The use of realistic properties at this point is again attested by the Cornish Creation (at. l. 2253), and the fact that it was often the Shipwrights' Guild that was responsible for this play probably means that as Noah says, for example,

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4. A Volume of English Miscellanies, p. 54.

5. Fitch, op. cit., p. 30. The same effect is achieved in the Cornish Creation, l. 383.

To hewe þis burde I will be-gynne  
 But first I wille lygge on my lyne,  
 (York Building of the Ark, ll. 97-111)

or, "These bordes I ioynne here together" (Chester Deluge, l. 85),  
 he takes hold of the tools of his trade and displays his craft.<sup>6</sup>

The manner of conducting these scenes may well have been copied from the scenes which show the act of Creation, especially as Genesis contains no account of Noah's working on the ark.

These two scenes are conspicuous for their compression of time, a feature largely absent from the Passion scenes,<sup>7</sup> and probably also for their realistic details. This is the result of the literalism,

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6. Of course, he probably only pretended to fix a board here and there to the stage-ship already in the platea. These ships were probably well-rigged ("Noe, with his shipp, apparalid accordyng", Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 364), and this was probably the fruit of professional pride. Ships, with full naval panoply, were used in all other kinds of dramatic spectacle in the later Middle Ages (Wickham, op. cit., i, see "Ship" in Index). From descriptions of wheeled ships used, for example, in Disguisings (and the obviously wheeled ships of the processional plays), it is possible to interpret stage-directions in the Ludus Coventriae Noah, and Digby Mary Magdalene (e.g.: "Et tunc navis venit in placeam", at l. 1716). The view has long been current that "a hole might be dug in the ground before the pageant, and filled with water on which floated a little boat" (Crosse, op. cit., p. 84); this view is based partly on the conjectured use of a ditch in a Cornish "round" (Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 391) and on the drawing of the Valenciennes Passion Play (reproduced in Craig, op. cit., p. 121--how could that ship cross the platea?). A refinement would be waves painted on a cloth attached to the side of the ship, as in a tournament in 1501 (Wickham, op. cit., i, 44).

7. But present also in saints' plays. Of the Digby Mary Magdalene, l. 2055, the ebullient Furnivall writes, "This beats Shakespere's growing babies into the marriageable Marina and Perdita in the course of Pericles and Cymbeline (sic)."

the need for authenticity, of the dramatists. In the Creation scenes they never strayed far from Genesis i. It was more with a sense of satisfaction, perhaps, than with a sense of wonder, that the scenes were received by the audiences, to whom they were directly addressed.

### C. Christ.

#### Doom.

Much more emotional use of direct address is made by Jesus. He speaks directly to the audience in the Chester (ll. 357-436), York (ll. 229-76) and Towneley (ll. 386-433) Last Judgement plays, and these remarkable scenes are dramatic versions of the Doom design common in medieval glass-paintings and mural-paintings.<sup>8</sup> At Chester, the usual graphic arrangement of the scene was reproduced on the stage, as is clear from the stage-direction which precedes Jesus' speech:

Finitis Lamentationibus mortuorum, descendet Iesus quasi in nube, si fieri poterit; Quia secundum Doctorum Opiniones in Aere prope terram iudicabit filius Dei. Stabunt Angeli cum Cruce, Corona Spinea, lancea, aliisque Instrumentis, omnia demonstrantes.

The Doom scene in art showed Christ sitting in Judgement, often

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8. Rushforth, Medieval Christian Imagery, p. 264; Woodforde, English Stained and Painted Glass, p. 11; Tristram, English Medieval Wall Painting, the Twelfth Century, p. 85, English Medieval Wall Painting, the Thirteenth Century, p. 469, pls. 56, 193(b), suppl. pls. 24(a), 37, English Wall Paintings of the Fourteenth Century, p. 295. See also Coulton, op. cit., pl. opp. p. 164.

surrounded by angels holding the Instruments of the Passion. The "other instruments" therefore were probably the Scourging Pillar and Scourges, Nails, and Sponge,<sup>9</sup> and may have included some of the other objects which occurred in this scene in late medieval art.<sup>10</sup> Either the angels held up realistic properties on the Chester stage or, as was frequently the case in glass-paintings, held Shields with the Instruments painted on them.<sup>11</sup> At Chester, therefore, the scenic arrangements for this play were probably inspired by a fairly common medieval pictorial design. The settings of other Judgement plays may well have been similar; indeed, this is the best interpretation of l. 258 in the York play: "Dis spere unto my side was sette." However, the suggestive demonstrative adjective has become indefinite in the Towneley play (l. 415). The aim of the display was to demonstrate the fact of the cruelty suffered by Christ, and in the play it supports His own testimony to His sufferings. In the Doom scenes in art, Christ's mantle is open so that the wound in His side, as well as His other wounds, may be clearly seen by the onlooker. This effect is retained in at least the Chester dramatic version, which in this respect animates the static pictorial design: Jesus says,

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9. Réau, op. cit., II, ii, 508.

10. Ibid., 509; Woodforde, Stained Glass in Somerset, pp. 196-7.

11. Rushforth, Medieval Christian Imagery, pp. 255-7; Woodforde, Stained Glass in Somerset, p. xl.

Behould now all men on me,  
and so my Blood fresh out flee,  
that I bledd on rode tree  
for your Salvation,

(11. 425-8)

and "tunc emittet Sanguinem de Latere suo". In the Towneley play, as He says, "here may ye se my Woundys wide", there is an accompanying direction--"tunc expandit manus suas & ostendit eis Wlnera sua"; this priestly gesture was presumably also made at York, which has the same text but not the stage-direction.<sup>12</sup> The blood flowing from Christ's side at Chester is a good example of the realism<sup>13</sup> of these productions. One of the few things the "old man" at Cartmel remembered about the Corpus Christi Crucifixion play was that the

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12. This lucky chance supports the proposition that a bare text does not mean a bare stage performance. Indeed, it just as reasonably implies the exact opposite, as Mr. J. F. Arnott has pointed out.

13. In the sense used by M. Willson Disher in Melodrama. Nineteenth-century melodrama was "realistic" since it showed, by trickery, such things as murder and torture on the stage. The Creation and construction of the ark scenes may have been realistic and the Passion scenes clearly were. Realistic details were taken from the performances by other popular artists (or their designers) in the late Middle Ages: by alabastermen (Hildburgh, op. cit.), glass-painters (Woodforde, The Norwich School of Glass-Painting, pp. 25-8, 144-5, Stained Glass in Somerset, pp. 80 n. 1, 172 n. 3; Robinson, "A Detail of Medieval Staging," Theatre Notebook, xv [in press]), religious lyricists (see below, p. 164, n. 47), carol-makers (Chambers, English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages, p. 110), homilists (see p. 57 n. 83 above, and Owsst, Literature and Pulpit, pp. 283-4. At an earlier date Langland had probably been imaginatively impressed by a performance (Piers Plowman, ii, 247 ff.). See also Mâle, L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age en France, pp. 3-74, and p. 56 n. 79 above. This was the final effectiveness of the influence of the stage which began to be felt soon after the birth of the liturgical drama (Mâle, L'Art Religieux du xii<sup>e</sup> Siècle en France, Ch. IV, esp. pp. 149-50). Behind the stage-practices were often the learned imaginations of the Fathers (see, for example, p. 130 n. 135 above). For the superior realism of the York Realist see p. 72 n. 93 above.

"blood ran down".<sup>14</sup>

The dramatists, then, contributed animation to a popular design; they also had to find the words spoken by Christ in this scene to the Good and Evil Souls and to the audience. (In the Towneley play, the directions show that Christ speaks first to the audience, or to everybody, and then specifically to the Good, then to the Evil; and this is the logical pattern of His address in the other plays.) The dramatists took, of course, the common type of lyric known as Christ's Testament.<sup>15</sup> The tone of Christ's speeches in these scenes is the same as that in the lyrics; He speaks, in the York-Towneley plays, of all that He has suffered for Mankind, for "you":

Behalde mankynde, þis ilke is I,  
 þat for þe suffered swilke mischeve,  
 þus was I dight for thy folye,  
 Man, loke thy liffe was to me full leffe.  
 þus was I dight þi sorowe to slake,  
 Manne, þus behoved þe to borrowed be,  
 In all my woo toke I no wrake,  
 Mi will itt was for þe love of þe.  
 Man, sore aught þe for to quake,  
 þis dredful day þis sight to see,  
 All þis I suffered for þi sake,  
 Say man, what suffered þou for me?

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14. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 373-4; see also ii, 345, for "a new leder bag for the blode" at Canterbury, and Preston, Cambises, at l. 726, "A little bladder of vinegar prickt".
15. Taylor, "The Relation of the English Corpus Christi Play to the Middle English Religious Lyric," MP, v, pp. 8-9. See pp. 146-7 and notes.

The oratorical quality of this speech (with its repetition of "man") is high; the authoritative tone is combined with the reproachful. A plaintive attitude, usual in a certain class of these lyrics, occurs in His speech at Chester--"How might I doe thee more grace?"; from material commonly associated with the Passion<sup>16</sup> comes the reference, also at Chester, to wounds tearing His body (ll. 417-20). Some of the lyrics are, of course, more precisely related to the idea of the Last Judgment.<sup>17</sup> In these scenes, then, the vernacular dramatists (there are no liturgical plays of the Last Judgement) are perhaps best understood as bringing together two different varieties of medieval art, animating the pictorial and illuminating the verbal.

#### Crucifixion.

The same is true of the Crucifixion plays, especially those at Towneley and York. In these two plays Christ speaks to the audience from the Cross, and the kind of appeal which He makes to them here also belongs to Christ's Testaments,<sup>18</sup> that group of very common

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16. St. Bernard's Sermon for Passion Sunday, often used by vernacular writers (Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 509).

17. Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century, no. 3, and note.

18. A number of texts are collected in Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century (nos. 3, 4, 15, 46, 47, 51, 66, 70, 72, 74, 77, 127), Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century (nos. 102-110), The Early English Carols (nos. 263-71). Brown and Robbins, The Index of Middle English Verse, pp. 741-2, record many of these appeals of Christ to man.



and sometimes extremely dramatic lyrical monologues, which are usually based on various Latin verses, including the Improperia or Reproaches which were sung in services on Good Friday.<sup>19</sup> This type of lyric often begins with a line like "Ye that pass by the way, abide a little space" (a line originally suggested by Lamentations i, 12<sup>20</sup>), and in the plays it is the audience who become the passers-by; in the Towneley Crucifixion, the torturers raise the Cross bearing Christ and then He begins:

I pray you pepyll that passe me by,  
That lede youre lyfe so lykandly,  
    heyfe up youre hartys on hight!  
Behold if ever ye sagh body  
Buffet & bett thus bloody . . .

My folk, what have I done to the,  
That thou all thus shall tormente me?

After this speech (ll. 233-89), He concludes with the prayer "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; and later He repeats His appeal to "Mankynde" (ll. 469-79). In the York Crucifixio Cristi He addresses "Al men pat walkis by waye or strete" and draws attention to His sufferings (ll. 253-8). The pathos of these appeals is emphasised by the soldiers' crude impatience with them. In the York Mortificacio Cristi there are two similar appealing speeches

19. Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century, no. 15 and note, no. 72;  
    Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, no. 105 and note.
20. Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century, no. 46 and note, no. 74;  
    Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, no. 102 and note.

by Christ (ll. 118-30, 183-95). The Chester and Ludus Coventriae plays do not contain addresses of this kind by Christ from the Cross.

That the Christ's Testament kind of lyric gains in effectiveness when incorporated into a stage-performance is self-evident. The direct appeal by Christ is seen in its proper context, and is given a dramatic setting. The particular scene in late medieval art that seems to correspond most closely to this scene in the York and Towneley plays is the Seven Sacraments Composition, which consists either of a standing figure of Christ, hands raised and revealing the wounds, or of Christ on the Cross, with His wounds manifest. In both cases He is surrounded by the Seven Sacraments.<sup>21</sup> This is the scene in art (distinct from the common narrative painting of the Crucifixion) which isolates the suffering on the Cross and shows its application to mankind, just as the speech from the Cross in the plays temporarily freezes the action to draw the attention of the audience to its pathos and relevance for them. The painters of this scene may well have helped the pageant-masters and dramatists to proceed with the scene in the plays, but, with only a few fragmentary paintings from the fifteenth century extant, it seems that the main inspiration was the abundance of appropriate lyrical material. There may well be some connection, however, be-

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21. Rushforth, "Seven Sacraments Compositions in English Medieval Art," The Antiquaries Journal, ix, p. 84; a few other examples have since been discovered (Woodforde, Stained Glass in Somerset, p. 168 n. 1).

tween the fact that Christ speaks from the Cross in two of the cycles only and the fact that the Seven Sacraments Composition usually showed Christ standing rather than Christ on the Cross.

### Resurrection.

In the Towneley Resurrection, after the soldiers have settled themselves around the sepulchre, Christ speaks a long, appealing lyric (ll. 226-332), which had a separate existence and belongs to a common type.<sup>22</sup> At York, where the play is otherwise the same in this part, this effect is missing.<sup>23</sup> In the Ludus Coventriae Second Passion, Christ's speech at this point (ll. 1416-31) has close similarities to another, earlier version,<sup>24</sup> (in which, however, Christ addresses not "Man", as in the play, but Adam) and in the Chester play the speech has some resemblances to that in the Towneley play.<sup>25</sup> In the York, Towneley and Chester plays Christ's speech is preceded by angels singing "Christus Resurgens".<sup>26</sup> During this

22. Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, no. 102 and note; The Early English Carols, no. 265 and note.

23. Pollard thinks this passage once belonged to the York play, but for some reason was omitted. (Towneley Plays, pp. xix-xx).

24. Middle-English Harrowing of Hell, ll. 43-64.

25. Towneley Plays, p. xix. The speech was added to the Chester play by the reviser who added other popular elements--see p. 62 n. 38 above.

26. "Christus resurgens ex mortuis" is a liturgical antiphon sung (Sarum Breviary, i, dcccvii) with some ceremony before Matins on Easter morning. Singing by the choir to the action of a character is often found in the liturgical plays (Young, op. cit., ii, 403-4).

anthem, Christ no doubt (as commonly portrayed in art<sup>27</sup>) stepped out of the box-like sepulchre. His speech is instructional here, and He refers to His sufferings and, in the Towneley play, to His wet wounds and torture at some length. This suggests not so much the triumphant Risen Christ of the narrative paintings as the didactic and pathetic Christ of Pity, Christ standing in the sepulchre displaying His wounds, and the Christ of the Five Wounds. The former at least was often portrayed in late medieval English art.<sup>28</sup>

The influence of Christ's Testaments is not confined to these scenes, but is present in a less concentrated form at the beginning of various episodes, such as the York and Ludus Coventriae Harrowing of Hell plays, the Towneley Pilgrims, and the York Judgment Day (see above, pp. 115, 128, 113). The reproachful tone of the lyrics inspired by the Improperia is also found in the Ludus Coventriae Temptation. After a scene between the devils in Hell, Christ speaks out to the audience:

xlti days and xlti nyght  
now have I fastyd for mannys sake . . .

This suffyr I man for the  
Ffor þi gloteny and metys wrong  
I suffyr for þe þis hungryr stronge  
I am afferde it wyl be longe  
Or þou do þus for me.

(ll. 66-78)

27. E.g., Norwich Cathedral Retable (1381); see Réau, op. cit., II, ii, 544-9; Hildburgh, op. cit., pp. 36-40.

28. Rushforth, "The Kirkham Monument in Paignton Church, Devon," Trans. Exeter Diocesan Architectural and Archaeological Soc., Third Series, iv, p. 21; Réau, op. cit., II, ii, 42-3.

Again, after He has been baptised in the Ludus Coventriae Baptism, Christ "transit in desertum" and speaks to the audience, emphasising that His hunger will be "ffor mannys sake as I zow say" (ll. 122-30).

For the scenes where Christ addresses the audience, then-- chiefly the Doom, the Resurrection and the Crucifixion--the material available for the dramatist was largely lyrical verse in the form of dramatic monologues. From one point of view it can be said that the playwrights rescued these poems for the purpose for which they were best suited. The script of the play, however, was usually only as interesting as the staging allowed it to be, and it is probably the failure to visualise the plays in performance that has prevented critics from realising that this incorporation of the dramatic monologue spoken by Christ went hand in hand with developments in the field of pictorial design and popular religious taste. In fact, "one cannot help being struck by the number of cults connected with the Person and Passion of Jesus which appeared or flourished in the fifteenth century".<sup>29</sup> The work of the dramatist in these scenes was largely catalytic; it was on the stage that the icon was fused with the verse. The English drama is advancing well beyond the liturgical plays, which did not know these scenes, and which were much less impassioned.

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29. Rushforth, "Seven Sacraments Compositions in English Medieval Art," loc. cit., p. 100.

Of course, the dramatist was able to include Christ's dramatic monologue in his scenes because the technique of direct address spoken to the audience was acceptable. The vague "mankind" and passers-by of the lyrics became sharply defined in the theatre; the audience was directly involved. There is little need to be too cautious about the response of the audience to these appeals, and to the lamentations of Mary and others (discussed below), for not only may one speak of the "general facility of emotions, of tears", in the later Middle Ages,<sup>30</sup> but the Tretis of Miraclis Pleyinge states (putting the supporters' arguments) that

ofte sythis by sicke myraclis pleyinge men and wymmen,  
seyng the passioun of Crist and hise seyntis, ben  
movyd to compassion and devociun, wepyng bitere teris.<sup>31</sup>

#### D. Patriarchs and Others.

##### Tired and Aged.

The plays about Abraham and Isaac usually begin with a prayer and then a lament by Abraham; after this their progress is usually punctuated by statements made to the audience by Abraham, first of his obedience and then of his grief. Occasionally some arrangement is made to ensure that these statements are obviously made out of Isaac's hearing; for instance, in the Towneley Abraham, Abraham

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30. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, p. 14.

31. p. 45.

tells Isaac,

Bot ly styll tyll I com to the,  
I mys a lytyll thyng, I weyn,  
(11. 213-4)

and then speaks of his grief; the same thing happens at 11. 105-6. The natural emphasis on grief in the plays makes them dramatically ironical, God's decision to send an angel to relieve Abraham of his promise being made known to the audience before Abraham's final expression of sorrow. There is further dramatic irony as Isaac, ignorant of God's instructions to Abraham, agrees with him that children should obey their parents, and all people God. This moral is drawn in most of the plays. It is noticeable that the two chief themes of the play--obedience and paternal grief--are both made explicit by straightforward statements to the audience. The number of these remarks varies in the different plays; they are most numerous in the *Ludus Coventriae* and fewest in the *Chester* and *Brome* plays. The latter has been declared both exceptionally good<sup>32</sup> and very bad;<sup>33</sup> what distinguishes it from the other versions of this episode is its relative lack of direct statement to the audience, its emphasis on the emotional situation and Isaac's child-like joy and suspicion at his reprieve. How the Abraham and Isaac plays elaborate on the character's emotions is apparent from the contrast

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32. Fernor, The Frontiers of Drama, pp. 11, 21, 22.

33. Chambers, English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages, pp. 43-4.

between the plays and the brief and business-like scene in the Cursor Mundi (ll. 3117-202).

Simeon and Joseph, holy but rather simple-minded persons, also express their emotions directly to the audience; especially do they complain of weakness and of tiredness, and Joseph complains of his poverty in the Chester Nativity. This is his reaction (ll. 401-24) to the taxation announced by the King's messenger, and here the dramatic instinct can be seen at work, as this reaction is absent from the Stanzaic Life which was extensively used for this play. Joseph also complains of his tiredness at the beginning of some plays (see above, pp. 121-2) and in the Coventry Weavers' Pageant (ll. 506-21). Simeon also is found complaining at play-openings (see above, pp. 122-3). In the Coventry Weavers' Pageant he is tearful, explaining that "all we ar now mortall" (ll. 177-97); in this play it is possible that the dramatist's treatment of Simeon has been affected by his characterisation of Joseph. These direct expressions of emotion obviously have a lot in common with lyrical poetry, and especially with those lyrical monologues which represented the words of old men and regretted the passing-away of things; this is especially true of the speeches which sometimes occur at the beginning of the plays (see above, pp. 121-6). Both the theme of transitoriness and the complaint of an old man about his decay were appropriated by the dramatists;<sup>34</sup> what is to be

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34. Taylor, "The Relation of the English Corpus Christi Play to the Middle English Religious Lyric," loc. cit., pp. 6-7, 10, 22. See also Early English Carols, no. 259, for dialogue between Joseph and the Angel very similar in tone to this scene in the plays.



noticed is that they were appropriated with the requirements of characterisation in mind.

#### Their Wives.

In the Chester Deluge, when his wife refuses to step into the ark, Noah says,

Lord, that women be crabbed aye,  
and never are meke, that dare I say.  
this is well sene by me to daye,  
In witnes of yow each one.  
(ll. 105-8)

This is an aside to the audience, who are given the role of neighbours. The Wakefield Master's interest in the possibilities of this domestic antagonism is obvious from his devoting two scenes to it in the Towneley Noah. His anticipation of it when he has Noah say that he fears there will be trouble because his wife is "ffor litill oft angre" (l. 187) was no doubt received with satisfaction. His handling of the scenes is notable for the containment within the stanzaic structure of the swift altercations of Noah and his wife (in strong contrast to the so-called "rotation speeches"<sup>35</sup> of some of the plays), and for the development of the kind of remark addressed to the audience by Noah in the Chester play. Both man and wife in the Master's play invoke the audience, involving them in their strife, the wife speaking of "we women" and of how many wives present would gladly see their husbands dead, the husband warning

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35. Spencer, op. cit., p. 190.

all married men to chastise their wives (ll. 208-16, 391-400, 409). A fine assumption of an aside remark into the dialogue occurs at ll. 208-16, where Noah catches his wife complaining to the audience and tells her to hold her tongue.

That the aside remark was felt to be specially suitable for this kind of occasion is evident not only from the Wakefield Master's use of it, but also from its presence in two plays about the Creation and in other plays. In the Chester Creation "adam shall speake mournfullie" as he declares that all mankind is now taught by him "to flee womans intisement" (ll. 345-60); in the York Adam and Eve Driven from Eden the same moral is drawn, again in an aside remark (ll. 149-50).

Joseph is the character who says this kind of thing most consistently; his personality as it is given in apocryphal sources invited the characterisation, for he is there humble, weak and terrified, troubled at Mary's conception, ashamed and afraid of his Son.<sup>36</sup> In particular, it is worth noting that in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, x, he weeps at the thought that a man disguised as an angel has deceived Mary, and that in the Protevangelium, ix, when told he must marry Mary, he cries, "Let me not become ridiculous to the Children of Israel." Through whatever channels this idea of Joseph was received by the playwrights, they accepted it, and used the same

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36. Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, viii, x, xxvi, xxix; Protevangelium, ix, xiii; Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, x; History of Joseph the Carpenter, v; Gospel of St. Thomas I, xv.

technique for its exposition as they used for Noah and Adam and the Shepherds. Like these characters, Joseph applies his own situation to those around him. Of course, in his case it is a tale of "an old man and a may", as he says in the Chester Nativity; after explaining and lamenting his predicament in this play, he adds,

god let never an old man  
take him a yonge woman,  
ne set his hart her upon,  
lest he beguiled be!

for accord there may be none  
nor they may never be at one  
and that is seene in many one  
as well as on me.

(ll. 123-60)

Similarly, in the Towneley Annunciation Joseph speaks proverbially ("It is ill cowpled of youth and elde") to the audience (ll. 155-78); in the Towneley Flight into Egypt he says,

yong men, bewar, red I!  
wedying makys me all wan.  
(ll. 139-50)

Again, in the Coventry Shearmen and Tailors' Pageant he says all old men should take him as an example (ll. 133-5). In the Coventry Weavers' Pageant Mary rebukes Joseph for complaining about their kind of January and May marriage and he replies,

Dame, all this cumpany wyll sey the same.  
Is itt not soo? Spoyke, mon, for schame!  
Tell you the trothe ase you well con!  
(ll. 463-78)

She asks him to "leyve of these gawdis." Like Noah in the Wakefield Master's play (p. 156 above) she is, as it were, concerned about her reputation. Two other examples of a farcical interruption of a defamatory address to the audience may be cited: in the Croxton Sacrament the Doctor enters and demands to know what his boy has been saying to the audience in his absence (!) (ll. 493-500), and in the Towneley Killing of Abel Cain insists on his boy's ceasing to address the audience (ll. 439-50).

Joseph again complains to the audience ("Loo, fryndis"), in the Coventry Weavers' Pageant, about his "cumbrous" existence with Mary and about the precocity of Jesus, again proverbially (ll. 564-72, 747-53, 792-6). In the Ludus Coventriae Betrothal of Mary also, Joseph enjoys his apocryphal character (ll. 155-8, 199-202) and in the Ludus Coventriae Joseph's Return he addresses the audience proverbially, warning them of the dangers of young wenches:

3a. 3a all Olde men to me take tent  
and weddyth no wyff in no kynnyys wyse  
pat is a zonge wench be myn a-sent  
ffor doute and drede and swych servyse  
Alas Alas my name is shent  
all men may me now dyspyse  
and seyn olde cokwold pi bow is bent.  
(ll. 49-57; also ll. 81-3, 88-122)

This kind of speech became attached to the shepherds also, as they open their plays with their rambling soliloquies (see above, pp. 118-21); its suitability for them is obvious.

Some medieval poems warning of the dangers of various kinds of

marriage have the same tone as these speeches,<sup>37</sup> and of course such sentiments as the speakers express were not novel. What is noticeable is the dramatists' firm grasp on the suitability of this kind of thing for certain of their characters. In the plays the speeches are mostly proverbial and are spoken in either a warning or friendly or distressed way to the speakers' neighbours and friends, the audience. A farcical touch, found elsewhere, is introduced when the asides are spoken in the presence of Mary or Noah's wife in two of the plays. The Wakefield Master and a spirited reviser of the Coventry plays are especially fond of the device. Although less solemn or less grotesque than other types of open technique, it still promotes the kind of pretence in which the audience is drawn close to a particular character and invited to respond directly to his statement.

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37. Wakefield Pageants, pp. 105-6; Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries, nos. 39-44; Early English Carols, nos. 403-5, and p. 432, also nos. 408, 409, which have slapstick dialogue written in stanzaic form; Carey, The Wakefield Group in the Towneley Cycle, p. 161 and notes.

### E. The Emotions of Christ's Followers.

The lyrical laments which surround Christ's Passion in the vernacular plays are a continuation of a tradition established in the liturgical Easter plays;<sup>38</sup> lyrical complaints were also early associated with celebrations of the Passion.<sup>39</sup> In the Chester Christ's Passion, the four Maries speak their laments around the Cross, and it seems that these were chiefly, if not entirely, addressed to the person of Jesus, hanging on the Cross, and to the torturers (ll. 625-88). Some passages, however (ll. 633-40, 649-56, 665-70, 685-8) mention Jesus in the third person, and so perhaps the speakers here turned and spoke out to the audience. In the Towneley Crucifixion, while most of Mary's lament is made to her Son, a few parts are not addressed to Him specifically and one stanza appears directly to the audience:

Maydyns, make youre mone!  
And wepe ye, wyfes, everichon,  
with me, most wrich, in wone,  
The childe that borne was best!  
(ll. 395-9)

John, in the Towneley Scourging, mixes with his lament some information for the audience. He begins a new scene with this passage of direct address (ll. 260-75); it is a version of his speech in the York Christ Led Up to Calvary, which also opens a new scene and

38. Marshall, M.H., op. cit., p. 981.

39. Young, op. cit., i, 492-513.

is addressed to the audience (ll. 107-42). The laments of the Maries were probably contained in the leaf missing at this point; the soldiers interrupt them with the same coarseness and scorn with which they interrupted Jesus in the Crucifixion. In the York-Towneley Resurrection Mary Magdalene laments after the other Maries have left her, and this passage, in which she reproaches herself, must have been spoken out to the audience (ll. 270-87). In the Ludus Coventriae First Passion, after the conspiracy of the Jews, she also has a short soliloquy in which she laments her sins, gives her name and states her intention for the information of the audience (ll. 462-74). Her speech is typical of many in the medieval drama that combine the explanatory with the lyrical:

As a cursyd creature cloeyd all in care  
 and as a wyckyd wrecche all wrappyd in wo  
 Of blysse was nevyr no berde so bare  
 as I mysylf pat here now go  
 Alas Alas I xal for fare  
 ffor po grete synnys pat I have do  
 lesse than my lord god sum-del spare  
 and his grett mercy receyve me to  
     Mary maudelyn is my name  
 Now wyl I go to cryst jhesus.

In two of the plays Peter laments to the audience after he has betrayed Jesus. In the York Realist's play, little is made of this scene (ll. 168-71); but in the Ludus Coventriae Second Passion the playwright seems to have realised that Luke xxii, 61-2 would make good theatre. Whereas in the York play Jesus speaks, His silent look of reproach was acted here: "And þan jhesus xal lokyn on

petyr \* and petyr xal wepyn and pan he xal gon out." He then addresses a lament to the audience (at l. 192).

Although, then, a number of the lamentations in the plays are spoken to the audience, sometimes including information for them, only one passage directly invites the audience to share the speaker's grief; but this is usually implied, and the invitation evidently shows the influence of that class of lyric which appealed in this way to the listeners. These English lyrics are addressed rather vaguely to some women in general;<sup>40</sup> they are closely related to the Latin lyrical laments where the women are the women of Jerusalem.<sup>41</sup> In the theatre the appeal became more pointed, especially in the Towneley Crucifixion, for there the "maydyns" and "wyfes" are presumably the audience. The dramatic rendering of these verses in the plays may be understood to have been tearful<sup>42</sup> and accompanied by gestures of despair and longing made probably towards the Cross. If one may judge from the extant documents, the speeches in this scene, although emotionally charged, were not usually the kind of

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40. Taylor, "The English 'Planctus Mariae'," MF, iv, p. 615, no. 22; Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, nos. 7, 8, 9.

41. Young, op. cit., i, 498 (Planctus ante nescia, st. 13, 14 and Flete, fideles animae, st. 1); and 507.

42. Chester Christ's Passion, at l. 624 (apparatus), "maria lacrymans"; Ludus Coventriae Appearance to Mary Magdalen, at l. 1, "and wepyth". In this scene in painted glass, John and Mary are often shown with tears falling from their eyes (Woodfordo, Stained Glass in Somerset, p. 26).



direct and pressing invitations to share in the characters' feelings which were delivered to the audience in other parts of the plays.

Exceptions to this observation are, of course, the Bodleian Burial of Christ and Christ's Resurrection. These unusual plays are largely amalgams of lyrical material,<sup>43</sup> and there is in them far more direct appeal to the audience. Both plays begin with speeches addressed to the audience, the former with a most dramatic speech by Joseph (see above, pp. 128-9), who in this play also addresses to the audience the reproachful lyric which is perhaps most frequently found on the lips of Christ (ll. 274-321); the Virgin Mary also calls for a direct emotional response from the listeners, with her lyrical refrain "Who pat can not wepe at me may here", which is found elsewhere,<sup>44</sup> and with her statement "O man, he suffered thus for thee" (ll. 615-789). The composer of these plays, who seems not to have originally intended them as drama,<sup>45</sup> probably realised that the material he was handling was, in fact, exceptionally dramatic, and--given the usual technique of direct appeal to the audience--suitable for performance; whether they ever achieved performance, however, is doubtful, since the material is not varied enough for the stage. The Burial of Christ could have been performed

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43. Taylor, "The English 'Plandus Mariae'," loc. cit., p. 628.

44. Ibid., pp. 628, 634; Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, no. 9, and note.

45. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 432.

with an image of Christ ("his ymage of pitee", l. 796) which the Virgin held in her lap ("Here in myn armys", l. 614) as she sat (l. 658) beneath the Cross. This was the traditional pictorial form of the Lamentation over Christ's Body,<sup>46</sup> and if the play was performed it was a staging of this scene. The only other extant English play that stages it is the *Ludus Coventriae Second Passion*, at l. 1140 to l. 1155. Some of the lyrical laments of the Virgin (see above, p. 162 n. 40) suppose Christ's head to be in her lap.<sup>47</sup>

Joy at Christ's resurrection, like grief at His crucifixion, is expressed directly to the audience in the Towneley and *Ludus Coventriae Resurrection* plays, in both cases in very lyrical speeches. In the latter, the Virgin Mary invites the audience to exalt with her:

Now all mankynde beth glad with gle  
 For deth is deed as ge may see  
 and lyff is reysed endles to be  
 In hevyn dwellynge Above.  
 (ll. 1468-71)

In the former, Mary Magdalene's lyric is more personal (ll. 612-32). Similar speeches occur in the Digby *Mary Magdalene* (ll. 1336-48), and in the *Ludus Coventriae Appearance to Mary Magdalen* (ll. 63-85),

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46. Réau, *op. cit.*, II, ii, 519.

47. Some of the lyrics show an intense and realistic visual imagination, and this is perhaps what Professor Brown is referring to when he writes (*Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*, p. xxi) of the influence of the stage on these lyrics; see especially nos. 7, 11, 13-16, 45-48.

where Christ's reproachful rhetorical question becomes on Mary's lips an expression of great joy:

how myght I more gretter joye have  
 than se þat lorde with opyn syght. . .  
 There kan no tounge my joye expres.

Here the lyrical exclamation has been fitted in between two scenes fairly common in the liturgical drama (Christus Hortulanus and the announcement of Mary to the disciples). The Virgin's expression of her great joy and thankfulness at the Annunciation, the Magnificat, is included in the mystery plays; in the Chester Nativity (at l. 64-112) and Towneley Salutation (ll. 49-78), it seems that she begins by singing a line or two of the Latin and then continues singing or speaking it in English, but in the Ludus Coventriae Visit to Elizabeth, she sings (or says) it entirely in Latin, while Elizabeth translates it into verse, appropriately changing the pronouns--an impressive ritual-like scene (ll. 81-104). After this, Mary says it is ordained to be sung every day at "our" evensong--an "anachronism" due to the dramatist's instructional impulse. In the York Annunciation, the Magnificat is sung as an ending to the play.

Whenever it is convenient a character can give his name and explain his business or intentions to the audience. In the Chester Coming of Antichrist, for example (between ll. 269 and 532) Elias and Enoch have, as it were, the audience continually in mind as they speak. Again, Moses in the Towneley Pharoah explains his intentions to the audience, concluding with a blessing on them (ll.

88-108, 196-9). At the entry of the three Magi, which has usually been displaced as a play-opening by a sword-rattling scene, the three Magi speak in turn and the passage is a mixture of prayer, dialogue, and direct address to the audience. In the York and Coventry plays, the third king exclaims as he sees the other two. The methods of introducing the shepherds and the Magi in the Coventry Shearmen and Tailors' Pageant (ll. 204-17, 540-93) are very similar to each other, the first shepherd and the second and third Magi remarking that they are lost. One more example will show the here inconspicuous open technique at work: the reported speech of Luke xix, 2-4 becomes, in the York Entry into Jerusalem, a passage of direct address by Zacharias (ll. 392-435). The playwrights do convey information by dialogue, but evidently they never felt that method to be superior.

#### F. The Audience and the Evil Characters.

On a number of occasions a wicked character explains his intentions to the audience; this kind of speech, in fact, makes the opening to three of the Temptation plays, and in other temptation scenes there is a similar effect. For example, in the Chester Creation the Devil enters crying in distress, explaining that pride has cast him down and that he is going to make man lose paradise by deceiving Eve; he then assumes his disguise, in full view, of course, of the audience—"my adders coate I will put on" (ll. 161-208). At l. 161 there occurs, in one group of mss., the stage-

direction:

Then Adam and Eve shall stande nackede and shall not  
be ashamed, and then the serpent shall Come up out  
of a hole and the deville walkinge shal saye. . .

This direction, together with l. 193, "A manner of an Adder is in this place" and l. 206, "my adders coate I will put on", indicates that the writer had in mind an arrangement whereby the Devil entered onto the platea and at the same time a snake costume was drawn up out of a trap-door in the wagon floor. The Latin stage-direction in the other group of mss. does not fit the text so well. The Devil's long and evil soliloquy, spoken, as it were, confidentially to the audience as he lurks in Paradise, is extremely effective--chilling and abominable. A similar but shorter villainous confidence occurs in the Norwich Creation, Text B (ll. 36-42). It was on scenes like these, no doubt, that the author of Wisdom drew for his presentation of Lucifer; here also the Devil says it is his intention to tempt man by telling him false stories and here also (as at Norwich) he aims to achieve his purpose by assuming brightness: this is an interesting moralisation and modernisation of the mystery play scene, for his bright disguise is no longer a serpent skin with the face of a woman (as at Chester), but the costume of a "prowde galonte" (ll. 325-80).

In the Chester (ll. 81-105, 125-8, 141-60), York (ll. 85-96, 125-34, 175-80), and *Ludus Coventriae* (ll. 144-52, 187-95) Temptation plays the Devil speaks aside to the audience to record his

distress at Jesus' failure to succumb and to indicate his next line of attack. The horror of the play-opening is repeated throughout the performance; the audience is kept informed of the Devil's distress and his plans by his direct statements to them, whereas in, for example, the Cursor Mundi (ll. 12916-13001) the mind of the Tempter is hardly shown. The Temptation scenes may be compared to the Abraham and Isaac episodes, with their regular supply of asides and elaboration of the emotions (see above, pp. 152-4). In the Temptation scenes in Mankind, the Tempter also confides to the audience, although here he is more mischievous and his relationship with them more personal. He asks them to keep quiet while he does his work--"Qwyst! pesse!"; there is more fun in this scene (ll. 518-33; 48-50; 58-73; 82-6; 98-9), and there are more opportunities for sporting wags to warn Mankind with a shout.

The Devil also explains to the audience, again in distress, his plan to prevent Jesus' crucifixion. This scene occurs in the York Dream of Pilate's Wife, where it is taken from the Northern Passion. It is possible to see how the York Realist dramatises the homiletic material before him; he turns a passage of straightforward narrative (Northern Passion, ll. 1061-76) into a confiding soliloquy (ll. 159-67), adding the dramatic cry of despair, "Owte! owte! harrowe". This was an obvious adaptation, but the elementary nature of the process should not conceal its suitability. A similar speech occurs in the Ludus Coventriae Second Passion (ll. 507-22). The idea of a confiding soliloquy by Satan in these scenes--

given the homiletic material--may well have been suggested by his soliloquies in the Creation plays. The devil's distressed and wicked statement of purpose in the Newcastle Noah (ll. 97-114) was probably suggested by the scenes in these two types of play.

Another villainous and secretive address to the audience is sometimes spoken by Judas. Again it is clear that the simple narrative in the Northern Passion of what "iudas thoght" (ll. 131-132d; pp. 20-1, ll 13\*-41\*, etc.)<sup>48</sup> has been transformed into a soliloquy addressed to the audience in the York Realist's Conspiracy:

And perfore faste forþe will I flitte  
 The princes of prestis untill,  
 And selle hym full sone or þat I sitte,  
 For therty pens in a knotte knytte.  
 Þus-gatis full welc schall he witte,  
 þat of my wretthe wreke me I will.  
 (ll. 127-54)

There is a similar passage in the Chester Christ's Visit to Simon the Leper (ll. 265-304), which is a scene by itself. In the York Last Supper Judas' malicious statement to the audience (ll. 104-15) may easily have been suggested by another episode in the Northern Passion (ll. 147-50); he delivers the speech on leaving the supper-table, and in the Ludus Coventriae First Passion there is an aid here to the understanding of the presentation of this kind of soliloquy:

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48. See Lyle, The Original Identity of the York and Towneley Cycles, pp. 7-8.

here judas rysyth prevely and goth in þe place  
and seyt. . .

Now cowntyrfetyd I have A prevy treson  
My Maysteres power for to felle.

(ll. 590-605)

Other similar soliloquies are uttered by Aristorius (Croxton Sacrament, ll. 280-96), Saul (Digby St. Paul, ll. 169-82, though Saul is perhaps speaking to his servants), and, less sinisterly, by Mak (Towneley Shepherds' Play, II, ll. 269-95). Aristorius, like Judas in the Ludus Coventriae, walks in the "place" as he soliloquises: in the "place", characters can be more confidential with the audience:

Now prevely wyll I prove my pace,  
My bargayn thys nyght for to fulfyl.  
Ser Isoder shall nott know of thys case,  
For he hath oftyn sacred as þat ys skyl.

The chyrche key ys at my wyll;  
Ther ys no thyng þat we shall tary.

It has been suggested that Judas' revelation of his reason for betraying Christ is "handled more dramatically" in the Towneley Conspiracy (ll. 248-81), since there he explains it in dialogue with the Jews.<sup>49</sup> This evaluation of the scenes would be true, of course, only if the insinuation into a dialogue of information that the audience should know were taken to be the chief skill of a dramatist; but the medieval dramatists did not noticeably care

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49. McNeir, op. cit., p. 604; Williams, op. cit., p. 15 n. 4 ("presented more dramatically").



for such a skill. They frequently chose this villainous soliloquy, and for the same reason that they chose other open techniques: by letting the audience into his secret the villain raises their expectations, and since it is to them that he directly confides his plan, they are placed in a position where they have a special responsibility to react. The devil, Judas and the others, it may perhaps be assumed, spoke in a furtive and confidential way, the tone of their speeches varying from the terrifyingly nefarious to the mischievous.

The devils threaten, curse (or even make direct assaults on) the audience. They do this, for example, when they come to fetch Herod and Antichrist in the Chester plays. In the Slaying of the Innocents the demon enters crying, "Warr, warr!" (which suggests that he brushed by the audience) and threatening to beat the audience with his "Croked Cambrock"<sup>50</sup>--the threat and the cruel instrument belong to the same tradition as the braggart's menacing sword and the soldier's "knad". He says he will return to fetch more people (ll. 433-56). In the Coming of Antichrist demons enter to collect the body of Antichrist, explaining that they were his

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50. "Cambrock" is unrecorded in the NED; from the context it is clearly some kind of offensive weapon ("with this Croked Cambrock your backs shall I cloe") and so it is possibly connected with the words "cambrel" or "cambren", which designate a piece of bent wood or iron used by butchers for hanging meat (NED). All the mss. have the form "cambrock", except the Devonshire, which has "cramboke" (p. lvi); this is not recorded in the NED, but a "cramp" or "crame" is a grappling iron and "boke" means "to thrust".

inspiration and be their provider, and leave behind a "dole" "to all this fayr company of sorrow and care" (ll. 661-706). Such a malison was not only in character, it was also, of course, true, just as is the demon's sudden remark to the audience (or other devils?) in the Towneley Orestion that as he curses the devils' pride, "so may ye all that standys be side" (l. 157). The warnings addressed to "you, Tapstars" (Chester Slaying of the Innocents, l. 449) and "Ye harlots and liars", etc. (Towneley Judgment, by the Wakefield Master, ll. 319-22; 324-31; 350-67) by devils would probably have been received with acclaim.

The devil sometimes curses or insults the audience on his way out, as in the Chester Temptation, where he departs with a vulgar flourish and says that he will soon be calling his servants--the wicked ones in the audience--to Hell (ll. 157-60; BWh, ll. 1-12). The false tapstress in the Chester Christ's Descent into Hell curses the audience (ll. 269-308), and Herod on going to sleep says, "Lucifer save you all, sirs", to his retinue or to the audience or to both (York Trial Before Herod, ll. 55-7). The most consistently disrespectful person, however, is Cain, and this attitude is in keeping with his surly and unrepentant character. In the York Sacrificium Cayme and Abell he curses the "cankerd company" (ll. 97-8); in the Towneley Killing of Abel he is wickedly defiant to the audience (ll. 331-5), and his boy, after speaking the defamatory proclamation, curses them (ll. 443-8). The rather mysterious young man in the Ludus Coventriae Woman Taken in Adultery is probably

best understood as a Cain-like character; he is first hostile and rude to the Jews (ll. 127-36) and then he explains to the audience that he was really much afraid of the Jews. He says this scornfully, perhaps, or mischievously; he goes out cursing the audience (ll. 127-44).

The attitude taken by the low and evil characters towards the audience (which sometimes served to provide the opening of a play or scene) was essentially boisterous and nasty, but sometimes the onslaughts of the devils may have been comical. It would be surprising to learn that there was no continuity between the sallies of the devils in the Mystère d'Adam (stage directions, ll. 41-2, 47, 120-1) and the action of the Vice in Heywood's A Play of Love, who runs about the "place" with fireworks. The close and rude contact maintained by the evil characters with the audience may be contrasted with the stately aloofness of, for example, God. There is dramatic decorum in this distinction, for the audience, of course, consisted of fallen and sinful mankind. Not until the Reformation does a sympathetic character (John the Commonwealth) come from the ranks of the audience (Lindsay, Thrie Estaitis, ll. 2413-30). The same distinction is observable in other ways; the anatopisisms, for example, are found chiefly, if not exclusively, on the lips of wicked or homely characters--it is a shepherd who dreams he was in England, and a pagan dignity who offers his flunkey the Earldom of Kent. Again, the occasional sign of extra-metrical and extempore

speech is attached to the wicked or the undignified only (for example: Chester Adoration of the Shepherds, at ll. 57, 64, Coming of Antichrist, at l. 252; Mankind, l. 63; Ludus Coventriae First Passion, at l. 998; Castle of Perseverance, at l. 1812).

The lamentations of wicked characters are usually different in style from those of the good characters. The cry "Owte! owte! harrowe" and similar exclamations commonly serve to introduce the lamentations of the evil characters. The Devil often begins his speech thus, and the cry became associated with his character. An extended cry of defeat, based, no doubt, on the Hellish confusion described in the Gospel of Nicodemus, constitutes one of the scenes in the Digby Mary Magdalene (ll. 963-92); there is also a roar of frustration at ll. 722-4. The Devil is sometimes so petrified that he passes wind. This was a comic moment; it should be noted that this kind of reaction to the thought of Hell is quite appropriate--for Lucifer (Ludus Coventriae Fall of Lucifer (ll. 77-82), Fall of Man, ll. 353-6, Temptation, ll. 187-95).

Cain's grief is also expressed directly to the audience (Chester Creation, ll. 569-76, 665-80, Ludus Coventriae Noah, ll. 174-7 and Lamech's speech, ll. 190-7, probably modelled on Cain's), and is rather similar to the Devil's. Herod's grief may well have been increased under the influence of the Devil's; it is expressed directly to the audience, as is his fear at the moment of his death (Chester Adoration of the Magi, ll. 374-81, Slaying of the Innocents,

11. 417-32; Towneley Offering of the Magi, 11. 290-326, 469-80; Digby Killing of the Children, 11. 365-74, 381-8). The prince's death in the Ludus Coventriae Death of Herod is dramatically sudden; in the Digby Killing of the Children and Mary Magdalene (11. 265-76) it is more like the scene in the Chester Slaying of the Innocents, exclamatory and melodramatic:

Alas! what the devil! is this to mone?  
 Alas! my days be now done.  
 I wot I must dye soone,  
 for damned I must be. . .  
 My legges rotten and my armes. . .  
 I dye, I dye, alas! alas!  
 I may no longer dwell!  
 (11. 417-32)

There are other lamentations addressed to the audience, and some of those in the Castle of Perseverance clearly show the influence of Cain and the Devil (11. 2209-26, 2379-405).

The open presentation of the devils and other evil characters, therefore, takes various forms: they may, in certain well-defined scenes, confide in the audience and so stimulate a positive recognition of their evil and create an atmosphere of furtiveness; they may associate rudely with the onlookers and curse or insult them; their loud and foolish lamentations are addressed to the audience and their shameful deaths played out in front of them.

#### G. Preaching in the Plays.

There are a number of sermons within the plays. These, like those which begin the plays (see above, pp. 108-13) are mostly

addressed to the audience rather than to other characters on the stage; like them, they also sometimes exhibit (quite naturally) features associated with preaching in medieval England and are usually delivered by biblical characters thought of as preachers in the Bible, such as John or Moses, or by other suitable characters, such as ecclesiastics. When the sermons are historical rather than purely contemporary (as in the Morality plays) then the concomitant assumption that the audience is listening to the sermon for the first time lends the occasion the strong, vital kind of dramatic pretence which often occurs in other episodes.

Moses' sermon on the Ten Commandments in the *Ludus Coventriae* Moses, (ll. 49-194), for instance, is a metrical homily similar in form to a number of medieval pieces;<sup>51</sup> what is interesting, however, is the way in which this sermon is shown to be delivered on God's instructions and so delivered in its original setting, with the audience participating. It is the original sermon on the Ten Commandments, as is Moses' sermon in the Towneley Prophets (ll. 31-90). In the Chester Balaam and Balak it seems that the sermon is spoken to a group of stage Israelites (see stage-directions at ll. 24, 33), but it may also have been more widely delivered. John the Baptist's sermons in the Towneley (ll. 275-88) and *Ludus Coventriae* (ll. 131-82) plays of the Baptism are exhortations to the audience. St. Peter and St. John preach to the people in the *Ludus Coventriae*

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51. Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 486; *Ludus Coventriae*, p. 11.

First Passion (ll. 222-53, 254-69); they say that the "Heavenly leech" is coming, and while no doubt their message is logically to the citizens of Jerusalem, it was most certainly the audience also who were instructed to repay Jesus with the love of their hearts. Peter is also found preaching in the Digby Mary Magdalene (ll. 1812-15), where Mary, too, preaches to the audience, or as Furnivall says, to "the folk" (ll. 1924-39); the episode is from The Golden Legend.<sup>52</sup> Lazarus proclaims the goodness of God in the York Lazarus (ll. 194-7) and Digby Mary Magdalene (ll. 914-20), and declares the inevitability of death in the Towneley Lazarus (ll. 111-216); here he probably speaks, with repetitious urgency, entirely to the audience, whereas in the other instances he may well have spoken to Martha's household as well.<sup>53</sup> There is a sermon by a bishop in the Croxton Sacrament (ll. 786-807) and in the Pride of Life (ll. 337-90), "addressed to the audience";<sup>54</sup> in the latter case the sermon draws on the early literature of Complaint.<sup>55</sup> St. Paul preaches directly to the audience against the Seven Deadly Sins in the Digby St. Paul (ll. 503-72), his preaching being indicated in Acts ix, 20,

52. "And they fond the blessyd marie magdalene prechyng with her disciples," f. ccxviii. The disciples are not represented in the play, it seems.

53. Lazarus' sermon is closely based on one of Bromyard's (Owst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 487).

54. Non-Cycle Mystery Plays, p. lxix.

55. Peter, Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature, pp. 191-2.

and sermons by abstract characters, Mercy and Wisdom, appear in Man-kind (ll. 157-80) and in Wisdom (ll. 1001-68, from the Novem Virtutes).<sup>56</sup> The warning against dice spoken by the Torturers in the Wakefield Master's Talents--a didactic sermon delivered by three converted characters--is quite without parallel in the mystery plays (ll. 368-403).

Apart from these dramatic sermons, which were delivered in all their seriousness straight to the audience, there are also in the plays a large number of sermon-like remarks, made briefly to the audience or to other characters, pointing out that the scene just acted is an "example" for them. The large majority of these remarks are made by Jesus. Thus, in the York Last Supper (ll. 65-8) and Ludus Coventriae First Passion (ll. 833-6), Jesus says of His washing the disciples' feet that it is an example of meekness and obedience; this is a scriptural "example" (John xii, 15). Again, in the York (ll. 92-8) and Ludus Coventriae (ll. 73-7) Baptism plays He explains to John that He is receiving baptism as an example for all men--"For men schall me þer myrroure make", He says at York; in the Ludus Coventriae He says it is an example of meekness, and this is repeated to the audience by John (ll. 79-87): it seems likely that this sentiment has been borrowed from the feet-washing episode. In the York Temptation Jesus explains the example of His action in words very similar to those He used to John in the Baptism; He says that

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56. Smart, op. cit., pp. 34-7.



when men are tempted,

Dare myrroure may bei make of me,  
for to stand still.

(11. 193-8)

He concludes the Ludus Coventriae Temptation with a personal homily (11. 196-221). When He forgives the woman in the York Woman Taken in Adultery, He explains to the disciples that it was an "ensample"--

whoso schall othir blame,  
Loke firste þam-self be clone.  
(11. 84-6; cf. John viii, 7)

In the plays dealing with the raising of Lazarus, Jesus prays to God before performing the miracle (John xi, 41-2) and it seems probable that the "populam qui circumstat" of the Vulgate refers to the audience as well as the household in the plays (Chester, 11. 446-53, York, 11. 174-83, Ludus Coventriae, 11. 413-20, Digby Mary Magdalene, 11. 903-9, omitted in Towneley Lazarus). Another example of a dramatist widening the range of a remark in the Bible is the Towneley treatment of John xi, 25-6, where Jesus says to Martha only that He is the Resurrection and the Life; in the Towneley Lazarus, Jesus begins this speech:

I warne you, both man & wife,  
I am the resurrection & the life.  
(11. 51-6)

In the Chester Christ's Visit to Simon the Leper Jesus introduces the parable of the two debtors by saying,

By an Exsample I shall thee showe,  
and to this companye, on a roe . . . ;  
(ll. 77-80)

He does not say this in Luke vii, 40-1. Three rather similar remarks are made by minor characters in the York Woman Taken in Adultery (ll. 71-4), Christ Led Up to Calvary (ll. 187-90) and Incredulity of Thomas (ll. 183-4). Mankind holds himself up to the audience as an "example" in the Castle of Perseverance (ll. 2970-3008). The only really sententious and explanatory remark made to the audience by Jesus is in the Ludus Coventriae Christ and the Doctors (ll. 279-80).

At these moments, then, where a character pauses in the action to point the moral to the audience, it is very often the case that the direct speech of the Bible has become moral exposition; and the range of the address is sometimes widened, if only by the addition of the conventional tag "old and young", or "man and wife", to include the audience. Such exposition of the moral significance of an episode is very similar to the method of medieval sermons, which frequently contain a short story and sometimes follow it with some such phrase as "By this example you may know. . .", or "By this you may understand. . .".<sup>57</sup>

Some of the Chester plays have an "Expositor", otherwise known as a "Doctor",<sup>58</sup> and therefore probably conceived as a preacher

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57. E.g., Mirk's Festial, pp. 155, 166, 171, etc.; Middle English Sermons, pp. 9, 40, 66, 77, etc.

58. He is sometimes called a Doctor in mss. BWh (Chester Plays, pp. 84, 103, 224, 228); he is quite distinct from the Nuntius.

(see above, p. 21 n. 19). In the Sacrifice of Isaac he says, sitting on horseback,

Lordingis, what maye this signifie,  
I will expound apertlie,  
that lewed, standing hereby,  
may know what this may be,

and interprets the story of Melchisedek (ll. 113-44),<sup>59</sup> as he also later interprets God's command about circumcision (ll. 193-208).

In Balaam and Balak he tells of the Ten Commandments and says (speaking now more as the players' advocate) that they have selected the "most frutefull" items from "this storye" since the whole would take too long to play (ll. 65-88); he also interprets the prophecies after the prophets have spoken (ll. 305-12; 321-8; 337-44; 353-60; 369-76; 385-92; 401-8). The fact that he speaks after each prophet, and speaks an interpretation, indicates that he is not related very closely to the vocator of the liturgical Prophetas who, in the nature of things, spoke before each prophecy as well as after. He then says they chose to play six prophecies only since more "wold tary much the daye" (ll. 409-32). He also appears in the Prophets and Antichrist, where he again gives an explanation after each prophet has spoken (ll. 25-332). In the Nativity he delivers a long speech (ll. 577-656), all of which may be found in the Stan-

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59. From the Stanzaic Life, ll. 2393-420, beginning, "But quet this dede may signifie, / takes hede I will you say. . . / I will expoun er that I go." "That lewed, standing hereby" is not in the Life.

zaic Life; <sup>60</sup> even the apparently theatrical conclusion to his speech:

and no myracles, as we have ment/  
to play right here anone

is (except for the word "play") from the Stanzaic Life (ll. 693-6).

His speech in the Temptation (ll. 161-208) also comes from the Stanzaic Life (ll. 5241-5332), except, of course, for l. 202: "as played was in this place".

Contemplation speaks as an expositor in the middle of the Ludus Coventriae Visit to Elizabeth, where he gives the relevant details of the narrative of the "proces" (ll. 23-42). The scene is interesting since Contemplation tells his story while Mary and Joseph journey "circa placeam" on their way to visit Elizabeth. This again shows how, as far as one can judge, the placea was used to reveal the continuity of the action; movement played a vital part in medieval stagecraft (see above, p. 137 n. 2). Between the two Passion plays of the Ludus Coventriae two Doctors speak; this scene is an insertion, and it may be incomplete.<sup>61</sup> As it stands its relevance is not clear, but part of it (ll. 9-12) shows very clearly the affinity of these figures in the plays with the preachers. On the other hand, there is, in the Digby St. Paul, the Poeta, who as well as speaking the prologue and epilogue, speaks at the end of the first and second "stations" and at the beginning of the second and

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60. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 427-8.

61. Ludus Coventriae, p. 270 n. 3.

third. He gives instructions to the audience "to folow and succede" to the next "station",<sup>62</sup> promises that the story "shalbe briefly shewyd with all our besynes", and apologises for the "compyler hereof".

These expositors are not common in the medieval drama; the majority of all types of medieval plays manage without them. Apart from the exceptional "Poeta", they all seem to have been conceived as Doctors and thus it may be assumed that they originated from the desire of the clerical dramatists to be present in person or by proxy in their homiletic capacities<sup>63</sup> to urge the significance of their scenes, and to explain or apologise for them or ask for audience. It is likely that this impulse arose independently in various places. This theory is not irreconcilable with the theory

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62. The method of staging this play is obscure, but it is at least clear that there were, as usual, a "place" and built-up structures for the action. "Station" must mean the site of one of these structures. Whether there were three or two, sharing one "place" or in different parts of the "larger town" (Furnivall) or "small village" (Chambers), it is impossible to say. In any case, the method using "stations" was perhaps put forward as optional--this seems the best interpretation of "si placet" at l. 155.

63. Owt, Literature and Pulpit, p. 486, writes, "The mounted Expositor of the Chester Cycle and the Contemplatio of the Ludus Coventriae continue from time to time to do the office of those homiletic commentators" who prefaced and interrupted certain earlier Continental plays. Owt also refers to the influence of methods of open-air preaching inaugurated by the friars (*ibid.*, p. 478; Preaching in Mediaeval England, p. 313). The formative influence of the friars on the composition and performance of the plays, although undemonstrable, is likely (see Wickham, *op. cit.*, i, 316, for the early period, and Mill, Mediaeval Plays in Scotland, p. 291, for the later).

that the narrative singing of the choir, and less frequent devices such as explanatory speeches, in the liturgical drama are the forerunners of the doctor expositors in the vernacular drama;<sup>64</sup> for the clerical dramatist, with the desire to be present as a preacher to forward his play, may easily have been introduced to the possibility of achieving his purpose by being familiar with the narrative devices of the liturgical drama. The expositor, however, as he appears in the extant plays, shows few if any marks of a descent from the liturgical drama; rather, he is a preacher who occasionally speaks on behalf of the play as well as his theme.<sup>65</sup>

#### H. Proclamations.

On a number of occasions a messenger delivers a proclamation or message straight to the audience. In many cases this deliberately antagonises the audience towards wicked characters; sometimes it invites their sympathy. Thus, in the Towneley Offering of the Magi (ll. 73-84) the messenger sent from Herod proclaims that they will be slain unless they believe in Herod and Mahound. Again, in the Pride of Life, the King of Life's messenger probably issues his challenge to the audience (ll. 471-502, incomplete). He cries,

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64. Young, op. cit., 11, 404, states this categorically.

65. Chambers' assertion (Mediaeval Stage, 11, 148) that the Doctor and Expositor are the "lineal descendants" of the vocatores, and of St. Augustine in some of the German Prophet plays, is only partially true.

Pes & listenith to my sawe  
 Bope gonge & olde;  
 As ze wol nozt ben aslawe  
 Be ze never so bolde.

I am a messenger. . .

I am sente ffor to enquer  
 O-boute ferre & nere,  
 If any man dar werre arere  
 A-gein such a bachelere.

Similar scenes occur in the Chester Nativity (ll. 385-400), Ludus  
 Coventriae Trial of Joseph and Mary (ll. 117-28) and Betrothal of  
Mary (ll. 141-54), and the Castle of Perseverance (ll. 493-529).

In the case of the two morality plays the messengers descend from  
 the scaffolds into the "place"; this both gave the illusion of their  
 speaking at large, and brought them closer to the audience. The  
 essential point is that by addressing the audience directly the  
 messengers involve them in the situation so that they are forced to  
 respond. The method lends a sense of immediacy to the scene--there  
 is a notable example of this in the Ludus Coventriae Second Passion:

here xal A massanger com in-to þe place rennyng and  
 oryng Tydyngys tydyngys . and so rownd Abowth þe  
 place . Jhesus of nazareth is take . Jhesus of naza-  
 reth is take. . .<sup>66</sup>

(at. 1. 69)

66. This episode has been appreciated by Block in Ludus Coventriae,  
 pp. lvi-lvii, and McNeir, op. cit., p. 618--"perhaps as effect-  
 ive as any stage entrance in English drama". Miss Joan Little-  
 wood adopted this device in one of her productions (Pinas Ain't  
Wot They Used T'Be, where an underworld courier warns the Gal-  
 lery and Stalls that Mostface is approaching); two years ago I  
 outlined the theorisings on pp. 98-100 above and pp. 279-81  
 below to Miss Littlewood, who replied: "I agree with almost  
 everything you say. . . I am sure you are on the right lines"  
 (letter in my possession). See p. 202 n. 12 below.

This may be compared with the opening of the Bodleian Burial of Christ (pp. 128-9 above) for its vivid and immediate appeal.

Other proclamations, concerned with court proceedings, may well have involved the audience in a similar way, but to a lesser extent (York Dream of Pilate's Wife, ll. 367-77, Trial Before Herod, ll. 360-3; Mankind, ll. 659-62). There are two comic proclamations in the plays, one in the Towneley Killing of Abel (ll. 416-36) and the other in the Croxton Sacrament (ll. 528-41). On these two occasions the speakers stand "up" to make their formal proclamations. Proclamations are also sometimes used as a method of beginning a play.

#### I. Summary.

The majority of the vernacular plays have some kind of open technique, if not during the performance, then at the beginning of it. This technique, as it is found during the performance, is centred around certain well-defined groups of characters and episodes. In some cases it is the result of incorporating into a dramatic context certain formal methods of communication, such as sermons and proclamations; in others it is the result of adapting other artistic forms for the purposes of effective dramatic performance--chiefly, various kinds of solemn and emotional lyrics. When the device, as in these cases, is the result of an adaptation of some other form of expression, then this is usually transformed into something especially suitable for the theatre. The address to the passers-by and to mankind in the lyrics becomes less vague



in the theatre; it becomes a precise appeal to the audience. Mary's appeal to the women of Jerusalem becomes an appeal to the spectators. Indirect speech in the Bible becomes direct address. A proclamation demanding allegiance becomes, when spoken by the representative of a proud and wicked character, a challenge to the audience, an occasion for their rejection of presumption and wickedness. Again, the dramatic context meant that Joseph or Noah could refer their domestic problems to the judgement and experience of the audience, and proverbial lore could be resanctioned by the community. Sermons in the plays, usually suggested by the source material or demanded by the story, very often become admonitions to the audience. The adaptations result, then, in transformations, since living dramatic techniques are thereby created. Some of the devices, especially the defamatory proclamations and other farcical moments, and the running commentaries of God and Noah, are probably due not so much to adaptation as to invention.

All these devices are, as it were, interludes in the performances. On both sides of a device there may be ordinary dramatic dialogue, varying from fluent conversation to formal colloquy. The final speeches of the Knights in Murder in the Cathedral constitute a device similar to those in the medieval drama. All branches of the medieval drama use the open technique, and use it without any forcing. In some instances it is

clear that a particular device was added to a vernacular play after the bulk of it had been composed,<sup>67</sup> but this does not seem to have been always the case. By its very nature the open device often appears to be detachable from the body of the play, but there is nothing to suggest that many of these passages were not included when the plays were first performed in the vernacular. The simplest plays in, for example, the Towneley cycle, contain them. In any case, whatever their original guide--presumably the liturgical drama--the open technique as it is now found was the contribution of the vernacular dramatists.

The open technique is, however, found in one scene common in the liturgical drama: the announcement of Christ's resurrection is, in the simpler plays, often made by the Maries to the choir and congregation.<sup>68</sup> Slightly more complicated plays, which present Peter and John, also sometimes preserve the open technique by having the two disciples make the announcement to the choir and the congregation; previously, the effect was that the choir and congregation were pretended to be the disciples, now the suggestion is that they are the disciples' companions:

duo presbyteri sub persona Johannis et Petri ad Sepulchrum venientes tollunt sudarium, et ad clerum populumque conversi procedunt sic cantantes antiphonam,

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67. For example, Christ's speech to "earthly man" in the Chester Christ's Resurrection, ll. 154-85 (see above, p. 149 n. 25); or the Towneley Conspiracy, ll. 1-53.

68. Young, op. cit., 1, 253, 307; also 258, 263, 264, 266, 282, 292, 300.

"Gernitis, o socii ecce lintheamina et sudarium, et corpus non est in sepulchro inventum".<sup>69</sup>

In the most usual types of liturgical drama, therefore, one particular open technique is common, and its presence there may be explained as being due to the ritual and commemorative character of this drama; all the people present join in acting out or celebrating the Resurrection. There are practically no instances (see below, p. 220 n.29) of this particular open technique--the announcement of the Resurrection to the congregation--in the vernacular plays, but there are, on the other hand, many open techniques in the vernacular plays which never appear in the liturgical drama.

It does not seem that any one dramatist was fonder of the open technique in general than the other dramatists, although certain playwrights had a special fondness for certain devices--particular interest in the farcical and proverbial complaint is shown by the writer of rime couée stanzas in the Coventry plays; in the lyrical monologues by the author of the Bodleian Burial of Christ and Christ's Resurrection; in the sententious aside by the author of the Ludus Coventriae Abraham and Isaac, for example. It is unlikely that any dramatist deliberately eschewed the open technique. It was evidently felt to be the natural way of staging certain episodes.

The reason for this must be that the dramatists felt that the technique increased the effectiveness of their plays and intensified

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69. Ibid., i, 318; also 310, 311, 325, 328, 329, 343, 367.

their impact on the audience. For the essence of all the devices is the same. It is that the audience is suddenly attracted from observing the play to participating in it. While in the passages of conversation the onlooker remembers the story and reflects on its meaning, perhaps, here he is suddenly called upon to make his personal testimony. The open techniques do not usually advance the action--that is not their business; they bring home to the audience the pathos and meaning of the action. The speeches are not usually only "short cuts", or ways of conveying information that would otherwise have to be given in dialogue form, as Elizabethan soliloquies are often considered to be;<sup>70</sup> on the contrary, they are valuable in themselves. The speeches directly addressed to the audience are usually impassioned; the open technique within the play is characterised by its emotionalism. This is so not only in the case of Christ's appeal to the audience which corresponds to the growth of the cult of His sufferings in the late Middle Ages, but also in the case of, say, Abraham and Isaac, or the followers of Christ. The good invite sympathy, the wicked stimulate antipathy. Emotionalism is not a characteristic of the liturgical plays, except, perhaps, at that point near the end where they employ the open technique. Most of the scenes in the vernacular plays in which the open technique is used do not, in any case, have any antecedents in the liturgical plays, and those vernacular scenes, such as Christ's

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70. See, for example, Doran, Endeavors of Art, p. 252; Fermor, op. cit., p. 126.

Appearance to Mary Magdalene, which follow the pattern set by the liturgical drama, sometimes have a passage of impassioned direct address inserted (see above, p. 165).

The dramatists' methods of pointing and enlivening the plays usually assumed that the audience was ready to join, without any cavilling at the impossibility of both watching the procession and taking part in it,<sup>71</sup> willingly in the dramatic game. The audience is considered to be directly contemporary with the events taking place before its eyes, but it does not in virtue of this forgo the knowledge and faith which give it the power to react. The game that was started when a play began was renewed at various moments throughout the performance.

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71. A French proverb, several times quoted by A.B. Walkeley to illustrate the naturalistic dogma.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## Ending the Play

## A. Naturalistic Endings.

The open technique is frequently used at the conclusion of a play, but there are also many endings which may be called naturalistic, since they do not take any explicit notice of the audience. The fact that the performance has ended is usually made abundantly clear, for this kind of ending usually consists of the departure of a character or group of characters on a journey, or a blessing by one character. In the Chester cycle, for example, the Fall of Lucifer ends (borrowing a convenient scriptural moment--Genesis i, 22, 28) with God blessing His creation; at the conclusion of the Deluge, He blesses Noah and bids him "fare well". At the close of the Magi's Oblation, the three Magi are warned by the angel and so depart, but first take leave of each other, courteously; similarly, a suitable conclusion has been added to the scriptural narrative (John xi, 1-44) in Christ. The Adulteress. Chelidonius, where Jesus blesses Martha and says "Have good day. . ." and "to Ierusalem I take the way". Christ's Visit to Simon the Leper. Christ's Betrayal and the Sending of the Holy Ghost also end naturalistically and with equal decisiveness. The majority of the Chester plays, however, employ some special concluding device.

Similarly, most of the Towneley plays do not end naturalistically; but again, those that do, end in such a way that it is clear that the play is over: Isaac closes with Jacob bidding his parents farewell, Isaac blessing him (cf. Genesis xxviii, 3-4) and Rebecca hoping for "glad tythyngis"; Jacob finishes with Essau suggesting to Jacob that they depart (cf. Genesis xxxiii, 12). A rougher departure terminates the Conspiracy, which is similar in this respect to the Chester Christ's Betrayal: in the former, Malchus calls Jesus a "luskand losell", and tells him to

Step furth, in the wenyande!  
wenys thou ay to stand styll?

and says no man shall save Him; in the latter, a Jew says to Jesus,

trott uppon a prowder pace,  
Thou vyle pop[e]lard!

again promising that He will not escape. There are other instances of this kind of last-minute savagery in the plays, and often the final sentiment is, as in these examples, a reinforcement of the characterisation--the Towneley Scourging ends with the three torturers determined to get on with the crucifixion:

1 Com on thou!  
2 Put on thou!  
3 I com fast after you,  
And folowse on the chace.

Two other Towneley plays end naturalistically, Caesar Augustus with

Caesar commending the messenger to Mahound, and the Talents with Pilate blessing the torturers, fastidiously, in French--fastidiously, for in this play he has been partly characterised, it seems, along the lines of the villains in the York plays xxix-xxxi.

The first four plays of the York cycle end with God blessing His work. The blessing in Genesis i, 22, is in its place at the end of the second play and that in Genesis i, 28, at the end of the third play; the benedictions in the first and fourth plays are suitable dramatic interpolations. Similarly, one character blesses the others at the close of the Descent of the Holy Spirit and the Appearance of Our Lady to Thomas. A departure forms the ending of Noah and his Wife, Joseph's Trouble, the Purification and the Crucifixio Cristi, in each case emphasised by the concluding words: there is some art in the ending of Joseph's Trouble--Joseph tells Mary to bundle their "gere" and the last words of the play are "Helpe up nowe on my bak"; the Purification ends in the style of a "Farewell" lyric;<sup>1</sup> the Crucifixio Cristi (like the Towneley Scourging, and other plays--see above, p. 193) is well completed by the soldiers' ungracious departure. Those York plays that end naturalistically, then, end with an appropriately conclusive tone, and not unartistically.

Several of the Ludus Coventriae plays also close naturalistically at the point of a departure: the Fall of Man, Conception of

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1. Taylor, "The Relation of the English Corpus Christi Play to the Middle English Religious Lyric," loc. cit., p. 5.



Mary, Visit to Elizabeth and Adoration of the Magi end with a character suggesting it is time to go. The episode of the betrayal in the First Passion ends with one Jew urging the others to lead Christ to Caiaphas, and their departure is similar to that composed of the torturers' dialogue in the other three cycles; the stage-direction that follows (at l. 1040), instructing the Jews to make a great noise, manhandle Jesus and hold their weapons and crosset-lights up, serves as a reminder that the scripts here represent considerable animation and activity. Prayer and worship form the conclusion of other Ludus Coventriae plays, including the Betrothal of Mary, Joseph's Return, Purification, First Passion, Appearance to Mary Magdalen, Ascension, and Day of Pentecost. These doxologies very appropriately end religious plays, as the characters of these plays shared with the spectators the same very serious religious preoccupations and therefore the sentiments which they would naturally speak at the end of an episode would be echoed sympathetically by the audience. Blessings bestowed by one character on the others in the Ludus Coventriae Birth of Christ and Adoration of the Shepherds<sup>2</sup> again make natural and sensible finishing points.

Various other plays, including the Bodleian Burial of Christ, Robin Hood and the Friar ("go home", says the Friar at ll. 149-50), and the Shrewsbury Fragment of the Resurrection, conclude natural-

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2. Here Mary thanks the shepherds for their singing (l. 152). Does this mean that in the performance of this play the "Hail" lyrics were sung (ll. 90-118)?

istically; in the latter, Mary suggests leaving for Galilee by repeating the angel's words, which no doubt were close to the antiphon "Surrexit enim sicut dixit Dominus; ecce praecedet vos in Galilaeam, alleluia; ibi eum videbitis".<sup>3</sup>

The Wakefield Master wrote only one naturalistic ending--that in Noah, where Noah prays that he and his family may go to Heaven. The York Realist, on the other hand, favours a certain kind of naturalistic conclusion. His Mortificacio Cristi ends with Joseph blessing Nicodemus, and his Agony and Betrayal with a Jew declaring that it is best to go to Caiaphas now they have Jesus fast--a type of conclusion found in other torturers' plays. His other plays (*viz.* nos. xxvi, xxix-xxxiii; see above, p. 70 n. 91) all end with Pilate, Herod, or Caiaphas dismissing the soldiers, usually in a pagan and comic manner:

Anna. Sir, youre faire felaws, <sup>saunce forth in the deuyll way</sup>  
 Cayph. Goose onne now, and <sup>(Peter Denies Jesus, ll. 397-8)</sup>  
<sup>saunce forth in the deuyll way.</sup>  
 (Peter Denies Jesus, ll. 397-8)

There is not much variety in this kind of conclusion, but it is certainly an effective combination of characterisation and dismissal. It is not itself original--the Towneley Caesar Augustus also ends with a pagan blessing--but the York Realist is alone in his emphatic and repetitious use of it. For his play-openings he took a fashionable device and strengthened it; for his endings he used known

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3. Young, *op. cit.*, 1, 226.

devices but shows a special fondness for one of them--the pagan flourish by a villain.

Generally speaking, only a moderate percentage (about 35%) of the plays end naturalistically; for the majority of the plays other methods of terminating the performances were preferred. The naturalistic endings consist largely of blessings and prayers, leave-takings and departures. These are often so worded as to suggest that the action continues after the departure of some of the characters, and they make it clear that the play, or the scene, is over. Sometimes the concluding words do not seem to have been chosen with any particular care, but at other times it is clear that the playwright has taken the opportunity to exercise his art.

#### B. Songs.

Liturgical Easter plays were usually performed during Matins, after the Third Responsary and before the Te deum, which is the conclusion of Matins.<sup>4</sup> The Te deum, of course, is a song of praise, and it is worth noticing that sometimes in the liturgical Easter drama it was specifically connected to the plays by being regarded as a song of rejoicing at Christ's resurrection. This logic behind the Te deum is not very often expressed in the rubrics, but in the Regularis Concordia, for example, the instruction is, after the play is over:

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4. Ibid., i, 231.

prior congaudens pro triumpho regis nostri, quod devicta morte surrexit, incipiat hymnum Te deum. . .<sup>5</sup>

The Te deum thus becomes the conclusion of the drama. The connection between the hymn and the play is sometimes taken a step further; this happens when a character in the play, rather than the cantor, begins the Te deum, as at the end of the Fleury St. Paul and Hilarius' Lazarus and Daniel.<sup>6</sup>

This is the situation in a dozen vernacular English plays; a character, having reason to rejoice, calls on his fellows to sing the Te deum or other song of praise. Thus the Te deum is incorporated into the drama. It is not impossible that this represents a direct legacy of the liturgical drama to the vernacular drama; that is to say, an early vernacular dramatist concluding his play in this way may have deliberately imitated a liturgical play where a character was the cantor. This may have been so even when, as in the case of the plays about the Harrowing of Hell, he found the idea of a song of praise in his material; the practice in the liturgical drama may have suggested to him that he end his dramatisation of this episode at Chapter xxiv of the Latin Gospel of Nicodemus, where Adam and David call upon their fellows to praise the Lord and where

all the prophets, rehearsing sacred utterances from their praises, and all the saints, crying Amen, Alleuia, followed the Lord.

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5. Ibid., i, 250; for another example, see i, 429.

6. Ibid., ii, 222, 218, 286.

There is no leader of this chorus in the Latin or Middle English (ll. 1537-40) Gospel of Nicodemus, but the dramatists have provided one. Thus, the Chester Christ's Descent into Hell ends with Adam saying,

Goe we to blisse, then, owld and yonge,  
and worship god, alway weldinge,  
and Afterward, I read, we singe  
with great solemnity.

"Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur." Et sic  
ibunt glorificantes Deum, cantantes "Te Deum".<sup>7</sup>

In the Towneley Deliverance of Souls, after Jesus rescues his "child-  
er all" Isaiah concludes the play:

Therfor now let us syng  
to love oure lord ihesus;  
Vnto his blys he will us bryng,  
Te deum laudamus.

In the York Harrowing of Hell (largely the same as the Towneley play), Adam first suggests a song of praise:

Makes joie nowe more and lesse,  
Omnia we laude god of his grace,  
(ll. 383-4)

and this passage and its timing correspond precisely to the Middle English Gospel of Nicodemus (which was used by the composer of this play<sup>8</sup>), where Adam says,

7. The other four mss. have Michael begin the Te deum. They also add a scene between a false tapstress and the devils.

8. Craigie, "The Gospel of Nicodemus and the York Mystery Plays," in An English Miscellany Presented to Dr. Furnivall, pp. 59-60.

Makes loy, zhe sayntes alle  
 And thankes god of his grace.  
 (ll. 1499-1500)

A "late hand" has added "tunc cantent" at this point in the play, and the antiphon "Omnis terra adoret",<sup>9</sup> or one similar to it was sung. The York play ends with Michael's leading the saints and prophets to Paradise, and Adam concludes the play by saying,

To þe lorde, be lovyng,  
 þat us has wonne fro waa,  
 For solas will we syng,  
Laus tibi cum gloria.

Again, the final song has been provided with a leader, or cantor. There is no such scene in the Harrowing of Hell in the Ludus Coventriae.

Other plays conclude with journeys to heaven, and singing accompanies the movement of the characters: at the end of the Chester Coming of Antichrist Michael leads Elias and Enoch "ad Coelum" singing "Gaudete Iusti in Domino. . .", and in the Towneley Judgment, after the Wakefield Master's devils have gone off to Hell with the wicked ones, the First Good One leads his fellows into the Te deum:

Therfor full boldly may we syng  
 On our way as we trus;  
 Make we all myrth and lovyng  
 With te deum laudamus.

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9. Sarum Breviary, i, cccxix, iii, 281 and iii, lxxiv.

Songs occur after the concluding episodes of other plays. The York Departure of the Israelites (but not the Towneley version) ends with the Egyptians drowning and an Israelite saying, "Cantemus domino, to god a sange synge wee". The York Annunciation concludes with Mary rejoicing, singing her Magnificat; and in the York Entry into Jerusalem, after the citizens have welcomed Jesus with "Hail!" lyrics, they sing (according to a "late hand"<sup>10</sup>). When the dove returns with the olive branch in the Ludus Coventriae Noah, Noah calls his family to sing for joy in worship, "Et sic recedant cum navi" (see above, p. 141 n. 6). At the conclusion of the Norwich Creation, Text A, Adam and Eve sing and lament "walkyng together about the place", and in the later version, Text B, they rejoice, singing in English. A character again calls for the Te deum at the close of the Croxton Sacrament, the Castle of Perseverance and the Digby Mary Magdalene. The Digby Killing of the Children ends with Anna calling the "chast virgynis" to "folowe me" and "shewe summe plesur" in the worship of Jesus, Our Lady and St. Ann; a direction follows: "Anna prophet[issa] et [omnes] tripident". This unique ending perhaps shows the influence of the carol;<sup>11</sup> in any case it has dramatic

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10. A late hand added similar instructions for singing to the York Noah and His Wife (l. 266), Annunciation (at ll. 144, 152), Temptation (at l. 91), Entry into Jerusalem (at l. 287), Harrowing of Hell (at ll. 36, 383), Resurrection (at l. 186), Ascension (l. 178), Descent of the Holy Spirit (at l. 97). It is not clear from Miss Smith's edition whether these additions are all in the same hand. It is probable that they record, rather than prescribe, a sixteenth-century practice.

11. Danced with a leader in medieval England (Greene, in The Early English Carols, pp. xxx-xxxii).

justification since the dancers are virgins and their dance is worship.

The singing at the end of these plays is, then connected to the preceding events in the plays because it is generally an expression of the characters' feelings: one character usually leads the others in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. The opening line of the Latin is often incorporated into the English verse. The concluding songs are the more effective since they are so appropriate; they are also songs familiar to the audiences and part of their own worship. This kind of ending would certainly have produced a most sympathetic and cordial state of mind in the audience, which is best appreciated, perhaps, by remembering some modern productions which end with the performers singing the National Anthem, although here (unless the play is very patriotic) the song has no dramatic relevance to the rest of the performance.<sup>12</sup>

Some plays close with angels singing. There is a beautiful finality about the conclusion of the Chester Slaying of the Innocents: Joseph and Mary prepare to depart out of Egypt and the angel, after saying he will accompany them, says,

And I will make a melody,  
and singe here in your company  
a word was sayd in prophesye  
a thousand yere agoe.

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12. A better example would be Joan Littlewood's production for Theatre Workshop of Lope de Vega's The Sheep-Well (Fuente Ovejuna) in 1955 before a partisan audience, where the audience stood while the actors sang a song of the oppressed. See above, p. 185 no 66.



He then sings the antiphon "Ex Egipto vocavi filium meum, ut Salvum faciet populum meum". Usually, however, the angels sing in chorus. The angels who set out to bring Mary to heaven in the York Death of Mary sing, as they go, "antiphona scilicet Ave regina celorum"; and when Jesus receives Mary in heaven at the conclusion of the York Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin, He commands the angels to sing in Her honour. As Gabriel returns to heaven at the end of the Ludus Coventriae Conception of Mary, the angels sing the Ave Maria. In the same cycle, just before Jesus' admonition to the audience which concludes the Temptation, "hic venient Angeli cantantes et ministrantes ei . Gloria tibi domine. . ."; and while Mary ascends to heaven in the Assumption of the Virgin, "alle hofne makyth melody". Similarly, when Mary Magdalene is raised to heaven for the last time in the Digby Mary Magdalene, the angels receive her and rejoice ("gaudent In celis").

The angels play an important part in many of these plays. Their singing and music-making would have made a fine choral ending to those plays whose action terminates in the heaven-setting; other scenes set in heaven, particularly the Creation scenes, were usually enhanced by the angels' singing (see above, pp. 27-8). There appears to have been more of this celestial harmony in the York plays and the Ludus Coventriae than in the other cycles, and this was because those two cycles had more scenes--notably those concerning the Virgin--that required the intervention of heavenly ministers. The choral singing was evidently not always static, for the course of

the action requires the angels to change their positions as they sing in plays with ascents and descents: in the *Ludus Coventriae* Temptation (at l. 195) and Assumption of the Virgin (at l. 91) they sing and play while in motion. Their singing also often accompanied the movements of another character, as at the end of the *York Judgment Day*, where God declares that His purpose is now fulfilled, "Et sic facit finem cum melodia angelorum transiens a loco ad locum". Similarly, a stage-direction in the *Ludus Coventriae* Mary in the Temple reads, at l. 260,

here xal comyn Allwey An Aungel with dyvers presentys  
goynge and comyng and in þe tyme þei xal synge in hofne.

It may be said that a moving theatrical effect is combined with a dramatic function in these plays. As a play-ending, the angelic choir is eminently suitable.<sup>13</sup>

The shepherds, of course, sing in their plays, and three of the plays conclude with their singing. They worship the Child in

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13. The angels in feathered tights or costumes, some with musical instruments, who appear in late medieval glass-paintings, alabaster-carvings and misericords have often been noticed as showing the influence of the stage. See Prior, "The Sculpture of Alabaster Tables", Illustrated Catalogue of the Exhibition of English Medieval Alabaster Work, p. 42 (mentioning also wood-carvings); Hildburgh, op. cit., pp. 67-8; Woodforde, Norwich School of Glass-Painting, pp. 142-5. Examples are reproduced in these works. For similar angels on misericords, see illustrations in Whittingham, The Stalls of Norwich Cathedral. In the *Ludus Coventriae* Assumption of the Virgin, at l. 90, the angels play cithers, and in glass-paintings in Norfolk this is one of their commonest instruments (Woodforde, Norwich School of Glass-Painting, p. 142).

the York Angels and the Shepherds and then depart, saying they will "make mirth as we gange". Both the Wakefield Master's Shepherds' plays end with their singing; at the end of the first, they leave the manger and their leader says,

to loy all sam,  
With myrth and gam,  
To the lawde of this lam  
Synge we in syght,

and at their departure at the end of the second the final words call spiritedly for a song:

To syng ar we bunt  
let take on loft.

As the angels and other characters sometimes do, the shepherds journey as they sing. A feature of some of their plays is their finding the angel's song incomprehensible and difficult to imitate; despite this, and the fact that in the Chester plays they have their own jolly song ("cantabunt hilare carmen," at l. 458) and that their song in the Towneley Shepherds' Play, II (l. 268) may have been a popular one, it would be inadvisable to suppose that the plays concluded with a secular song. It is possible that the shepherds used a vernacular lyric (as they do in the Coventry Shearmen and Tailors' Pageant, at ll. 277 and 331), but it is more probable that they usually sang the conventional Te deum or another well-established hymn. These were the "mirth" of the Church, and the Church's answer to secular Christmas enjoyment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>. Owsst, Literature and Pulpit, p. 483.

## C. Blessing the Audience.

At most of the play endings, the audience is explicitly recognised; for example, a character may bless them. Sometimes it is not clear whether the speaker is blessing the other characters, or the audience, or both; there is no way of deciding with certainty for whom, say, the blessing in the Chester Christ's Resurrection is intended,<sup>15</sup> but Peter's blessing at the end of the Chester Christ's Ascension was probably spoken to the audience, since he suggests to his brethren that they depart and then prays that Jesus will "save all this company". In cases like this (and they are the majority), there can be little doubt that the blessing was meant for the onlookers.

A blessing may be suitably given by a preaching character, and John the Baptist blesses the audience at the conclusion of his play in the Towneley, York, and Ludus Coventriae cycles. In the Towneley play he concludes with a sermon to the audience (ll. 275-88), and, of course, it was customary to end a sermon with a blessing. In the York play John does not preach, but he finishes the performance by worshipping Jesus and then blessing the audience (Miss Smith notes this). The Ludus Coventriae play, which begins with a most dramatic sermon, also ends with a sermon (ll. 131-82), with John

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15. Other cases where it is not clear who is meant to receive the blessing at the end of the play are the Towneley Offering of the Magi, York Building of the Ark, York Abraham's Sacrifice, and York Coming of the Three Kings to Herod (xvii). The two latter end identically: May God "Us wisse and with you be". The last remark may be for the audience.

preaching the necessity of repentance; he concludes with the customary benediction and adds, "Ffor now my leve I take": the introduction of the departure motive makes the sermon a theatrical one. The sermon delivered by Moses in the *Ludus Coventriae* ends in a very similar fashion, Moses adding to the usual sermon-ending the sentiment:

Fare well gode frendys for hens wyll I wende,  
my tale I have taught zow my wey now I go.

At the conclusion of the episode of the Purification in the Coventry Weavers' Pageant, Simeon blesses the audience, and his clerk adds a blessing which ends, in the fashion of the sermon and the liturgy, "In secula seculorum, amen" (ll. 714-21). Another preaching character concludes Mankind; Mankind first asks for mercy on "us" and then Mercy blesses him and he goes out. Mercy then mixes the theme of the play with his blessing on the audience; he draws them into the play:

Wyrschep[f]yll soferyns! I have do my propirte!  
Mankynd ys deliveryd by my suverall patrocynye. . .

He advises them to inspect their own lives, and says,

Therefore God [kepe] zow all "per suam misericordiam",  
þat ye may be pleyseris with þe angellis a-bowe,  
And have to zour porcyon "vitam eternam". Amen.<sup>16</sup>

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16. The sprinkle of Latin phrases is a feature of many vernacular sermons (Owst, Literature and Pulpit, pp. 487-8).

Again, at the end of Wisdom, Anima addresses the audience with a moral exhortation (ll. 1153-68).

Other characters who (implicitly or explicitly) bless the audience to conclude the plays are Elizabeth, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene, Luke, the Virgin Mary, Jesus, Peter, Abraham and Thomas.<sup>17</sup> Like the preachers, these characters include the audience in the world of the play. Elizabeth, for example, at the end of the Towneley Salutation of Elizabeth, says farewell to Mary and concludes,

Grete well all oure kyn of bloode;  
That lord, that the with grace infude,  
he save all in this place.

Again, Nicodemus closes the Towneley Crucifixion by blessing the audience; although the pattern of events here is the same as that at the end of the Chester Christ's Passion, the former gains by ending more decisively with the benediction, for in the latter Nicodemus simply laments. Thomas blesses the audience in his speech concluding the Ludus Coventriae Appearance to Thomas; his speech is really a lyrical poem, a lament and a self-justification, in five stanzas with two refrains. It shows the influence of the Testaments of Christ (l. 382; and pp. 150-1 above); it is addressed openly to the audience, to "pou man", and finishes with Thomas blessing his

audience.

17. Towneley Salutation of Elizabeth, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Pilgrims; York Journey to Bethlehem, Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene, Incredulity of Thomas, Ascension, Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin; Ludus Coventriae Abraham and Isaac, Woman Taken in Adultery, Appearance to Thomas.

hearers. The benediction which concludes the York Incredulity of Thomas is interesting because there are two versions of it: Jesus ("Deus") says to the disciples,

my blissyng I giffe you here,  
And my menze;

the last "my" is "this" in the Sykes ms. In both cases it would seem reasonable to suppose that by "menze" Jesus means the audience.<sup>18</sup>

The blessing spoken by the characters to the audience was both possible and desirable because the audience, the actors and the good characters shared the same serious religious preoccupations; at the same time, it is a final invitation to the audience to enter wholeheartedly into the dramatic pretence, for it is only holy and good characters who pronounce the blessing. Many of the poems intended for oral delivery in the Middle Ages end with a blessing,<sup>19</sup> and the speaker often finally says "Amen", as do a number of the characters who bless the audience in the plays; however, there is hardly any need to explain the eminently suitable character-benedictions by referring to this practice, although occasionally the reference may

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18. It is not the case that one ms. favours the open technique more than the other. The Register supplies "pou" in l. 190, where the Sykes ms. has the biblical (John xx, 29) "they", and thus includes the audience in Jesus' speech. The Sykes ms. supplies l. 183, giving Thomas' speech the character of a testimonial, as at the end of the Ludus Coventriae Appearance to Thomas.

19. Crosby, op. cit., pp. 108-9.

be necessary--when Thomas blesses the audience at the end of his lyrical poem in the *Ludus Coventriae* Appearance to Thomas, for example.

As good characters may conclude plays by blessing the audience, evil characters may curse them or leave them with a vulgar remark. The curse that Cain or his boy delivers to the audience (see above, p. 172) is found at the end of the Chester Creation and the York Sacrificium Cayme and Abell. On the other hand, the Towneley Cain, after his boy has cursed the audience, is more restrained in his departure, as in the *Ludus Coventriae* (ll. 183-95); these two endings are close to Genesis (iv, 14). The Newcastle Noah ends with a farewell to the audience from Noah as he departs, and the Devil then says,

All that is gathered in this stead,  
That will not believe in me,  
I pray to Dolphin, prince of dead,  
Scald you all in his lead,  
That never a one of you thrive nor thee.<sup>20</sup>

The vulgarities (see above, pp. 172-4) of the evil characters are uttered as they go out, defeated.<sup>21</sup>

The Wakefield Master's Herod the Great ends with the same fine spirit with which it began (see above, pp. 80-1); Herod expresses

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20. The "amen" that follows here is presumably the scribe's.

21. Probably the entertainment of the mini (Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, i, 24, 33, 59, 68, 70, 72; ii, 262) touches the medieval drama most closely at this point of vulgar diablerie. If this is so, then there is here an intelligent appropriation of an immoral dramatic tradition for the characterisation of immoral persons.



his relief and happiness at the slaughter of the children and commands the audience to obey him:

No kyng ye on call  
Bot on herod the ryall,  
Or els many oone shall  
Apon youre bodys wonder.<sup>22</sup>

He adds another threat and concludes,

Syrs, this is my counsell--  
Bese not to cruell,  
But adew!--to the devyll!  
I can nomore fraunch!  
(11. 467-513)

This is the only play to end with such a splendid and hypocritical repetition of the mood of the very beginning. The conclusion of the Chester Adoration of the Magi is similar in that Herod there delivers a passionate monologue, his mad anger turning into a resolve to send for his knights, and the whole dreadful news of Christ making him "wax dull and pure drye"; he calls for wine (11. 374-413). His agitated revelling, a fine play-ending, is meant to be remembered when he is stricken dead in the next episode but one.

#### D. Friendly Farewells.

Another method of finishing the performance by recognising the audience is also sometimes found. This consists of a character, usu-

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22. Similar periphrastic phrases for death are common in the romances. See, for example, Sir Gowther, 11. 1886-7, Sir Ferunabras, 1. 1542, Otuel, 11. 183-6, and numerous instances in the Laud Troy-Book (e.g., 11. 4576, 5166, 5272, 5587, 6540, etc.).

ally but not always a simple, homely person, bidding them farewell in a friendly fashion. Noah and the shepherds end plays like this (Newcastle Noah and Chester Adoration of the Shepherds); so also do some villains. There seems to be nothing especially appropriate about Pilate's last remark in the York Resurrection, and this may be a sign that the friendly farewell could attach itself to any play whenever it took the fancy of a dramatist. It is also found at the end of the Wakefield Master's Buffeting, spoken by Caiaphas, and at the end of the Towneley Talents, spoken by Pilate, after he has blessed his soldiers with a pagan blessing. It may be that it found a place here because the villains delivered it in a sickly fashion; on the other hand, they may not have directed their attention to the audience.

However, it is probably more significant that the character who most frequently departs in this way is Joseph. This is in harmony with his simplicity and homeliness (see above, pp. 121-2, 154, 156). His farewell concludes the Towneley and York Flight into Egypt, and in the York play it is rounded off gently by Mary; the York and Towneley plays of Christ with the Doctors also end with his saying, "Ffar well all folk in fere". The same episode in the Coventry Weavers' Pageant (which is descended from the York-Towneley text) ends slightly differently; the familiarity of Joseph's farewell has been exaggerated by the reviser, who has also made Mary Humble (11.

1134-45).<sup>23</sup> A scene between the three doctors has also been added; this scene is a very clear example of the open technique (11. 1184-92), for the doctors arrange a future disputation and one of them says to the audience,

Where all you, the comenalte  
You ma departe on this condyssion,  
Thatt ye atende at the next monysson.<sup>24</sup>

He finally says, to finish the play, "And here I take my leve at eyvere mon".

The familiarity and friendliness of these play-endings is a dramatic technique that, like most of the other endings, presupposes the sympathy and interest of the audience, and expects a positive reaction from them. It is usually the lowly counterpart to the blessing of the audience by more elevated virtuous characters. Such an ending was well-suited to the usual feeling for a clear-cut conclusion, and was also often a suitable expression of the speaker's character.

Two particularly effective--familiar but horrible--play-endings were composed by a writer or writers at York. The Massacre of the Innocents ends with one of Herod's officers (?) crying,

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23. This reviser, using a rime couée stanza, was also responsible for most of Joseph's "open" remarks in the Coventry plays (see above, pp. 157-8, and Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, p. xxv).

24. Compare the summoner's speech at the beginning of the Ludus Coventriae Trial of Joseph and Mary (11.5-8), and Mankind, 11. 659-62.

Asarme! evere ilke man,  
 That holdis of mahounde.  
 Wer they a thousand skore,  
 This bergayne schall pai banne  
 Comes aftir as yhe canne,  
 For we will wende be-fore.

Christ Lod Up to Calvary ends like this:

i. Miles. banne rede I pat we no lenger stande,  
 But ilke man feste on hym a hande,  
 And harle hym hense in hye.  
 ii Miles. }aa, nowe is tyme to trusse,  
 To alle oure companye.  
 iii Miles. If anye aske aftir us,  
 Kenne þame to Calvarie.

In one way, these endings are not dissimilar to the other examples of expressions of savage or callous workmanlike determination uttered by villainous subordinates to conclude some of the other plays (see above, pp. 193-5). However, the other endings are naturalistic, whereas these two seem to be examples of the open technique. The audience becomes involved in the savage intentions of the soldiers. The final effrontery of the villains is to suppose that the audience will support them (cf. the opening to Christ Led Up to Calvary, p. 70 above). The presumption of the third soldier's off-hand request is intolerable. By combining a recognised type of play-ending expressing the cruelty of Jesus' opponents with the recognised open technique a writer or writers produced two remarkable moments in the medieval drama. A play which possibly concludes in the same way as the two York plays is the Coventry Shearmen and

Tailors' Pageant, where Herod's excited call to horse may have been flung at the audience.

#### E. Character-Epilogues.

Sometimes a character speaks what amounts to an epilogue to the play. For example, at the end of the Chester Purification an angel--the same that consoled Simeon, probably--says,

Now have you hard all in this place  
that Christ is comen through his grace,  
as holy Esaie prophesied hase,  
and Symeon hath hym scene.

Leve you well this, lordes of might,  
and kepe you all his lawes of right,  
that you may in his blisse so bright  
evermore with hym to beene.

This summarises the play and points to its relevance for the audience; the angel, perhaps addressing both the doctors and the audience and blessing them, takes the play as visible proof of the Christian story. Again, a character such as St. John may lend the weight of his authority to the conclusion of a play; the Chester Last Judgment finishes (cf. Revelations i, 2-3) with his saying:

And I, John, the Evangelist,  
bear witness of thinges that I wist,  
to which they might full well have trust,  
and not have done amiss.

And all that ever my lord sayde here,  
I wrote it all in my manere;  
therefore excuse you, withouten were,  
I may not well, I wisse.

Most of the epilogues of this nature, however, are spoken by Jesus. He concludes the York Woman Taken in Adultery and Raising of Lazarus, for example, like this:

Sisteres, I may no lenger lende,  
To othir folke now bus me fare,  
And to Jerusalem will I wende  
For thyngis þat must be fulfilled pere.  
Therefore rede I you right,  
My men, to wende with me;  
Ze þat have sene þis sight  
My blissyng with 30 be.

After announcing His departure and so terminating the performance, He seems to bless the audience in virtue of their presence at the miracle. The speech was added to the biblical account for the dramatisation. Other York plays which end in a similar fashion are the Harrowing of Hell (ll. 401-4), Last Supper (cf. John xiv, 21, 31), Temptation and Transfiguration. The Ludus Coventriae Temptation and Raising of Lazarus also close with statements by Jesus about the significance of the episode. The conclusion of the former, beginning,

Now All mankende exaample take  
by these grete workys þat þou dost see,

promises reward in heaven for resisting temptation; it perhaps shows the influence of Christ's Testaments (l. 202; and pp. 150-1 above). The latter ends with Jesus saying,

Now I have shewyd in opyn syght  
of my godhed þe gret glorye,

and forecasting His passion (reflecting John xi, 41-2 and then Matthew xx, 19 and Mark x, 34).

Two character-epilogues, both dealing with the inevitability of death, are especially lengthy expositions based on the themes of the plays. Lazarus in the Towneley play describes the horrors of death and holds himself up as an example for the audience; he ends with a blessing (ll. 111-216). Death himself concludes the *Ludus Coventriae* Death of Herod (ll. 246-84); he draws the moral of the play for the audience, emphasising the element of tragedy (see above, p. 59):

Of Kynge herowde all men beware  
 pat hath rejoyced in pompe and pryde  
 Ffor all his hoste of blyssse ful bare  
 he lyth now ded here on his syde,

and describes his sudden and irrevocable visitations and pictures himself:

Thow I be nakyd and pore of array  
 and wurmys knawe me al a-bowte. . .  
 Undyr þe erth xal ȝe dwelle  
 and thei xul Etyrn both flesch and felle  
 As þei have don me.<sup>25</sup>

This is clearly a dramatic representation of the decaying corpses often portrayed in art in the late Middle Ages.<sup>26</sup>

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25. There is a similar speech in the Castle of Perseverance, ll. 2779 ff. Owst draws attention to other speeches by Death in medieval literature (Literature and Pulpit, pp. 531-3).

26. Farnham, op. cit., pp. 41-2; Rushforth, "The Kirkham Monument in Paignton Church, Devon," loc. cit., p. 29.

The character-epilogues so far discussed are those addressed to the audience by characters who retain their dramatic identities while drawing a moral and sometimes blessing the audience. Sometimes, however, the actor speaks a kind of epilogue which requires him to speak as an actor and not as a character; but there is no break in the continuity of the address when, for example, Jesus, closing the Chester Christ Appears to Two Disciples, says,

Whosoever of my father hath any mynd,  
or of my mother in any kynde,  
in heaven Bliss they shall it fynd,  
with out any woe,

and then speaks out of character by saying,

Christ geve you grace to take the way  
unto that ioy that lasteth aye!  
for theres no night but ever day;  
for all you thither shall go.<sup>27</sup>

Exactly the same kind of epilogue is found at the end of the Ludus Coventriae Woman Taken in Adultery. There, however, the speech-heading "Jesus" has been crossed out and "Doctor" substituted; possibly somebody felt it to be undesirable to have the actor so suddenly speak out of character. The ending of the Chester play, though, was acceptable, and there were probably no objections when God Himself called for the Te deum at the end of the Castle of Perseverance, or when Nicodemus alluded to Christ's resurrection as he

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27. There can be no doubt about the attribution of this speech, since it is the same in all five mss.



blessed the audience at the end of the Chester Christ's Passion. This kind of ending, which presents the costumed actor, rather than the character, to the audience, is the counterpart of those overtures to the performances which were assemblies of the costumed figures outside their dramatic contexts. (It is perhaps relevant to note that at the conclusion of a liturgical play the characters sometimes continued to take part in the liturgy; the shepherds "rule the choir", that is, act as choir-leaders, when the service is resumed after, for example, the Padua Officium Pastorum.<sup>28</sup>)

Similarly, in some instances the character-epilogue is concerned explicitly with the actual circumstances of the performance as well as with the application of the moral of the play to the audience. Thus, at the conclusion of the York Travellers to Emmaus:

ii Pereg. . . .

Go we to Jerusaleme þes tydingis to telle,  
Oure felawes fro fandyng nowe fraste we,  
More of þis mater her may we not melle.

i Pereg. Here may we notte melle [of] more at þis tyde,  
For prossesse of plaies þat precis in plight,  
He bringe to his blisse of every ilke side,  
þat sofferayne lorde þat most is of myght.

The Ludus Coventriae Prophets and Christ and the Doctors end in this way, referring to the conditions of the performance, as do the Dublin Abraham (ll. 366-9), the Bodleian Christ's Resurrect-

28. Young, op. cit., ii, 10; see also ibid., ii, 14, 19.

10n29 (ll. 1621-31), and perhaps the Brome Abraham (ll. 433-4).

The ending to the Digby Mary Magdalene (ll. 2127-40), spoken by a Priest, also combines both the play-world and the real world of the play's presentation!

& I wyll passe to þe bosshop of þe sete,  
 thys body of mary to berye þe name,  
 with alle reverens and solemnyte.  
 sufferens of þis processe, thus enddyt þe sentens  
 that we have playyd In yower syth.  
 Alle-mythty god, most of magnyfycens,  
 mote bryng you to his blysse so brygth,  
 In presens of þat kyng! . . .  
 now, clerkys with woycoys cler,  
 To Deum laudamus lett us syng.<sup>30</sup>

The character-epilogue in the form of a blessing, a farewell remark, or a moral summary, therefore, is spoken to the audience often without any explicit recognition of the circumstances of the play's presentation, the audience being drawn into the play-world; this is what happens at many of the play-beginnings, where a speech by a character takes the place of a prologue. Sometimes the character-epilogues explicitly refer to the performances, and this, too,

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29. This play ends with a liturgical Resurrection in Latin: "tunc Cantant omnes [actores] simul 'Scimus Christum [surrexisse ex mortuis]' voll aliam sequentiam aut ymnium de resurrectione". This is the only, and untypical, representation of the open technique of the liturgical drama (see above, pp. 188-9) in the vernacular drama. The rubric continues, "Post cantum, dicit Joh[an]nes, finem faciens!". He speaks the epilogue that concludes the performance.

30. The further four lines are clearly (pace Chambers, Medieval Stage, ii, 430) scribal.

may happen at a play-opening (see above, p. 22 and p. 60 n. 87). At the end of the play, their common religious concern binds together actor, character, and audience.

#### F. Epilogue Figures.

Special epilogue-speakers are rarer even than prologue figures. The Chester Expositor concludes five of the Chester plays with an epilogue. At the end of the Sacrifice of Isaac he explains that Abraham and Isaac are types of God and Christ. At the end of Balaam and Balak he says,

Lordinges, much more matter  
is in this story then you see here,  
but the substance, without were,  
is played you beforne.

And by these propheties, leav you me,  
three kinges, as you shall played see,  
presented at his Nativitie  
Christ, when he was born.

The Expositor is here the players' advocate, and he also introduces the next subject of the cycle in the especially positive way of some of the introducers of plays; this is especially clear in another version (ms. BWh) of the Expositor's epilogue:

the birth of christ, fayer and honest  
here shall yee see, and fare ye well!

The omission of the idea of pretence is a feature of some earlier speeches (pp. 16-17 above). The epilogue to the Nativity spoken

by the Expositor consists of an account of Octavian's church at Rome, and a reminder of the miracle of the midwife's withered hand. This is taken from the Stanzaic Life of Christ (ll. 633-44; 765-80);<sup>31</sup> the last lines of the play, however, drawing the moral

that unbeleefe is a foule synne,  
as you have seene within this playe,

are not from the Life. At the end of the Temptation, the Expositor explains "this thing that played was".<sup>32</sup> In the Prophets and Antichrist he speaks the conclusion, asking grace for the audience

To come to the Blisse that lasteth aye,  
as much as here we and our play,  
of Antechrists sygnes you shall assay:  
he comes soon, you shall see.

He speaks here with authority; the authority and truthfulness of Christianity and its representatives is put behind the presentation of the play. Antichrist "comes soon" in two senses: his pageant is next, and the end of the world is not far off.

A doctor, or preacher, also speaks an epilogue to the Brome Abraham. He emphasises the moral of the piece and urges the audience to apply it to their own lives--and "groche not agens owr Lord God". He is the admonishing preacher. His first line ("Lo! sovereyns and sorys, now have we schowyd") is the same in tone and

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31. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 428-9.

32. Not from the Stanzaic Life, although ll. 161-208 are.

phrasing as the preacher's explanation of his exemplum; the preacher may begin with "Loo, sirs, here may ye see how. . ." <sup>33</sup> or a similar phrase. An apologetic epilogue, the Norfolk Epilogue, which may have been used more than once, <sup>34</sup> is concerned only with excusing the weaknesses of the actors and the faults of the play. Contemplation, who appears at the beginning and elsewhere in a group of plays in the Ludus Coventriae, speaks an epilogue to the Visit to Elizabeth. He narrates the continuation of the story and then apologises for any "inconvenyens" that may have been said or done; he asks Christ to reward the audience for their attendance, <sup>35</sup> and the actors then sing "Ave Regina celorum". In the Digby Killing of the Children, the "Poeta" speaks the epilogue, excusing the "rude eloquens" and "sympyll cunnyng" of the actors, promising the Disputation in the Temple for the following year, and calling for a further dance and music from the minstrels "A-fore our departyng". In the Digby St. Paul also, the "Poeta" speaks an epilogue, first continuing the

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33. Middle English Sermons, p. 235, see also pp. 233, 236, 243, etc.; and Ludus Coventriae Baptism, l. 79.

34. It is contained in a church-warden's commonplace book of the fifteenth century. The play was performed at a Church Ale, and the epilogue may have been preserved for use on future occasions.

35. This suggests that the granting of days of pardon to the attenders at the Chester plays was perhaps not confined to that cycle. The various pictorial representations of Christ (see above, pp. 142, 148, 150-1) conferred days of pardon when prayed before. It may be, therefore, that attendance at the religious plays was more widely held to be actually spiritually efficacious than is now known, even if not always specifically worthy of pardons.

story, then excusing the shortcomings, and then saying,

Commyttyng yow all to our lord Ihesus,  
To whoys lawd ye syng,--Exultet celum laudibus.

If this is an invitation to the audience to join in the final hymn, it is unique among the extant plays. The hymn is a most appropriate finale to the play of St. Paul, for it is in praise of the apostles.<sup>36</sup>

#### G. Summary.

Many of the plays conclude at the end of a conversation between some of the characters, and the natural conclusion of the dialogue thus becomes the conclusion of the performance. When the plays end with dialogue at a scriptural moment, then some suitable expression of leave-taking or benediction was sometimes added; invented terminal dialogue sometimes plays a part in characterisation. The naturalistic endings are on the whole quite as conclusive as, for example, epilogues, and for this reason, no doubt, they were not obviously avoided, certainly not in the processional drama, where indeed, in the work of the York Realist and in other plays, they flourished. Blessings and farewells, while sometimes part of the dialogue, are just as frequently pronounced to the audience, usually by virtuous and simple characters. The extension of the open technique to the ending of the play here means that the audience is often sympathetically

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36. Sung at Lauds in the Common of the Apostles (Sarum Breviary, ii, 368).

involved; though in two striking cases, they are repelled. The cordial relations between audience and actors are also emphasised in the character-epilogues, which are spoken by virtuous characters and which apply the moral of the story to the lives of the audience, and sometimes also refer to the conditions of staging, thus bringing the performance out, as it were, into the open, where it began. When plays end with characters or angels singing songs of praise and rejoicing, the song has a dramatic motive, and, it may be imagined, a fine theatrical effect.

There is no information about how a medieval performance actually concluded, and even less evidence on which to base conjecture than in the case of the openings of the performances. At the end of a processional play, the characters could have stayed on the wagon until it was removed from its station; when the play ends with the departure of some characters, these also may have remained on the wagon, although in the case of the torturers' departures, it is possible that they left the wagon and went off through the crowd, just as it seems that they sometimes arrived through the crowd, or mounted the wagon from the pavement (see above, p. 103). The three kings, too, could have ridden off on their horses. Characters that remained on the wagon would almost certainly not have lined up and received applause. There is no evidence for applause in the medieval theatre at all; the idea of applauding at the end of a performance probably came from performances of Terence in sixteenth-century England and of plays modelled on the Latin comedy (see

below, p. 274). The audience may sometimes have joined in the final songs of praise, although there is scarcely any evidence for this; the fact that the songs were in Latin is, however, no proof of the audience's silence.<sup>37</sup>

At the conclusion of a stationary performance it is possible that the actors walked in procession out of the "place". No evidence of this remains; even so, since it is probable that the actors at least sometimes began performances by marching into the "place", it is not unlikely that they ended performances by doing the reverse.<sup>38</sup> At the end of the Digby Killing of the Children there was music played by "minstrels", and this music may have accompanied the processional departure of the actors. What medieval ancestor in the theatre the Elizabethan jig may have had is unknown.<sup>39</sup> Despite this uncertainty about the manner of closing the performance, however, it is clear that the dramatists well knew how to bring their plays to satisfactory and even fine conclusions, just as they

37. Young accepts the evidence as showing that the audience sometimes joined in the Latin hymn at the close of a liturgical play (op. cit., i, 322). A vernacular hymn was also sometimes sung at the end of liturgical Easter plays in Germany (ibid., i, 322). See also p. 224 above, for the ending of the Digby St. Paul.

38. In Wisdom, the characters go out in procession at the end of the first part of the play (at l. 324). The staging of this play, however, cannot with any probability be claimed as an example of the "place and scaffold technique".

39. J.F. Collins, "Music in the Craft Cycles", PMLA, xlvii, p. 621, calls the ending of the Digby Killing of the Children a "jig".



had worked out the most vivid and suitable methods of opening them; and in both cases, the open technique was usually the basis of their achievement.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## Imitations and Remnants of the Medieval Dramaturgy

## A. The Contemporaneity of Medieval Plays and Tudor Interludes.

The extant cycles of mystery plays were "put down" between the years 1569-1580, and other cycles and plays were abandoned or suppressed slightly earlier or slightly later.<sup>1</sup> At this time, the latter half of the sixteenth century, the devices isolated and described in previous chapters would almost certainly have taken a prominent place in the performances. All the Tudor dramatists, therefore, could easily have been familiar with them by personal experience or by hearsay.

The Tudor interludes descended from the medieval moralities,<sup>2</sup> and in the course of the sixteenth century the influence of Latin comedy and humanistic imitations of Terence and Plautus also made itself felt.<sup>3</sup> The two dramatic traditions most readily accessible to the majority of the early Tudor playwrights were therefore the

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1. Gardiner, Mysteries' End, pp. 71-2.

2. Ramsay, in Skelton's Magnificence, pp. cxxviii, cxcvii.

3. Herford, Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany, pp. 70-164; Craig, op. cit., pp. 365, 373; Herrick, Tragicomedy, pp. 61, 225-7.

native medieval and the Latin; both were much more than memories during much of the sixteenth century. Except in the case of John Bale, it has not hitherto been remarked that various techniques of the medieval drama were adapted by the Tudor dramatists. The recognition of these offshoots of the medieval dramaturgy materially increases the appreciation of some Tudor plays, and takes the historical sections of the preceding chapters to their logical conclusions.

#### B. John Bale and the Protestant Mystery Plays.

Writing God's Promises, Johan Baptyst, and the Temptation of Our Lord, Bale "chose form and content known and perhaps dear to an audience. For they are like Corpus Christi Plays".<sup>4</sup> The elucidation of this statement, that God's Promises is "practically a Prophetæ",<sup>5</sup> is, in the sense that this play has a regular and patterned structure, no doubt true, although other techniques used in these plays are more strikingly medieval.

The stately opening to God's Promises by God the Father--

In the begynnyng, before the heavens were create,  
In me and of me, was my sonne sempyternall,

God going on to speak about the power and equality of the Trinity-- is clearly an imitation of the usual method of opening plays about the Creation (see above, pp. 23-9); although Bale has imitated the

4. Miller, "The Antiphons in Bale's Cycle of Christ", SP, xlviii, p. 629.

5. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 448; Miller, op. cit., pp. 632-3.

style of the mystery plays here, he has found himself obliged to re-write this kind of introductory speech, avoiding the usual medieval phraseology. The beginning of Act II, which consists of God repenting in soliloquy that He ever made man, is like the opening of some of the mystery plays about Noah (see above, p. 114). In Act VII John the Baptist preaches directly to the audience—"Repent, good people. . ." (Eiii, iii<sup>v</sup>); such a direct exhortation of the audience was a regular feature of the mystery plays. Similarly, the idea of ending each "act" with one of the seven Oes or pre-Christmas antiphons was perhaps suggested to Bale by the common medieval practice of concluding a performance dramatically with a song of praise led by one of the characters (see above, pp. 197-202); he is probably preserving this feature "to end the scenes with a flourish"<sup>6</sup> but he is also avoiding the (to him nauseating) details of the "popetly plays"<sup>7</sup> by introducing antiphons previously unused in this connection (as far as is known).

John the Baptist opens Johan Baptyst with an explanatory speech to a stage crowd, but in the course of the play he explains his purpose and function to the audience ("alloquitur populum") in two soliloquies (on pp. 107, 110), as he does, for example, in the Ludus Coventriae Baptism (ll. 1-52, 131-82). The Jews interrupt his "prating", as they interrupted the "jangeling" of Christ and the Maries.

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6. Miller, op. cit., p. 635.

7. By these Bale (King Johan, l. 417) presumably means the mystery plays.

in the mystery plays (see above, p. 147). Just before He is baptised Jesus explains who He is and, drawing the moral for the audience as He does in many of the mystery plays (see above, pp. 178-80), says,

Let this example be grafted first in your wit,  
How I, for baptism, to John myself submit.

The play ends with John singing a song of praise to the Father, in the vernacular, and, it seems, inviting the audience to join in, a thing which may only possibly have happened when medieval plays ended with a character leading a hymn of praise (see above, p. 226 and n. 37).

Jesus opens the Temptation of Our Lord with a direct explanation to the audience of His purposes and intentions (as in, for example, the Ludus Coventriae Baptism, ll. 122-30 and Temptation, ll. 66-78). Then Satan begins a most medieval villainous and confidential soliloquy; the dramatic moment has been borrowed from the Temptation and Creation scenes in the mystery plays, but again, the phraseology is mostly new. Satan begins:

Nowhere I fourther, but every where I noye,  
For I am Sathan, the common adversearye,  
An enemy to Man. . .  
What nombre I wyne, it were too longe to tell.  
(DiV)

The last line represents a common type of medieval devilish but truthful "boast" (see above, p. 51). He then goes on to say that he must disguise himself ("A godlye pretence, outwardly must I

bears") to prevent Jesus redeeming mankind (as he fears is His intention). The adder's coat and the bright disguise have already, in the medieval plays, been moralised into the coat of a fashionable rogue (see above, p. 167), and Bale further transmutes them (in his protestant advocacy) into a hermit's garment which Satan, as in the earlier plays, puts on in full view of the audience ("Hic simulata religione Christum aggreditur"). This, of course, is only a detail in his protestantization of the mystery-play scenes, but it is a revealing one. The usual medieval technique could persist, even though superficially changed. Essentially the same process can be seen in Wever's Lusty Juventus, where a common type of moral play has been twisted into a protestant polemic. The Temptation of Our Lord ends with a character-epilogue spoken by two angels and Jesus, pointing the moral for the audience (see above, pp. 216-17), and then concludes finally with a song by the angels, a common feature in the medieval plays, including plays about the Temptation.

The Three Laws also has a number of distinctly medieval features. The beginning of each "Act", for example, is a self-identification by a dignified character. God's beginning of Act I recalls (as in God's Promises) the opening of the Creation plays:

I am Deus pater, a substaunce invysyble,  
 All one with the sonne, & holy ghost in essence.  
 To Angell and Man I am incomprehensyble,  
 A strength infynyte. . . .  
 (Aiiiv)

Lex Naturae, Lex Moseh and the Gospel each begin an act in this way, their studied dignity recalling the formal self-identifications of the speakers at Royal Entries and in the medieval plays. The Vice-like character Infidelity reveals his plan in a confidential speech to the audience which shows the influence of the confiding Devil of the medieval plays: he says to the audience,

Now wyll I worke soch masterye,  
By craftes and sutyle polycye,  
The lawe of nature to poyson,  
With pestylent idolatry.  
(B11V)

Also in this play there are direct warnings "before thys audyens" (E1V) by virtuous characters, somewhat more explicit than the usual homiletic remarks in the medieval drama. Near the end of the play the three Laws sing God's praise (Fv1V) and then, after a short scene, they and Fides Christi speak a character-epilogue.

The extant opening of King Johan (something is lost) is again a stately self-description (ll. 1-20), John referring to the "crony-clys" as his authority as God refers to the Scriptures in two post-Reformation mystery plays (see above, p. 25 n. 26). A Vice-like figure, Sedition, confides nefariously to the audience (ll. 765-71). Twice a character is caught revealing some information to the audience and is rebuked by another for doing this; the Pope, who cries,

Ah, ye are a blabbe, I perseyve ye wyll tell all  
I left ye not here, to be so lyberall [i.e., of speech],  
(ll. 1026-7)

and Sedition, who commands England, "Holde thy peace callst" (l. 1892) after She has complained to the "good people" present, are, as it were, concerned about their reputations with the audience, as are Noah and the Virgin and others in some of the medieval plays (pp. 157-8 above). The death of Dissimulation--

By the Mass, I die, I die!  
 Help now at a pinch! Alas. . .  
 (ll. 2073-4)

reads like a vulgarisation of the death-scenes of the wicked dignitaries in the medieval plays (see above, pp. 174-5). Homiletic remarks by characters also appear (e.g., ll. 1397-418, 2032-3). Finally, there is a character-epilogue (ll. 2604-45).

All of these plays, except King Johan, are introduced and concluded (Three Laws introduced only) by "Baleus Prolocutor", that is, presumably, by Bale himself. Speaking mostly in his capacity as a preacher, and explaining and promoting personally the themes of his plays, he was responding to the same instinct that originally brought the "Doctor" onto the medieval stage (pp. 183-4 above). He may have been introduced to the idea of being present as a preacher at the performances by examples he had seen or heard of in the medieval plays; indeed, this seems likely in view of the fact that "Baleus Prolocutor", speaking of the subjects of the plays, omits, as in many cases in the medieval drama, the idea of pretence and thus introduces a feeling of immediacy and an absolute kind of dramatic



illusion. For example, at the beginning of Johan Baptyst he says,

Now shall Messias, which is our heavenly kinge,  
 Apere to the worlde, in manhode evydent.  
 Whose wholsom commynge, Johan Baptyst wyll prevent.

He is not the players' advocate, but because of the themes of his plays he does imply the authority of the performance (pp. 15-16, 221, above); so, for example, introducing God's Promises he says that God has promised mercy and ends: "They come that therof, wyll shewe the certytude". The feeling of authority, relevance and urgency which Bale was attempting to communicate is again evident from the fact that his Cycle of Christ (God's Promises, Johan Baptyst and the Temptation of Our Lord) was, on the day of the proclamation of Queen Mary, performed at the Market Cross in Kilkenny;<sup>8</sup> preachers often delivered their sermons and officers their proclamations at market crosses. His argumentative and polemical nature expressed itself through a traditional dramatic convention.

Bale was, in fact, trying to re-write the old drama, preserving a number of its devices, for a new purpose. He may have copied some of the techniques of the medieval plays in his lost plays<sup>9</sup> also. The stately self-introductions, the songs of praise, the character-epilogues, the homiletic remarks, the villainous soliloquy complete

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8. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, ii, 374.

9. He also wrote a Passion cycle of eight plays (*ibid.*, ii, 447).

with the villainous adoption of a disguise (a protestant one now), and various other medieval techniques all reappear. They are deliberate imitations. The braggart boast and the call for order, perhaps the most notorious devices of the old drama, are not reproduced, but they do not usually appear in the particular religious episodes treated in Bale's extant plays. Although he imitated much of the medieval dramaturgy, he also changed the various techniques slightly; he did not imitate them too closely. The common-sense hypothesis is that he wished to capitalise on the audiences' familiarity with established dramatic methods while at the same time avoiding contamination from them.

The Resurrection of Our Lord, a fragmentary protestant composition which could be part of Bale's "de sepultura et resurrectione",<sup>10</sup> probably intentionally avoids reminders of the traditional mystery plays. Jesus, for example, does not, in contrast to the established dramatic tradition, speak after His resurrection (at l. 242); Pilate is not a braggart. Again, although both Mary and Peter lament, and Christ speaks two long explanatory passages to the travellers to Emmaus, the medieval plays are not noticeably brought to mind. The expositor or "Appendix" (ll. 290-321, 510-20, etc.) emphasises the importance of the Bible (recalling only the late protestant banns to the Chester plays) and is the same kind of figure, with the same sentiments, as "Baleus Prolocutor".

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10. The Resurrection of Our Lord, p. vii.

### C. Introductory Devices.

#### Boasts and Calls for Order.

Boasts and calls for order, regular features of the medieval drama (see above, pp. 36-107), had a widespread influence on the Tudor drama. This is not surprising, in view of their ubiquity in the older plays; and their notoriety, suggested by Hamlet's disdainful reference to Herod's ragings, receives further confirmation from the evident desire of some Tudor dramatists to make capital out of these well-known devices.

John Skelton, for example, adapts the boastful speech in Magnificence; Magnificence's boast to the audience (he is "alone in the place") follows the medieval pattern:

For nowē, Syrs, I am lyke as a prynce sholde be;  
 I have Welth at Wyll, Largesse and Lyberte. . .  
 All Honour to me must nedys stowpe and lene. . .  
 For I am prynce perlesse, provyd of porte,  
 Bathyd with blysse, embracyd with comforte. . .  
 I am the dyamounde dowllesse of dygnyte.  
 Surely it is I that all may save and spyll,  
 No man so hardy to worke agaynst my Wyll. . .  
 I reyne in my robys, I rule as me lyst,  
 I dryve downe these dastardys with a dynt of my fyste. . .  
 Nor none so hardy of them with me that durste crake,  
 But I shall frounce them on the foretop and gar them to quake.  
 (ll. 1457-514)

The similarity to the medieval boast is self-evident. In particular, there is the strong alliteration, the logic behind the use of the conjunction "for", the claim to "save and spyll", the exaggerated threats to his enemies, the claim to be above "all" princes, barons and men, and the ridiculous self-confidence. Some of the allitera-

tive phrases recall those used in the medieval plays, but the passage does not appear to be directly related to any one particular medieval speech, although the affinity is clearly with the type found in the *Ludus Coventriae* and the Digby *Mary Magdalene* rather than with that in, say, the Chester plays. The speech differs from the medieval boast by Magnificence's extended comparison of himself to Cyrus, Caesar, Hercules and many other worthies; though the idea of the comparison is present in the medieval boast, such names do not occur there. It has been plausibly suggested that Skelton is here parodying Barclay's eulogy of Henry VIII in *The Ship of Fools*, ii, 205;<sup>11</sup> the principal affinity of this speech, however, is with a most prominent feature of the medieval drama.

The device is employed here to emphasise the wickedness of Magnificence's state of mind. The play is modelled on the morality play of the Conflict of Vice and Virtue type,<sup>12</sup> and the bragging speech has been attached to the object of the conflict when the evil forces are in the ascendant. This is also the logic of its association with Manhood in *The World and the Child*; the morality play in this way uses for its own special purposes a device which grew up with the mystery plays. The late use of the device is more pointed than its use in an earlier morality such as the *Castle of Perseverance*, where it is confined to the unchanging evil charac-

11. Ramsay, in Skelton's *Magnificence*, pp. lxxxvii-lxxxviii.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. cxlvii-clvi.

ters; as a mere theatrical or dramatic device, without moral implications (or some other modifications), the full-blown boast of the mystery plays was probably rather ancien jeu for a courtly audience, such as Skelton's, in the sixteenth century. It was still useful, however, when it could be employed for a particular purpose and so given special significance.

It is very often the case that the cry for order and the accompanying threat, so common in the medieval drama, have been adapted to the circumstances of an indoor performance. As a character enters through or along the side of the audience,<sup>13</sup> the medieval cry and threat, with some changes, finds a natural place in the Tudor interlude. Freewill's call for room in Hickscorner, for example, clearly owes something to the medieval call for order:

Make you rome for a gentylman syrs, and peace  
 Duegarde seygnours tout le preasse  
 And of your Jangelynge if ye will cease  
 I wyll tell you where I have bene.  
 (Biv)

In Youth (Waley's ed.), which was influenced by Hickscorner, Youth boasts and threatens the audience at his first entry; he cries,

A backe felowes and gyve me rome  
 Or I shall make you to avoyde sone  
 I am goodle of persone  
 I am pereles where ever I come

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13. Graik, The Tudor Interlude, pp. 19-20.

My name is youth I tell the  
 I florysh as the vine tre  
 who may be likenoth unto me  
 In my youthe and Jolytye.<sup>14</sup>  
 (Aiv, Aii)

Youth has a dagger (with which he threatens Charity) and it may have been in evidence during his bragging speeches, like the sword in the medieval examples. During the play, while inflated by Riot and Pride, he utters another boast of the medieval kind, which, at its own popular level, recalls Magnificence's. He says,

A backe galantes and loke unto me  
 And take me for your speciall  
 For I am promoted to hye degree  
 By ryght I am Kyng eternal  
 Neither duke ne Lorde, Baron ne knight  
 That maye be likened unto me.  
 (Civ)

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14. Baskervill ("Mummers' Wooing Plays in England", MP, xxi, p. 232) draws attention to the appearance of this passage (Youth, ll. 39-58) in the Revesby Play (ll. 308-33). His suggestion is that both "borrowed or adapted one of the conventional descriptions with which characters introduced themselves in the Middle Ages in dances, games and popular interludes." I think (it is a matter of opinion) that the boasting self-introductions and the rough cries for room in the folk-plays are imitations of the medieval dramatic techniques and their Tudor offshoots; two speeches particularly suggestive of this provenance are the presenter's and Little John's speeches in the Mylor play, edited in Chambers, The English Folk Play (see pp. 71, 78). That the braggarts were received especially well by the folk (Tiddy, The Mummers' Play, p. 110) is very likely. Speirs considers that "the Herod and the Pilate of the Mystery Cycle bear an unmistakable resemblance to the Turkish knight of the Mummers' Play", but there is no evidence for his assertion that the Mystery Cycle is "the outcome of a union, a unique combination of the dramatic rituals of the old religion and the new" ("The Mystery Cycle", Scrutiny, xviii, p. 264).

The fact that this instantly suggests the medieval drama is largely due to the extreme and blasphemous presumption of Youth's boast.

The association of the medieval bragging call for order with that cry for room which became a standard feature of the Tudor interlude occurs also in some other plays. For example, while the chief inspiration of Thersytes was a Latin dialogue,<sup>15</sup> the author also drew on the English medieval tradition, for the Latin begins with Thersites addressing Mulciber, but Thersites' speech opening the English play is closely related to the medieval bragging calls for order:

Have in a ruffler foorth of the greke land  
Called Thersites, if ye wyll me knowe  
abacke, geve me rounge, in my way do ye not stand  
For if ye do, I wyll soone laye you lowe.

In this play, the traditional device has become attached to a miles gloriosus character. The same is true of the entry of Ambidexter, the Vice, in Preston's Cambises:

Enter the Vice, with an old capcase on his head, an  
olde paille about his hips for harnes, a scummer and  
a potlid by his side, and a rake on his shoulder.

Stand away, stand away, for the passion of God. . .  
(ll. 126-59)

The most complete Tudor miles gloriosus, Ralph Roister Doister, however, shows no signs of this particular native dramatic technique.

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15. Ravisius, Dialogi, pp. 239-48.

The appropriation of the abusive speeches of the medieval braggarts for the entry of impolite, overbearing or foolish characters through the audience was not necessarily, therefore, a simple change. There are other complicating factors apart from the miles gloriosus in Heywood's Weather the Vice, Merry Report, enters and says,

Now syrs take hede for here cometh goddes servant  
 Avaunt cartely keytyfs avaunt  
 Why ye dronken horesons wyll yt not be  
 By your fayth have ye nother cap nor kne  
 Not one of you that wyll make curtsy  
 To me that am squire for goddes precyous body.  
 (Aivv)

He goes on to give an alliterating list of places he has visited. The demand for respect and the abusive language come from the medieval device, and the alliterating list of the braggart's dominions probably inspired Merry Report's list. However, since Weather was acted by children, the speech was delivered by a child actor; therefore the device is being put to a new use: it is here the instrument of precocious ferocity. The seriousness has gone out of it; Heywood is playing with it.

The story of the decline of the device is very conveniently told by the three Wit and Science plays. The monster Tediousness (or Iirksomeness) features in all three. In the earliest, John Redford's Wit and Science, he enters "wt a vyser over hys hed" and begins,



Oh the bodye of me  
 what kaytyves be those  
 that wyl not once flee  
 from tediousnes nose,

and declares that he will strike Wit over the head:

thes bones this mall  
 shall bete hym to dust.

He then stretches his limbs to make them supple and makes to attack the audience to clear a space for his assault on Wit:

stand back ye wrechys  
 beware the fechys  
 of tediousnes  
 thes kaytyves to bless, [i.e., in order to  
 make roome I say kill Wit and his friends]  
 rownd every way  
 thys way that way  
 what care I what way  
 before me behynd me  
 rownd about wynd me  
 now I begyn  
 to swete in my skin  
 now am I nembles  
 to make them tremble,  
 pash head pash brayne  
 the knaves are slayne  
 all that I hyt.

He decapitates Wit, crying "Ho ho ho ho" and declares of Wit's companions,

by mahoundes bones had the wrechos taryd  
 ther neckes wythout hedes they shold have caryd  
 Ye, by mahowndes nose myght I have patted them  
 in twenty gobbetes I shold have squatted them  
 to teche the knaves to cum neere the snowte  
 of tediousnes. . .

(11. 224-35)

Finally he goes to rest in his "own nest". The similarities between Redford's presentation of Tediousness and the threatening braggarts of the medieval drama--the ugly visor (see above, pp. 40, 50), the wooden club (see above, pp. 40, 84, 171), the insulting cry to the audience, here adapted for a Tudor hall, the euphemistic expressions meaning "to slay" (see above, p. 211 and n. 22), the bloodthirsty expressions, the generally exaggerated demeanour and the swearing by Mahound--make it certain that Redford drew upon this popular feature of the medieval drama to present his allegorical monster.<sup>16</sup> The first passage is not heavily alliterated, as this device often is in the older plays, but it does have a distinctive metrical form, as it is composed in a series of short couplets which distinguish it from the speeches of the other characters in the play.

In the anonymous Marriage of Wit and Science, written some twenty or thirty years after Redford's play, Tediousness has been cut down to neo-classical size, retaining only the minimum amount of absurd ferocity, and being only a shadow of his former self. He says he will eat Will and his fellows two at a time, and he briefly threatens Will with his club (V,v). He also ends IV, 11, with a laughable extra-metrical "Hoh hoh hoh". Similarly, in the anonymous Marriage

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16. Craik (op. cit., p. 53) suggests that Tediousness is "a savage giant" and cites Hall's description of the Court Disguising in 1515, with its "wyldemen". For a possible relationship between these wildmen and the medieval braggarts, see above, p. 95.

of Wit and Wisdom, "Tricksomenes enter [s] like a monstor, and shall boat douns Wit with his cloub", but his two appearances (on pp. 35, 38) are very brief; he wears a visor in this play also. The cardinal difference between the presentation of Tediousness in Redford's play and in these two later plays is the fact that the attack on the audience does not occur in the two latter. For this reason the device has here quite lost its vitality; it is an almost unidentifiable relic.

Another instance of a cry for room which, with its accompanying threat to the audience, recalls the mediæval drama, occurs in Pikeryng's Horestes where Provicion enters crying,

Make rouns and gyve place, stand backe there a fore,  
 For all my speeking, you presse styll the more.  
 Gyve rome I saye quickeley, and make no dalyaunce,  
 It is not now tyme, to make aney taryaunce!  
 The kinges here do com, therefore give way,  
 Or elles by the godes, I wyll make you I saye.  
 Lo where my Lord Kyng Nestor doth come. . .  
 Make rome I say, before their with shame.  
 (Diiii, iiii<sup>v</sup>)

The latest extant obvious echo of the device in an officious cry for room is in Woodes' The Conflict of Conscience, where Hypocrisy calls for room and tells a bystander to take off his hat (ll. 1075-6), as does, for example, the Summoner in the Ludus Coventrie, other mediæval braggarts (see above, p. 95), and Merry Report in Heywood's Weather.

The mediæval boast and menace is not always, however, associated with the cry for room. In Henry Medwall's Nature, for example, Pride,

a great gilt-spurred personage, after a disdainful and haughty entrance ("Wote ye not how great a Lord I am"), continues,

. . . ho ho abyde  
 I have a dagger by my syde  
 Yet therof spake not I  
 I bought thys dagger at the marte  
 A sharp poynt and a tarte  
 He that had yt in his hart  
 Were as good to dye.

(Cii-iiiv-iii)

He also has two swords which, being too heavy for him, are carried by an attendant; here there may well be a reflection of some particularly fatuous bragging speech, remembered or heard in some lost medieval play. Again, in the fragmentary Albion Knight "Division cometh in with a byll, a sword, a buckler, & a dagger":

Have in a ruske  
 Out of the buske  
 A lustye Captayne,  
 A Boore with a tuske  
 A sturdie Luske  
 Any battaile to detaine. . .  
 As styff as a stake  
 Battayle to make  
 As never afferde. . .

(ll. 166-97)

He says he will strike Peace and Justice. As in the case of Redford's Wit and Science, instead of the long alliterative lines which characterise some of the boastful speeches in the medieval drama, the boast is here contained in short rhyming lines. This metre is found in various plays throughout the sixteenth century character-

ising the speeches of the Vice, and several times it distinguishes the passage which is related to the medieval boast.

The presentation of Satan in Ingeland's The Disobedient Child owes much to the medieval drama.<sup>17</sup> As the Devil enters he pushes through the audience, or forces part of it to the wall, and so here is another example of the bragging speech adapted to the conditions of indoor playing. He begins,

Ho, ho, ho, what a fellowe am I!  
 Geve rowme I saye both more and lesse!  
 My strength and power hence to the Skye  
 No earthly tonge can well expresse.  
 Oh what invencions, craftes and wiles,  
 Is there conteyned within this head. . .  
 . . . no gentleman, knyght, or Lorde!  
 There is no Duke, Earle, or Kynge!  
 But if I lyst, I can with one worde,  
 Shortly sende unto their lodginge. . .  
 Ho, ho, ho, there is none to be compared,  
 To me I tell you, in any poynte.  
 (Fiii-Gi)

He declares that he is responsible for all the trouble between the husband and wife, and also boasts of his "well-favoured head". The form of the boast of extreme power, and the Devil's ludicrous notion of his own beauty (if that is the correct interpretation of "well-favoured"), come from the medieval drama. This is the only example of the Devil's bragging speech, which was common in the medieval drama (see above, pp. 46-50), surviving in the Tudor drama. Usually when he appears in the Tudor interludes, the emphasis is on his fear

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17. The play is based on a Dialogue by Ravisius which does not contain a Devil (Ravisius, Dialogi, pp. 71-82).

and despair (as in Wever's Lusty Juventus, Biii and iiii<sup>v</sup>, and Lupton's All For Money, Biii and iiii<sup>v</sup>, where he cries and roars and also dances foolishly for joy), and in this also the influence of the medieval drama is apparent; in the older plays he often acted out of fear, and sometimes (in the Digby St. Paul, for example) his terror was comically treated. In other presentations of the Devil in Tudor plays--Garter's Susanna, ll. 26-50, Woodes' The Conflict of Conscience, ll. 1-114--the élan of the medieval players' Devil, so unmistakably recaptured by Ingeland, is lacking.

Lupton's All For Money contains an amusing adaptation of the old device for a child actor. The Vice, who has a dagger (Biv) and who is evidently played by a boy, says,

And is it any marveill why I so many servants have?  
 None with fine qualities with me can compare,  
 Therefore in my sight everie one is but a slave.  
 What, of with your cappes, sirs, it becomes you to stande bare. . .  
 No pride, no slothe, no gluttonie can be used,  
 No periurie without me, neither envie nor hatred.  
 As my qualities be good, so my personage is proper. . .  
 Therefore to beholde my persone, you can not chuse but loye.  
 (Biiiv)

The demand for respect from the audience, including the removal of their hats, and the literal truthfulness of the boast (it is Sin speaking) as well as the boast of personal handsomeness all come from the contemporary medieval drama. The boast of personal beauty has here been most interestingly adapted for the purposes of the child actor!

I am neither to high nor to lowe, to great nor to small,  
 No thicker no thinner, no shorter no longer  
 They decently appertayne, as you may see all.  
 If I were higher I were the worst to fall:  
 If I were lower they would take me for a boy.  
 (Biiiv)

The comedy resides in the audience's inevitable recollection of the boasts of personal beauty in the religious plays. Many of the interludes played by child actors make play with the boys' supposed precocity (an outstanding example is the shaving scene in Damon and Pythias); in the case of the ferocity and abuse of Heywood's Merry Report and Lupton's Sin, and of the latter's boast of his well-proportioned frame, the context essential to the appreciation of the scenes is the ubiquity of one of the most popular and extreme medieval dramatic devices.

The demand for respect from the audience reveals the medieval dramatic inspiration of Fortune's speech in W. Wager's The Longer Thou Livest The More Fool Thou Art. She exclaims,

No Gods mercy, no reverence, no honour,  
 No cappe of, no knee bowed, no homage,  
 Who am I? is there no more good manner,  
 I trowe, you know not me, not my lignage,  
 I tell you I rule and governe all,  
 I advaunce and I plucke downe againe. . .  
 I am she that may do all thinges,  
 In Heaven or earth who is like to me.  
 (Diiiv-Div)

In this play, also, Wrath menacingly calls some of the characters to make room for him (Ciiiv). There are no striking reminders of

the medieval braggart in W. Wager's other plays,<sup>18</sup> although in Enough Is As Good As A Feast there is a rather boisterous devil.

Pikeryng's Horestes, the last of the extant plays to retain notable traces of medieval bragging speeches, begins with the Vice, who has a sword or dagger, saying to the audience,

A Syra nay soft, what? let me see,  
 God morrowe to you syr, how do you fare?  
 Sante a men. I thinke it wyll be.  
 the next day in y<sup>e</sup> morning, before I com thear  
 Well forward I wyll, for to prepare,  
 Some weapons & armour, y<sup>e</sup> catives to quell,  
 Ille teache the hurchetes, agayne to rebell.  
 Rebell? ye syr, how saye you there to?  
 What? you had not beste their partes to take?  
 Houlde the content foole, and do as I do,  
 Or elles me chaunce, your pate for to ake.  
 Ye and thats more, for feare thou shalt quake,  
 Before Horestes, when in good south he,  
 Shall arryve in this lande, revenged to bee. . .  
 Farre well good man dotterell, and marke what I saye,  
 Or eles it may chaunce you, to seke a new hound!  
 You would eate no more oakebread, I thinke then by y<sup>e</sup> roud,  
 If that, that same poulle from your shouleres were hent,  
 You would thinke you were yll, if so you were shent.  
 (All)

It is in this play that Provicion with his threat reminiscent of the medieval stage appears.

In varying proportions, therefore, all the features associated with the wicked boasts and bragging calls for order in the medieval drama are present in some Tudor interludes, both courtly and popular. Sometimes the inspiration of the medieval dramatic technique

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18. Enough Is As Good As A Feast, The Trial of Treasure and Cruel Debtor.



was fresh; such seems to have been so in the case of Skelton, Heywood, Lupton and Redford, for example. At other times the influence was possibly received through the agency of other interludes. Both the monstrous braggart call for order and the various weaker reflections of it in the medieval drama are echoed in the Tudor interludes. When it is found in Tudor interludes, the device has undergone certain modifications. Five chief changes or adaptations are noticeable. Firstly, it is often associated in the interludes with the entry of characters crying for room; certain characters in the medieval drama do cry for room, but they do not usually accompany the cry with a threat, although there are a few instances of this (see above, pp. 100-107). In this respect the device has been adapted to suit the exigencies of indoor performances in a hall. Secondly, the alliterating phrases are not always preserved. Sometimes the device is not marked off metrically from the rest of the play; sometimes it consists of a length of very short lines, elsewhere the property of the Vice. Thirdly, it sometimes, but by no means always, joins hands with the miles gloriosus. Fourthly, whereas in the medieval drama it normally opens a play or scene, it has no fixed or regular position in the Tudor interlude. Fifthly, it is sometimes adapted for child actors, and in these cases, as often in the Tudor interlude, the essential seriousness of the medieval dramaturgy has given way to more light-hearted comedy. The last clear examples of Tudor interludes making use of this device are

Pikeryng's Horestes (1567) and Woodes' The Conflict of Conscience (1575-81); it is a safe conjecture that it was heard little more on the Tudor stage after the third quarter of the sixteenth century, the time of its demise in its full-blooded form on the medieval stage.

However, the memory of the boast and braggart call for order no doubt lingered on; it flickers in Love's Labour's Lost, where the device is momentarily burlesqued. The village dignitaries produce a show modelled on the kind of Royal Entry that had been fashionable for at least a hundred and fifty years, and the chief butt of Shakespeare's burlesque is here the inexperienced (and hastily contrived) Royal Entry.<sup>19</sup> Now, the fine art of Shakespeare's burlesque, both here and in the performance by the "rude mechanicals" in A Midsummer Night's Dream, is to exaggerate features of the object of his burlesque just sufficiently for them to become ridiculous but retain their plausibility. In the course of the performance in Love's Labour's Lost (V, ii), the speakers are heckled by the courtiers. Holofernes, as Judas, gives way to the interruptions by forgetting his dramatic identity and exclaiming, "I will not be put out of countenance!" Armado, however, tries a different technique; he does not at first

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19. The four outstanding features of the speeches of welcome at Royal Entries--the curt introduction, the boast, the submission and the stilted language--are burlesqued:

I Pompey am, Pompey surnam'd the Great,  
That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat;  
And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance,  
And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.  
(V, ii, 548)

give way, but decides to call for order, using the martial authority temporarily conferred upon him by his impersonation of Hector; when he cries "Peace!"<sup>20</sup> to his audience he is justified in trying this approach by the whole of the medieval English drama, which worked on just this same principle. Apart from this momentary burlesque of the old technique, there is a joke residing in the contrast between Armado's real and assumed characters; this is the same joke as that which is perhaps implied in The Miller's Tale, where the "squaymous" Absolon, who has a voice "gentil and smal", "pleyeth Herodes upon a scaffold hye" (A, l. 3384).<sup>21</sup>

#### The Familiarity with the Audience.

A feature of practically all the Tudor interludes is the familiar and insolent attitude of the Vice and other wicked characters towards the audience.<sup>22</sup> This is clearly related to the boisterous conduct and attitude of the devils, torturers, and other, usually minor, wicked characters in some of the medieval plays (see above, pp. 100-107, 171-5, 210-11, 213-15). These are the characters who

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20. "Braggart". Peace. The Almighty Mars, of Launce the Almighty. . . Q., 1598; the word "Peace" is not in the Folio.

21. The commentators (Skene, Pollard, and Robinson) on these lines confine themselves to conventional references to the mystery plays; this is inadequate, for it seems clear that the lines constitute, in the way indicated, an amusing jest, although it is possible that the Herod Chaucer knew was a tame and fastidious one--certainly the extant fully-styled and lavish speeches for Herod were written in their present form after 1400.

22. Craik, op. cit., pp. 22-4.

sometimes insult the audience, and this becomes chiefly the business of the Vice in the Tudor interludes; however, in the interludes the boisterous and rude intimidation of the audience has become intimate and facetious bantering, although in the earlier part of the century it still sometimes retains a close similarity to its form in the mediæval plays. Counterfeit Countenance in Skelton's Magnificence, for example, addresses the audience (ll. 403-93), and parts of his speech--

What! wolde ye wyves counterfet  
The courtly gyse of the new jet?

--recall Titivillus' address to the audience in the Wakefield Master's part of the Towneley Judgment (see above, p. 172). The personal insults to the women in the audience continue throughout the century to be spoken by the Vice; he is usually a lecherous character, and sometimes seems to direct his insults at one blushing member of the audience in particular: for example, Ambidexter in Preston's Cambises asks a woman or girl in the audience if she would care to marry him (l. 953). There are many examples of this kind of vulgar comedy,<sup>23</sup> and the tradition is behind the remark made by Lear's Fool at the end of Act I, Scene 5.

The Vice and other low characters are also familiar with the audience in other ways, and sometimes their insolent tone merges with the presumptuous abuse spoken by the mediæval braggarts; this

23. Other examples are Fulwell's Like Will to Like, Aiiiv, Wapull's, The Tide Tarrieth No Man, Diii, Fikeryng's Horrestes, Eii.  
~~The Tide Tarrieth No Man, Diii, Fikeryng's Horrestes, Eii.~~

has happened when the audience are asked to remove their hats or hold their peace (Fulwell's Like Will to Like, Eiv<sup>v</sup>) or when the speaker otherwise overwhelms them with his personality, as at the beginning of Wealth and Health (ll. 1-19, "What ayles you all thus to syt dreaming. . ."24). Again, accusations made to the audience about their immorality or folly (by Ignorance in Rastell's The Nature of the Four Elements (Eiv), for example), merge with the medieval devils' exultations in the ubiquity of their evil dominion (see above, p. 51). Familiarity and informality were fostered by the early Tudor dramatists, and this aspect of the open technique was sometimes put to brilliant use--by, for example, Medwall in Fulgens & Lucres, in his manipulation of the relationship between the audience and the two servants, A and B. In their informality and spirited comedy the Tudor interludes moved on from the position of the medieval open technique and established their own unique atmosphere.

In the medieval plays, it is the torturers and devils who sometimes cry for room and seem to push through the audience, never, naturally, the virtuous or dignified characters (see above, p. 103), and this distinction is preserved in the Tudor interludes. Also in the medieval drama it is the wicked characters who sometimes approach the audience with scornful or foolish rhetorical questions (see a-

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24. A bantering character notices the audience staring at him in other plays, too! e.g., Love Feigned and Unfeigned (l. 76), The Trial of Treasure (B1).

bove, pp. 104-5), and this method features in many of the Tudor interludes. Pride in Medwall's Nature, who says,

Wote ye not how great a lord I am  
Of how noble progeny I cam,  
(Cii-iii)

Freewill in Hickscorner ("How saye you am not I a goodly personne", Aiiiv), the Gentlewoman in Heywood's Weather (Ciiiv), Iniquity in King Darius (Divv), and Solace and Deceit in Lindsay's Thrie Estaitis--1554 (ll. 142-81, 659-82) address the audience in this way. It would be foolish to suggest that this particular kind of self-introduction was in each case simply copied from a medieval performance; what has almost certainly happened is that the open technique, which was essential to both the medieval and Tudor schools of drama, has produced in the latter, aided by both the memories and the instincts of the playwrights, one of the dramatic tricks found in the former. The same explanation is also applicable to the announcements and mispronounced proclamations that are addressed to the audience in both the medieval plays (see above, pp. 184-6) and the Tudor interludes (for example, Fulwell's Like Will to Like, Bi, Lupton's All For Money, Di, Garter's Susanna, ll. 956-76, and Clyomon and Clamydes, ll. 1196-1210). The audience is, however, never deliberately and straightforwardly antagonised by the contents of a proclamation in the Tudor interludes, as happened in the medieval plays.

Another technique, again connected with the medieval presentation of evil characters and found in many Tudor interludes, shows in addition to the influence of the medieval dramaturgy the influence of the Latin comedy. The Vice or some mischievous character outlines his plan to the audience or meditates his scheme aloud. So, for example, the Devil in Wever's Lusty Juventus declares his intention to turn Youth from the Scriptures, and then Hypocrisy explains to the audience how he will enslave him with Abominable Living (Cii and iiv). Similarly, Envy in Impatient Poverty (Civ, ii) and Ill-Will in Wealth and Health (ll. 333-48) plot aloud and exultingly. Clearly, the prevalence of this device owes something to the villainous and confidential soliloquies which are a common feature of the medieval plays (see above, pp. 166-71); but it is equally certain that the clever servant of the Latin comedies who often turns his scheme over in his mind in soliloquy has also inspired the Tudor playwrights. The soliloquy in the Latin comedy is usually a cogitation or a thinking aloud, and the presence of a Davus or a Syrus as he appears, for example, in Terence's Andria I, ii, iii, II, ii, etc., Terence's Self-Tormentor, III, ii, IV, ii, etc., Plautus' Menaechmi, V, vi, Aulularia, IV, i, or in such humanistic imitations of the classical comedians as Acolastus, II, iv, IV, iii, etc., clearly makes itself felt in a large number of plays--Jacob and Esau, New Custom, King Darius, Misogonus, Clivemon and Clamydes, and of course, Gammer Gurton's Needle, for example. Sometimes the villainous or mischievous

soliloquy terminates in the speaker's asking for a guarded silence (Preston's Cambises, l. 621, Wapull's The Tide Tarrieth No Man, B11, for example), and this seems to be due more to the open technique of the English tradition, although there is some of this familiarity in Plautus (Monaechni, V, iii, for example). Sometimes the whole passage is more or less medieval in spirit: in Nice Wenton, Worldly Shame addresses the audience:

Hah ha though I come in rudely be not agast,  
 I must worke a feate in al the hast,  
 I have caught two byrdes, I wyll set for the dame,  
 If I catche her in my clutche, I wyl her tame,  
 Of all thys while know ye not my name?  
 I am right worshipfull maister worldly shamo. . .  
 Peace, peace, she cometh hereby,  
 I spoke no word of her, no not I,  
 (Biv, ivv)

and what especially marks this passage off from the kind found in Latin comedy is (apart, of course, from its essential moral seriousness) the boisterous approach of the speaker to the audience, and his ungracious self-identification. These features continue to appear in even such a thoroughly Latin (in style) comedy as Respublica, in Avarice's long monologue in I, i, for example. Often the context of the soliloquy is the same as in the Latin comedies; the villain or mischievous person remains after the departure of another character, giving no reason for staying behind: "go you before ile not stay" says Subtle Shift in Olyomon and Clamydes, and then turns to confide in the audience (ll. 531, 933). Other marks of the Latin



style—such as the overlapping soliloquies, the phrases "I'll step aside" and "Here comes. . ."—also frequently appear. It is often impossible to distinguish and separate, in these familiar and informal mischievous or wicked statements of purpose, the twin influences of Latin comedy and English dramatic tradition, so neatly have they merged together—in, for example, the soliloquies of Ragan in Jacob and Esau (the opening speech) and Iniquity in King Darius (Di and iv). These combined traditions lie behind the presentation of Iago, Richard II and other enigmatic villains of the Elizabethan stage.<sup>25</sup>

The self-descriptions persist into the Tudor interludes in other ways as well as in the boisterous confidential speeches, and, allowing for the influence of the Latin plays, are by and large the product of the older native dramatic tradition. One example of this continuity of the medieval tradition is the appearance of a figure, more or less related to Death, a just but terrible character, towards the end of the play. Death or its effects so appear in the medieval drama (see above, pp. 175, 217), and in a similar way Adversity (ll. 1876-952), Poverty (ll. 1955-65) and Despair (ll. 2284-90) appear in Skelton's Magnificence, God's Judgement and Confusion in W. Wager's The Longer Thou Livest The More Fool Thou Art (Gi, Gii), God's Plague in W. Wager's Enough Is As Good As A Feast (Fiv),

25. Spivak (op. cit., pp. 55-9 and passim) shows the English dramatic tradition behind these villains very clearly, but gives only minimal attention to the Latin.

Horror in Woodes' The Conflict of Conscience (ll. 1961-3), and Despair in Wapull's The Tide Tarrieth No Man (Giv). Just as Death describes his terrors so do most of these figures. Adversity says to the audience,

The stroke of God, Adversyte, I hyght;  
 I plucke downe kyng, prynce. . .  
 Lo, syrs, thus I handell them all.  
 That folowe theyr fansyes in Foly to fall. . .  
 To take, syrs, example of what I you tell,  
 And beware of Adversyte by my counsell.

God's Judgement, wearing "a terrible visure", says,

I represent God's severe judgement,  
 Which dellieeth not where to strike he doth purpose.

These figures represent the survival of one of the more solemn aspects of the open technique.

#### Stately Self-Introductions.

Medwall's Nature begins with a very long speech by Nature, seated; he identifies himself as God's minister, describes his powers and importance and then exhorts the audience to honour God. Man, who is sitting on the stage, shares the exhortation with the audience. This grand opening was probably suggested by the medieval plays about the Creation (pp. 23-9 above). John Rastell drew on Medwall's play in his Nature of the Four Elements, and this, too, begins with a long and dignified self-description; what Medwall learned from the medieval dramaturgy in this matter was passed on

to his imitator. The influence of this medieval dramatic technique is also apparent in Heywood's Weather. In accounts of the dramaturgy of this play (and of other Tudor interludes) the possibility of the influence of the medieval drama has been largely ignored, seemingly because of a forgetfulness of their contemporaneity. Jupiter, having descended from his throne, begins the play. His speech is like God's stately self-descriptions and other dignified medieval boasts; it is addressed to the audience and includes the idea of their submission to him. It involves the audience in the play; the difference in tone is due to the fact that Jupiter is a fictitious character. He says,

For above all goddes syns our fathers fale  
We Jupiter were ever pryncypale.

Then, following a medieval pattern (see above, pp. 45, 58, 95, 115), he sends a messenger to make a proclamation (which is not, however, made to the audience). Jupiter then returns to his throne (or withdraws)--"A whyle we woll withdraw"--and a song is sung; this recalls very noticeably God's withdrawal near the beginning of some of the Creation plays (Towneley Creation, at l. 76, Chester Fall of Lucifer, at l. 104) and the angels' singing in heaven during this episode (see above, pp. 27-8, 203-4). Similarly, the ending of the play has been imitated from a common method of concluding eschatological mystery plays; Jupiter ascends to his "trone celestyal", enjoining those

. . . that on yerth sojourne  
 . . . to syng moste ioyfully  
 Rejoicyng in us,

and the characters on the stage accordingly sing a final song. The theme of this play is taken from Lucian's Icaromenippus, and its structure has been thought to be due to the form of Lucian's Big Accusatus.<sup>26</sup> an opening soliloquy by Jupiter with a command to issue a proclamation appears there. However, it is surely clear that Heywood is using the medieval dramatic technique, for the singing and the movement of the god are not suggested in Lucian, the form and theme of the soliloquy are quite different (the boast in Heywood's Weather is a complaint--a god's life is a dog's life--in Lucian), and the ending of the play is not suggested in Lucian.<sup>27</sup> That Heywood knew his "play of corpus Cristi"<sup>28</sup> and could use it is already apparent from Merry Report's abusive speech (p. 242 above) in this same play.<sup>29</sup>

Regal and portly self-introductions occur throughout the Tudor interludes. In Godly Queene Hester, for example, Mardocheus enters and says to the audience,

26. Cameron, John Heywood's "Play of the Wether", pp. 25-6.

27. Lucian, Big Accusatus, pp. 144-7.

28. The Four PP, Diiv.

29. From the point of view of the technique used at the beginning and ending of the play Maxwell (French Farce & John Heywood, p. 107) is clearly wrong in saying that the play is "alien to the English. . . tradition".

I am Mardocheus borne in Jerusalem,  
 The sonne of Jaire and of the stocke of Benjamy  
 By Nabuchodonosor brought into this realme.  
 (ll. 141-61)

The affinity of this speech is perhaps not so much with the medieval religious drama as with the speeches delivered at Royal Entries (see above, pp. 30-1, 53-4).<sup>30</sup> The same is true of the opening speeches in Lupton's All For Money; there the boasts of Theology, Science and Art are the same in form and tone as the allegorical boasts at Royal Entries (Aiii and iiiv). The same manner appears in many of the Tudor interludes, employed to present both allegorical figures (Apulus and Virginia, Civ, and Liberality and Prodigality, I, i, 1-43, for example) and historical persons (Phillip's Patient Grissel, ll. 59-74, 1235-9, and Olymon and Olemydes, ll. 360-83, for example). Sometimes the self-introduction is very similar in tone to the character-sermons found in some of the medieval plays; the opening speech by Peace, for example, in Impatient Foverty, which begins with an aureate blessing, stresses the importance of peace and then names the speaker, is clearly in a line of direct descent from the opening of Mankind by Mercy.

The very brief style of self-introduction sometimes used for allegorical characters--"Christianity I doe represent" (Wapull's

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30. Payne (in Sapientia Solomonis, p. 37) writes of the Latin play that "the exposition is handled more skilfully than it is in Godly Queen Hester where characters still announce their identity to the audience after the fashion of the miracle plays."

The Tide Tarrieth No Man, Fliv), "vor we Ignoram people whom itche doe perzente" (Respublica, III, iii), "I represent a vertue called Pacience" (Phillip's Patient Grissel, l. 1787) and many others--was the subject of Shakespeare's burlesque in A Midsummer Night's Dream, where Snout says, "I, one Snout by name, present a wall" (V, 1, 154).<sup>31</sup> This kind of very brief self-introduction, which appears in many of the interludes and which, with its "I represent" perhaps shows the morally and politically anxious playwrights too conscious of their allegory, is not usual in the medieval drama.

#### D. Sermons and Homiletic Asides.

The Tudor interludes also reflect the medieval dramaturgy in another direction. The medieval play, owing to the flexibility of its open technique, was able, when necessary, to incorporate a sermon into its structure; in the interludes it is usually an allegorical figure who preaches. The speaker commends to the audience the virtue which he himself represents. There is here a link with the

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31. "Wall" has been supposed to be a burlesque of stage-craft. Craik (op. cit., p. 18) suggests that there would have been a property wall where necessary in performances of the interludes and that "Wall" is a "fantastic circumvention" of the normal type of staging. Harbage (Theatre for Shakespeare, p. 33), however, states the precise opposite: Shakespeare was mocking the "literal-mindedness of naïve amateurs" who supposed that because a wall was mentioned in the script a wall had to be shown. My own suggestion, which I believe to be much more in accord with Shakespeare's genius, is that he was burlesquing the excessive allegorisation of things which are not really suitable for allegorical treatment--such as "Search" (rather than a constable) in The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom and "Proof" in Preston's Cambises; the practice is confined to a few Tudor interludes.

allegorical speeches at Royal Entries, also (see above, pp. 30-1). Such a sermon is delivered at the beginning of Youth (Waley's ed.). Charity enters, blesses the audience, announces her name, and continues,

There maye no man saved be  
 Wythout the helpe of me. . .  
 I am the gate I tell thee  
 Of heaven that joyful citee. . .  
 Lo charitie is a great thinge.

Similar speeches, all addressed to the audience, appear in such different varieties of the Tudor interlude as Wager's The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art, by Piety and Discipline (Eiv-ii, Fiii), Respublica, by Misericordia (V, i), Lindsey's The Thrie Estaitis (1554), by Good Counsel and Verity (ll. 554-601, 1026-76), and Medwall's Nature, by Meekness (Hiv and ivv), and in many others. The seriousness and sense of urgency glowing in the majority of the interludes is largely due to this factor.

As well as the sermon, the short homiletic asides, which are part of the medieval dramatic technique, occur with greater frequency in the Tudor interludes. They continually draw the attention of the audience to the moral of the episode. So Conscience says, in The World and the Child,

Lo syrs a grete ensample you may se,  
 The freylnes of mankynde  
 How oft he falleth in folye.  
 (Oiv)

Again, Philologus in Misogonus says,

All yow that love your children take example by me.  
 . lett them have good doctrine and discipline in youth.  
 (II, v, 97-8)

Here Philologus speaks from his own experience, or in explanation of his own behaviour; this is the usual context of the homiletic aside in the medieval drama. In this way Grissel draws the moral of her own conduct in Phillip's Patient Grissel:

God graunt I may do as my mother mee willed,  
 Then God will prosper mee in tyme of neede,  
 Lett all Children bee mindefull of obedience in deede: . . .  
 To honor your Parents do dayly remember.  
 (II. 594-611)

The adulteress utters similar homiletic sentiments in some of the mystery plays, and she does so in L. Wager's The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene, where in her long speech of repentance (II. 1679-742) she exclaims,

To all the worlde an example I may be,  
 In whom the mercy of Christ is declared.

There are countless other examples of this practice in the Tudor interludes. A much greater emphasis usually distinguishes the instances in the interludes from the similar passages in the medieval drama, but they are much nearer to these in tone than to the sententiae in Terence and his humanistic imitators, although occasionally the Tudor homiletic aside seems to merge with the sententiae--in Jacob and Esau, for example, when blind Isaac says he must bear



with God's will, or when Rebecca, leading him, says all wives should care for their husbands. A further divergence from the medieval practice is the not infrequent homiletic statement by a wicked character; in The Trial of Treasure, for example, it is Inclination who says that all who pursue treasure and pleasure shall be deceived at last. This, and related repentant homiletic remarks such as those by Ralph Roister and Tom Tossopot in Fulwell's Like Will to Like (Eiv-ii), recall the speeches by the Wakefield Master's torturers in the Towneley Talents, which are not typical of the medieval drama.

The asides of a homiletic kind in the Tudor interludes cannot be said to be directly derived from the related passages in the medieval drama; their greater emphasis and insistence reveals the renewed vigour of the preachers, with a new protestant or humanistic cause to urge. The Tudor dramatists still worked, however, in the open technique, and this nourished dramatic methods reminiscent of the traditional methods, which were readily available with suggestions and precedents for the younger drama in the matter of sermons and homiletic asides.

#### E. The Biblical and the Emotional.

Two biblical Tudor plays use the open technique in ways in which it was also commonly used in medieval plays. L. Wager's The Life and Repentance of Marie Magdalene contains the only direct address spoken by Christ that survives in a Tudor interlude. Using biblical language, He promises everlasting mercy to His adherents,

the audience (ll. 1271-86) and invites them to rest in Him (ll. 1459-78). The latter speech never appears in the medieval plays and the former only rarely, but Wager was clearly helped in the composition of his play by the continuing tradition of the popular religious drama. The sermons delivered in John the Evangelist suggest that the interlude shared with some of the mystery plays in which St. John preaches to the audience the qualities of dramatic immediacy and relevance. The interlude begins with a sermon (ll. 1-25), there is another in the course of the action (ll. 250-60), and to conclude the interlude St. John again preaches and leads up to a cry for repentance (ll. 576-653). These sermons seem to have been delivered both to the audience and to characters on the stage; two knaves are converted by the last sermon, but it would be strange if the audience also did not take the part of the congregation.

In John Phillip's Patient Grissel speeches by Grissel seem to show signs of the influence of the lamentations of the Maries in those medieval plays in which one of the mourners sometimes seems to invite the women in the audience to share her grief (see above, pp. 160-4). Grissel cries, "Ye matrons milde deplore my case" (ll. 1097-1104) and

Fare well swet Childe thy Mother now, shall se thy face no more,  
 Helpe spoused Dames help Grissill now, hir fate w<sup>t</sup> teares to plore.  
 (ll. 1202-5)

The matrons and dames may, of course, have been represented on the

stage, although none are indicated at this point; in any case Grissel could still have desperately applied to the audience for sympathy. Earlier in the play she sings a song with the refrain "Ye Virgins all come learne of mee" (ll. 219-66), and this, also an invocation to the women in the audience, must show that Phillip was familiar with some version or adaptation of the religious lyric that was introduced as a Marian lament in a medieval play (see above, p. 163). In Boccaccio, Petrarch<sup>32</sup> and Chaucer<sup>33</sup> there is an emphasis on Griselda's marvellous self-composure--

Griseldis moot al suffre and al consente,  
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,  
And leet this cruell sergeant doon his wille. . .  
She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.  
But nathelees she neither weep ne sylked,

--and so the sentiments that Phillip puts into Grissel's mouth are alien to the original conception of the story. He seems in this matter to have given way to the influence of the medieval drama, although it is possible that he is merely following his (unknown) source; in some popular English or French version of the story emotionalism may have crept in. Grissel's speeches, Christ's sermon, and some of the other homiletic exhortations are exceptions to the general rule that in the Tudor interludes the open technique is not

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32. Originals and Analogues of Some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, pp. 160, 162.

33. Canterbury Tales, E, ll. 537-9, 545-6, 564-5, 677-9.

used to promote that impassioned quality so conspicuously a part of the open technique in the medieval drama.

#### F. Prologues and Epilogues.

Prologues are more usual in the Tudor interludes than in the medieval drama, although many Tudor plays, especially in the early part of the sixteenth century, do not have them. The homiletic impulse was responsible for the form of many of them; the prologue-speakers sometimes quote texts to support their arguments, and they usually emphasise the moral lesson of the play about to be performed. In this respect the Tudor prologues are like the medieval prologues, and the prologue-speakers may have been presented on the stage as preachers--the "doctors" of the medieval stage--but there is no certainty about this, although it is sometimes stated as a fact. It was definitely not the practice in some of the "coterie" plays, that is, plays which were performed privately: the prologue-speaker wears a garland of bays "as custome is" (l. 20)<sup>34</sup> in Misogonus. Certainly, the fact that in the early part of the century there is merely a scattered "Messenger" or "Prologue" and later a fairly consistent use of the "Prologue" points to the obvious influence of Latin comedy. In Jacob and Esau, for example, the prologue is spoken by a poet, and in other plays, such as Edward's Damon and Pythias, the Latin type of prologue is obviously followed.

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34. It is not clear whether the "custom" is wearing a garland or reciting the story.

As a general rule, it can be said that the moral urgency of the Tudor prologue is in line with the medieval tradition, but that for many of the plays the chief, if not the only model was the prologue in Latin comedy and its humanistic imitations.

Epilogues in the Tudor interludes are much rarer than prologues; the word "epilogue" itself was not completely established in the play books, "Last Speaker" (Phillip's Patient Grissel), "Perorator" (Ingeland's The Disobedient Child), "Prologue" (Garter's Susanna), and "Poet" (Jacob and Esau) also appearing as synonyms. Such epilogues as are spoken usually draw the moral conclusion of the play, apologise to the audience for deficiencies in the play or its presentation, or thank them for their attention, and conclude with a prayer. Some of them are not unlike the medieval epilogues discussed on p. 223 above.

In contrast to the paucity of epilogue figures in the Tudor interludes, and to the varying presence of prologue figures, it is the exceptional interlude that does not have a character-epilogue. Even when there is an epilogue figure there is also usually a character-epilogue (in Ingeland's The Disobedient Child, and King Darius, for example). The character-epilogue--the concluding speech or speeches of a performance addressed to the audience by one or more characters speaking as actors, not as characters--was a well-established feature of the medieval drama (see above, pp. 215-21), and at the end of about half the medieval plays a character or charac-

ters address the audience (see above, pp. 206-225). There can be no doubt that the Tudor interludes were in this respect influenced by the medieval dramaturgy. For example, the ending of Youth (Copland's ed.) is as follows:

Charity (to Youth):  
 Than shall ye be an heritour of blyasse  
 Where all joye and myrth is  
 Youth: To whiche the eternall  
 God bringe the persons all  
 Here beyng Amen.  
 Humility: Thus have we brought our matter to an ende  
 Before the persons here present  
 Wolde every man be contente  
 Leaste another daye we be shente  
 Charity: We thanke all this presente  
 Of their meeke audience  
 Humility: Jesu that sytteth in heaven so hye  
 Save all this faire companye  
 Men and women that here be  
 Amen, Amen for charitye.

It is quite clear that this is in the same tradition as, for instance, the ending of the Digby Mary Magdalene (see above, p. 220); the only difference is that the number of speakers has increased. Often the character-epilogue is neatly linked to the preceding dialogue, as in the case of Youth, and usually the ending of the play is in keeping with the tone of the whole performance. As in the medieval drama, it is usually only virtuous or repentant characters who speak character-epilogues. An example will demonstrate this general consistency of tone negatively: the ending of Heywood's Four PP is not in tune with the rest of the play; the Palmer's suddenly serious character-epilogue, exhorting the audience to obey

the commandments and love the Church, apologising for the play, and blessing the audience, is really a piece of medieval dramaturgy ill-assimilated to the farcical play. There are other rather abrupt and unexpected endings in Heywood's Play of Love and in Calisto and Melibea (Danio beginning the character-epilogue at l. 1044), but generally speaking the old method has been very pleasantly and suitably adapted to the purposes of the new plays; the characters chosen are fit to draw the moral (as they nearly always do) and utter a prayer.

The increase in the number of speakers is one change that took place in the character-epilogues in the sixteenth century; from the beginning of the century three or four speakers often contribute to it. A further change concerns its motive. The community of religion which lay behind the medieval character-epilogue does indeed continue to be a motive of its Tudor counterpart, which often blesses the audience, especially in the first half of the century; however, another interest joins the religious preoccupation: the sense of political community. From the fifteen-thirties onwards the character-epilogue prays for the monarch, and very often for the nobility, "spirituality" and commons as well. In fact the feeling for the commonwealth overtakes, in the course of the century, the feeling for community in religion, and it is this that now unites the actors and their audience at the close of the performance. In this way the performances express most clearly the prevailing na-

tional mood, and promote the cause of national unity espoused by the Tudor monarchs.

The fact that the Latin comedies often conclude with a kind of character-epilogue--an actor sometimes requesting the audience to applaud (especially in Plautus) and sometimes addressing them comically, inviting them to dinner in sixteen years' time (Plautus, Rudens) or telling them that the action will continue in the house (Terence, Andria)--had very little effect on the Tudor interludes, except those like Gammer Gurton's Needle (ll. 332-5) and July and Julian (ll. 1295-314) which imitate the Latin comedies throughout; even so, Roister Doister avoids this kind of conclusion, the whole company at the close of this play singing a song for the Queen. This strongly suggests that the idea of applauding at the end of a performance was confined to the schools and universities, if it was the practice there! Terens in english, the early Tudor translation of Andria, significantly substitutes a benediction for the "plaudite".<sup>35</sup>

A song is sometimes prescribed at the conclusion of a performance, and in the case of a play like Medwall's Nature, where the song is "some goodly ballet", or Heywood's Weather, it was probably suggested by the medieval practice; but in the case of a play like

35. For the usual ending, "vos valet, et plaudite", the English has:

I can no more now but the one, ii, And thre [i.e., the  
Save you and kepe you both grete And small Trinity]  
Reynyng above the Region etheriall.



Redford's Wit and Science and the ending of his First Fragmentary Interlude the song requires no such explanation.

#### G. Summary.

The medieval drama, in all probability, reached its greatest popularity and vigour in the sixteenth century;<sup>36</sup> certainly, it is now generally accepted that it did not disappear by languishing, but rather by suppression.<sup>37</sup> It is therefore not surprising to find various features of the medieval plays reappearing in the Tudor interludes. However, the Tudor interlude, although descended in the first place from the medieval moralities, was in various important ways different from the medieval plays. It was much shorter, and it was played indoors. New subjects were introduced. Its own unique atmosphere of informality and its own sense of urgency were developed. It assimilated the technique of the Latin comedy. Consequently, those medieval techniques which found a place in it underwent changes and adaptations.

Medieval dramatic techniques reappear in the Tudor interludes in two ways. Firstly, some provide the basis for slightly different techniques. In this case, various modifying influences, including the circumstances of performance in a hall and the new awareness

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36. One of the conclusions of Salter's ingenious argument is that "the period at which the craft plays in Chester reached their zenith of prosperity corresponds roughly with the reign of Henry VIII" ("Banns of the Chester Plays", RES, xvi, p. 16).

37. Gardiner, op. cit., pp. 65-93; Wickham, op. cit., i, 112-17.

of the Latin comedy, can be seen helping to shape the course of development. The bustling and bantering, the confidential speeches, and the character-epilogues are some instances of medieval techniques which have undergone this process. The independent dramatic instincts of the early Tudor playwrights, as well as their memories or knowledge of performances of medieval plays, must also be allowed to have produced methods very similar to some parts of the medieval dramaturgy, especially as both schools of drama worked with the open technique; proclamations and homilies belong in this category. Secondly, some medieval techniques are deliberately copied. In this case, the direct copying was often done to produce a dramatic moment that depended for its effect on the recognition of its relationship to the medieval plays; Bale's and Skelton's imitations are of this kind, and two other remarkable examples are Heywood's and Lupton's adaptations of medieval bragging speeches for mimicking child actors. The dramaturgy of the Tudor interludes is, then, recognisably derived, in many respects, from the medieval, and it sometimes copies it for purposes of its own.

## CHAPTER SIX

## Summary. Dramatic Illusion and the Late Middle Ages

The open technique was an integral part of the medieval English drama, which was performed on a ceremonial and open stage. It normally introduced and concluded a play and appeared at various moments during the course of the performance. At the beginning of certain plays the audience was awed by God's majestic address to them; at other times their sympathy was awakened by a lamentation, or a prayerful or comic rambling soliloquy, or a sermon or an insistent appeal; on the other hand, an alien figure frequently expostulated rather absurdly or affronted the audience presumptuously, and various lesser malignant characters sought to annoy them and Satan to chill them. The play-openings, sudden and conspicuous, were of the kind to raise interest and expectation. Though it is possible to distinguish various different kinds of talent at work, these play-openings are common to all the dramatists. There was a general sense of what was appropriate and dramatic. The opening of the play was vigorous and alive.

During the course of the performance the audience were invited at times to abandon their positions as spectators and to respond directly to straightforward appeals or insults. Such impassioned

speeches addressed to the audience were built into the narrative frame of the plays by the vernacular dramatists in order to elicit a lively emotional response from the spectators, and to this end sermons, proclamations, lyrics and narrative materials were transformed into devices suitable for the open stage. There was, again, a general sense of when the open technique was applicable; it was used for sermons, for proclamations, for the appeals and emotional exclamations and explanations of various characters, for furtive and criminal or more flippant moments, and on other more stately occasions. For the sake of cultivating the active concern of the audience, on any one of these occasions the story could be held up while all kinds of sentiment and feeling were dwelt on and while the audience was, in various ways, provoked, enticed or exhorted.

At the end of a performance, the playwrights often returned to the charge, and dismissed the audience with a dramatic reminder of the connection between themselves and the scenes they had just witnessed. The characters might bless (or curse) the audience, or bid them farewell, or express the final issue of the drama in songs familiar to them in their worship. Again, there was still a chance that some brutal insolence would be employed deliberately to foster real enmity between the audience and the persecutors of Christ. Fine ceremony may mark the end of a play, heavenly choirs exulting, or actors leaving their assumed characters and speaking out to the audience as fellow-Christians.

The open technique of the medieval drama required the audience to be prepared to do more than observe, however enthusiastically, the proceedings; they were expected to respond personally to the various scenes, to answer, for example, the appeal of Jesus or to condemn, silently or otherwise, the arrogant wickedness of the braggarts. In the former case, when the audience have become the passers-by and the "man" of the lyrics, the episode has a ritualistic or ceremonial flavour; in the latter case the scene must sometimes have become more like a game, with the audience and the character opposed to each other. It was evidently possible for the medieval audience both to watch the procession and to take part in it--not all the time, but at relevant, chosen moments.

When the historical characters in the play address the audience--an act which is itself the last "anachronism" of the medieval stage--they usually (paradoxical though it may seem) uphold the pretence of the play by their open recognition of the audience. This is chiefly because they speak in character, and consider the onlookers in the light of their own characters, whether they are tyrants or cuckolds or the suffering Christ. If a character insults the audience he does so because it is in his nature to do so. A tyrant reveals his tyranny by his attitude towards them. The characters impose themselves on the audience; that is one reason why prologues were so unnecessary on the medieval stage: the pagan king was there to dominate the crowd, and the preacher to exhort them. Such a

system of dramaturgy obviously depended on a generally-recognised stock of clear-cut characters.

The characters in the medieval plays, then, behaved towards the audience in the most egocentric manner, tacitly assuming that they were contemporaries, and seeing them only in relationship to themselves as, for example, neighbours, subjects, enemies, sinners or mothers. At the same time, however, this absolute kind of dramatic pretence did not, unlike naturalistic dramatic illusion, involve any concerted effort to delude the audience into thinking that the play was not a play but the real thing--on the contrary, the performance was recognised and felt to be a game and a ceremony. The example of the medieval drama, in fact, supports what Mr. Priestley says of the drama:

It is in the delicate relation between belief and disbelief, between the dream life of the play and the real life in the play's presentation, that our true dramatic experience has its roots and its being.<sup>1</sup>

When Herod commands the audience to remove their hats, the dramatist is playing with this relationship.<sup>2</sup> Observations on the "ritual" quality of the medieval plays<sup>3</sup> can only by misunderstanding exclude

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1. Priestley, The Art of the Dramatist, p. 5.

2. In The Skin of Our Teeth Wilder plays the same game, Mr. and Mrs. Anthropus asking the improbable or impossible, asking the audience to pile their chairs on the fire built to stay the ice-age.

3. Speirs, op. cit., pp. 92-4; see also above, p. 15 n. 4.

their consideration as drama.

The open technique was not an exclusively medieval phenomenon. It is the basis of the dramaturgy of the Tudor interludes, and it also appears in the Elizabethan drama,<sup>4</sup> where the clowns, for example, can address the audience in a familiar, personal tone and not break the dramatic illusion. Launce "takes the audience into his confidence about events which are supposed to have happened in the play-world itself" and throws "a ladder across from play-world to real world"; on the other hand, the audience appreciate him and Lear's Fool not only as characters but also as actors,<sup>5</sup> just as, for example, the medieval audience was sometimes blessed by a character and sometimes by an actor. The more usual type of Elizabethan soliloquy that does not directly recognise the audience is rather different from the direct address of the open technique (see p. 190 above). In some other kinds of drama, too, the open technique has its place, and the type of dramatic pretence achieved with its aid is usually much more absolute and uncompromising than the dramatic illusion fostered so

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4. Spivak, op. cit., passim; Kreider, Elizabethan Comic Character Conventions, pp. 8-31 and appendix C; Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy, pp. 12-15; Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy, pp. 97-136.

5. Bethell, Shakespeare & the Popular Dramatic Tradition, pp. 86-7.

painstakingly by naturalistically-based plays.

The medieval open technique was, however, quite different from the Elizabethan, and different even from that of the Tudor interlude. In the interludes there is a sharp reduction in its scope: with very few exceptions there is no serious emotional appeal to the audience, no desperate pleading with them, no serio-comic alienation of them; here, then, a bragging speech might be wholly comic and a proclamation delivered to the audience would not be calculated to disturb them. However, the open technique is still generally the basis of the dramaturgy of the interludes, even if it is more narrowly confined. In the Elizabethan drama it again suffers a serious reduction in scope, and it is no longer at the heart of the dramatic method of the playwrights;<sup>6</sup> it becomes a peripheral feature of the plays.

There is, no doubt, a thread of continuity running from the medieval use of the open technique through the Tudor interludes to the Elizabethan use of it, and it is possible to follow this link in, for example, the character-epilogues which, beginning as an expression of the common religious interests of actors, characters, and audience, go on to express their common political interest and then, in the Elizabethan (and Restoration) drama, express a variety of common human interests. Other aspects of the medieval drama, as

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6. A belated exception is Lodge and Greene, A Looking-Glass for London and England, which centres around a series of direct and urgent exhortations of the audience.



well as the open technique, can be recognised in the Elizabethan theatre; the most important of these are the narrative or epic quality<sup>7</sup> of the plays with its attendant realistic stagecraft,<sup>8</sup> and the mixture of tragedy and comedy.<sup>9</sup> However, what most surely separates the dramaturgy of the medieval playwrights from that of their successors<sup>10</sup> is the facility and promptness with which the medieval writers turn to the open technique, and their use of it for the expression of serious, religious and grotesque themes. The medieval open technique is much richer than that of succeeding periods, and many particular contrasts could be cited to illustrate this. How thin, for example, is Lear's Fool's suggestive remark made to the audience as he goes out compared with the cool affront-ery of the soldier closing the York Christ Led Up To Calvary. The medieval playwrights' religious purpose led them to seek the sympathetic involvement of the audience and the serio-comic alienation of them; it lent their open technique an extravagant and impassioned quality.

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7. Sisson, op. cit., pp. 88-102, 151; Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy, pp. 4, 11-12.

8. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy, pp. 12, 19. See also above, pp. 141-2.

9. Doran, op. cit., p. 210.

10. It is as important to emphasise the differences between Elizabethan and medieval dramaturgy as to express once more the continuities of the English dramatic tradition.

This quality, which with its righteous or presumptuous involvement of the audience gives the medieval dramaturgy its distinctive character, developed in the late Middle Ages. The break between the liturgical plays and the vernacular drama that is most significant from this point of view is the virtual introduction by the latter of the open technique and the emotional, impassioned and grotesque themes that it carried. Professor Craig dislikes large sections of the extant plays; he prefers those medieval plays that are least advanced beyond the liturgical drama, and there is a fine and faithful insistence on this throughout his book. For example, "the farther back one goes towards the thirteenth century, the purer and nobler in purpose is the medieval drama";<sup>11</sup> again,

The mystery plays after they fell into secular hands were not of course by any means faithful to their simple religious beginnings. They were full of aberrations, and their secularity grew as time went on.<sup>12</sup>

The drama of the late Middle Ages, then, succeeds the "purer and nobler" near-liturgical drama (which as far as England is concerned is very poorly documented, the texts being either lost or hidden in the extant plays), and its descendant is the Tudor interlude. From both it is distinguished by its dramaturgy, and especially by the way in which it uses the open technique.

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11. Craig, op. cit., p. 13.

12. Ibid., p. 158.

The manner in which the drama developed in England in the late Middle Ages was the result of a series of conscious choices (there being no rule that the drama should evolve--indeed, in the case of the liturgical drama evolution is the exception rather than the rule), and the path it took corresponds to a general trend in artistic taste and feeling, a general indulgence of the emotions, that was abruptly terminated by the Council of Trent and the Reformation. Professor Craig's displeasure is excited by those things which, it may be suggested, are the dramatic equivalents of this great shift in taste that began near the end of the fourteenth century, at a time when the English plays were assuming their characteristic forms. The growth of the serious and serio-comic dramatic game and ceremony, of the persuasive, attacking and demanding form of the drama, and the popular participation and concern of the audience, corresponds, in date and in manner, to the rise and flourishing of the sentimental, pathetic, riotous and didactic taste in religious art.<sup>13</sup> Of course, religious art had become humanised and emotional before this time,<sup>14</sup> and some of the liturgical plays, more especially those with Marian laments, do have a certain emotional quality.

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13. Mâle (L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Âge en France, pp. 75-144) describes this new emotionalism; it was didactic, too (Rushforth, "Seven Sacraments Compositions in English Medieval Art", loc. cit., p. 83).

14. Taylor (The Medieval Mind, i, 362) states that "the emotionalising, the veritable humanizing, of religious art began" in the twelfth century.

From towards the end of the fourteenth century, however, a new element displaces "la bonté, la douceur, l'amour";<sup>15</sup> the sweetness and light of the earlier religious emotion and religious art gives way to a new emphasis on grief and suffering. It was, therefore, while the reasonableness and symbolism and (if you will) purity of the earlier religious art was receding before a new impassioned sense of urgency, enthusiasm and didacticism that the vernacular plays in England were developed in their extant forms. Cyclical performances, which allowed for more open-technique play openings, began at this time.

The change in the artistic environment affected the new vernacular drama in, generally speaking, two ways. In the first place, it is in this context that the elaborate dramatic treatment of Christ's Passion is set. The Passion scenes in the English plays are usually more detailed than the other scenes; each blow of the hammer is, as it were, fondly and lovingly described, and each tear of the Magdalen counted.<sup>16</sup> To a certain extent the Abraham and Isaac episodes share in this elaboration of the emotions; a simple contrast to the same episode in the Cursor Mundi, composed early in the fourteenth century, reveals the new spirit that is abroad. The same spirit is manifested in the energy and élan of the presen-

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15. Mâle, L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age en France, p. 75.

16. The resulting realistic stagecraft (see above, p. 144 n. 13) was part of the same general movement.

tation of the evil characters, whether they are monstrous or fugitive.

Secondly, and this is of more particular interest to the study of the open technique, the involvement of the audience in the play-world is surely a manifestation of the same general trend. The passionate tenor of the new style of religious art clearly answered to the emotional needs of the kind of people who were likely to take more than a shallow interest in the religious plays. The use of the open technique in the late Middle Ages to issue urgent invitations to the audience to accept Christ and His folk whole-heartedly or to reject the Devil and his hordes uncompromisingly can be understood only in this context. In the case of the appeals of Christ to the audience the connection between the new style in art and the open technique is actually demonstrable; the new spirit led the religious artists in the fifteenth century to isolate certain moments of Christ's Passion, to take them altogether out of their chronological and narrative setting and set them before the onlooker: so the plays stop while Christ addresses the audience from the Cross or at His Resurrection (see above, pp. 142-52). Again, the open technique associated the audience personally with Christ's sufferings, and there is a curiously precise parallel in the depiction of donors in late medieval art:

On sent partout le désir ardent de s'associer à la Passion. Dans les retable on voit souvent les donateurs agenouillés qui semblent vouloir partager les souffrances de Jésus-Christ. . . Toujours ils sem-

blent pénétrés de reconnaissance et d'amour. . . Il en est qui n'y peuvent tenir, qui se lèvent et qui vont aider Jésus à porter sa croix.<sup>17</sup>

So it is possible to accept the Treatise of Miracles Pleyinge literally when it speaks of men and women weeping bitter tears at the performances. In a host of other ways the open technique manifests this new concern. Even Mary's appeal to the women of Jerusalem can become turned towards the audience; even a messenger, or old Joseph, can call directly for a personal response from them. And for every appeal for sympathy there was a grotesque incitement of their personal condemnation.

The open technique, then, lies at the basis of the dramaturgy of the English medieval plays. It is related in kind to the open technique of the other types of drama which enjoy the advantage of this phenomenon, and it is related in degree to the artistic and religious spirit of the late Middle Ages. Whether the extreme emotionalism of this period died of a surfeit of self-indulgence or of the rigours of the Reformation, its death accounts for the sudden reduction in the scope of the open technique.

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17. Mâle, L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age en France, p. 83. It would be remarkably foolish to call these scenes "anachronistic".

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