THE MORALITY PLAY
AS PRELUDE TO ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

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INTRODUCTION

Although it is generally accepted that the Morality Plays greatly influenced Elizabethan drama, this statement is often followed by the rider that they are dull and lifeless and that their chief legacy is a sense of moral earnestness which also characterises the best Elizabethan drama. The aim of this thesis has been to read the Morality Plays closely and in an appreciative spirit in order to find out what significant contribution they do make to the techniques of Elizabethan drama and to a proper understanding of it.

Chapter I discusses the earliest complete Morality, The Castle of Perseverance, which is the longest and most comprehensive of all the Moralities. The chapter tries to show what a Morality is about and how it differs from the great mediaeval cycles, the Mystery Plays. It is also an attempt to relate the early Morality Play to other mediaeval literature and to show that it is closely linked to the homiletic literature of the period.

Chapter II is a study of three Moralities of the period 1500-1520. There are few Moralities in this period and the plays chosen show a marked similarity to The Castle of Perseverance in their structure, although they differ from the earlier Moralities in their attitude to their subject matter and in their portrayal of the different allegorical characters. The plays under discussion are Nature, Mundus et Infans and Magnyfycence.

Chapter III; the period after 1535 was a period of great political and religious upheaval and this chapter discusses two plays written for propaganda purposes in the strife between Catholic and Protestant. John Bale's Three Laws, an anti-Catholic play, was

chosen because Bale is a startlingly original dramatist who makes use of techniques derived from the liturgy and from emblematic devices, and because he tries to mould the Mystery Plays and the History Plays into a Morality framework. The other play, The Conflict of Conscience was chosen because of its affinity to Dr Faustus and also because it tries to show the psychomachia in psychological, personal terms, rather than in a general allegorical manner.

Chapter IV discusses three later Moralities, Cambyses, Horestes and Appius Virginia, which portray historical or fictional characters in situations of conflict. They were chosen because they seem to show that the Morality Plays laid the bases for the Elizabethan tragic situation and the Elizabethan tragic hero.

With such diverse material, it is difficult to trace a clear line of development from one play to the next, but each group of plays has its own contribution to make to our understanding of Elizabethan drama.

CHAPTER ONE

A discussion of "The Castle of Perseverance", circa 1425, its relation to the literature of its time, and its influence on the drama which was to come.

In wyntir nyȝt or y wakid,
In my sleep I dreemed so;
I saw a child modir nakid,
New born þe modir fro.
Al aloone, as god him makid,
In wildirnesse he dide goo,
Til two in governaunce it takid,
An aungel freende, an aungil foo.

Quod þe world to þe child, "how many foolde
Hast þou brouȝt richesse? now late se:
þou schuldist deie for hunger and coolde
But y lente meete and cloþe to þee:
I wole þee fynde til þou be oolde;
How wolt þou quyte it me?"
Quod desteine, "he is bouȝt and sooldе."
Quod deeþ, "his eende make schal we."[1]

General Introduction: Allegory.

When we classify certain plays as "Morality Plays" we do so mainly because they are conceived in a certain allegorical form. It will perhaps be useful to distinguish certain kinds of allegory in order to find out why we consider the Morality Plays to be different from other kinds of mediaeval drama.

Allegory has been defined as akin to an extended metaphor. In it we refer to one set of values in terms of another so that we absorb two or more levels of meaning at the same time. When the Greeks speak about the God of the Sea of the Goddess of Love, this is mythology, but once the Gods are interpreted as embodying ideas or personifying states of mind, we are in the realm of allegory. The Stoics were the first to interpret Homer allegorically. They interpreted the text in terms of a significance which transcended the literal meaning. This method of

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[1] "The Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life", Lambeth MS. c. 1430, Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, ed. F.J. Furnivall (London: E.E.T.S., 1867), p. 58, ll. 9-24.

interpretation was later adopted by Hebrew and Christian apologists.[1] Thus Aquinas distinguished the "Sensus historicus vel litteralis" from the "Sensus spiritualis qui super litteralem fundatur et eum supponit". The well known interpretation by Dante of the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt is an elaboration of this; in the allegorical sense he sees it as showing our redemption wrought by Christ; in the moral sense, as the conversion of the soul from the grief and wretchedness of sin to the state of grace; in the anagogical sense as "The departure of the holy soul from the thraldom of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory".[2]

The Mystery Plays

For our study we must distinguish between two types of religious allegorical drama, the Mystery plays and the Morality plays.

It was common for the Old Testament to be interpreted in the light of the New Testament, and it was generally accepted that the New Testament provided a key to the meaning and significance of the Old Testament. Within this framework certain characters came to be regarded as types of Virtues and Vices. Thus Susanna was the paradigm case of Chastity; Jacob, the deceiver; Isaac and Abel, the fore-runners of Christ; while Cain, the murderer, and Judas, the betrayer, became the supreme examples of those damned souls for whom there is no redemption. Lucifer, the angel who thought he could usurp the throne of God, was the final example of overbearing Pride, and it was this sin which was regarded as the greatest of all sins, and the root of all evil. The Mystery Plays were part of this tradition. They showed the great sweep of the history of mankind from the Creation to the Last Judgement, but they were rooted in the particular incidents of biblical truth and embody the supernatural through individual character and event.

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[1] John Geffken, "Allegory", The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), I, 327, and
Dorothy Sayers, Introduction, Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy Part I, Hell, tr. Dorothy Sayers (Penguin edition).

[2] Dante Alighieri, op. cit. (Introduction), p. 15.

The Morality Plays

The Morality Plays were born of a different tradition. Their material came from everyday life and they were part of the homiletic literature of the Fourteenth and early Fifteenth Century. People believed in, and thought they could see around them, the eternal battle between Good and Evil and tried to analyse and order their own lives in these terms. They were intensely critical of society and of the Church and did not hesitate to denounce evil wherever they saw it. Piers Plowman searched in vain for a life which would be founded on the teachings of Christ, but found his task impossible. Death, the great leveller, was a constant reminder that Man must work out his own salvation or be damned everlastingly. Man, Everyman, must live in a world where the only certainties were faith and death.

The Morality Plays are both didactic and analytic. They show us how man can be corrupted by the forces of evil and how he can be saved by repentance through the mercy of Christ. These plays describe interior or spiritual action and express this action in a form of allegory which was first used by Prudentius in his Psychomachia (c. 400 A.D.). In this poem the Virtues and Vices are set against each other in a battle for the soul of Man. Patience defeats Wrath, Humility conquers Pride, and their struggle is described in terms of mediaeval combat. This description of personified Virtues and Vices and their battle for Man's soul had become a literary commonplace in sermons and other didactic poems and debates by the time the first Morality was written. Thumb-nail sketches of the Seven Deadly Sins are one of the chief delights for the modern reader of the literature of that time. We must remember that the hero of the Morality Plays is Everyman (Humanum Genus, Mankind), he is both universal, in that he represents the predicament of all mankind, and particular, in that he represents each one of us, the spectators. The different stages in his life, his temptations, his virtues and his vices are set up as characters who move in complicated patterns to convey to us his spiritual history in the journey from birth to death. These plays state a moral problem and resolve it in such terms that it becomes of the greatest importance to every man, not on the divine level, although, of

course, God reveals himself through moral truths as well as through His Life and Word, but on the human everyday level of how each man may come to terms both with life and with death. This is not a question of faith, in a universe where faith is a certainty, but of behaviour. In this sense the Moralities are analytic and problematic and are filled with the deep moral earnestness which was perhaps their greatest legacy to the Tudor stage.

The Theatre

The Vision of Piers Plowman[1] has described one form of the mediaeval theatre to us in almost the same terms as it has been reconstructed by modern scholars.[2] The poet falls asleep and dreams. He sees a new landscape, a spiritual landscape:

(Prologue l.11) Than gan I to meten • a merueilouse sweuene,
That I was in a wildernesse• wist I neuer where,
As I bihelde in-to þe est • an heigh to þe sonne,
I seigh a toure on a toft • trielich ymaked;
A depe dale binethe • a dongeon þere-Inne,
With deþe dyches and derke • and dredful of sight.
A faire felde ful of folke • fonde I there bytwene,
Of alle maner of men • þe mene and þe riche,
Worchyng and wandryng • as the worlde asketh.

The grassy field represents the lives of people in this world where they work and wander. Their lives are bounded on the one side by heaven ("a toure on a toft") and on the other by hell ("a dongeon pere-Inne"). Later in the poem a lovely lady comes down from "a castle" and she explains that Truth: God the Creator, lives in the tower, while Satan lives in the "dongeon". She calls it a castle too:

(Pass.I l.61) þat is þe castel of care • who-so cometh þerinne
May banne þat he borne was • to body or to soule.

When we translate Langland's landscape into theatrical terms we find that we have at least three buildings[3] which are placed round a central

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[1] The Vision of William Concerning "Piers the Plowman", ed. Rev. Walter W. Skeat (London: E.E.T.S., 1869), B text, written c. 1377.

[2] Richard Southern, The Medieval Theatre in the Round (London: Faber and Faber, 1958).
L. Hotson, Shakespeare's Wooden O (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1960).

[3] R. Southern, op. cit., p. 91 et seq. describes them as two-storied, curtained scaffolds.

playing area which represents the world, or man's life in the world. In The Castle of Perseverance[1] the text gives us a drawing of the theatre which probably had to be constructed each time the company moved to another town. The plan shows us a large circular playing-cum-seating area referred to as "þe place". It is surrounded by a ditch or strong fence. Inside the ditch stands, to the north, a scaffold or small raised stage, in which Belial (Satan) sits and which could represent

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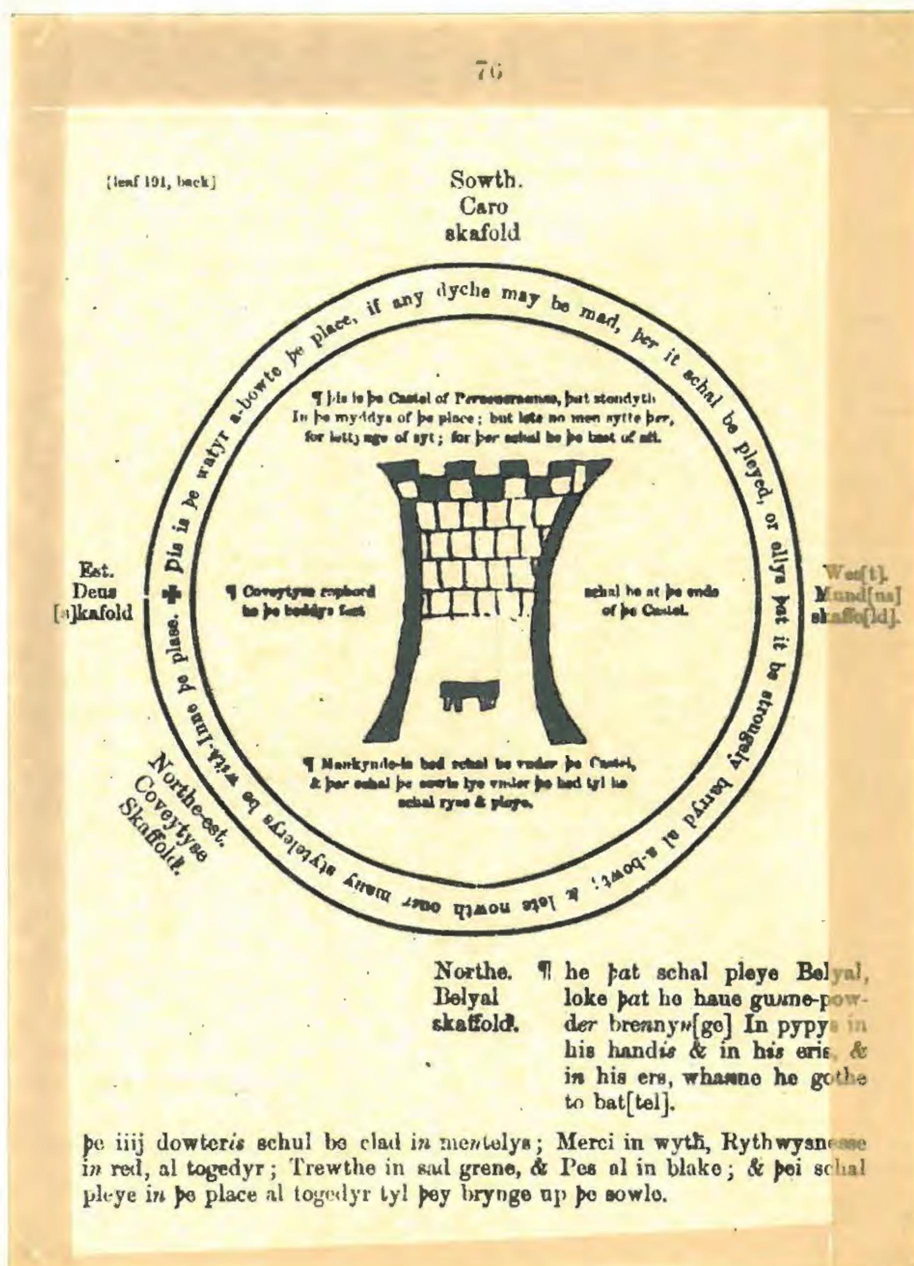
[1]"The Castle of Perseverance", The Macro Plays, ed. F.J. Furnivall and A.W. Pollard (London: E.E.T.S., 1904). See Frontispiece and p. 76.

Photocopy of stage plan for The Castle of Perseverance, op. cit., p. 76.



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[leaf 191, back]

Sowth.
Caro
skafold

Þis is þe watyr a-bowte þe place, if any dyche may be mad, þer it schal be pleyed, or allys þat it be strongely barryd al a-bowt; & lete nowth ouer many stytelerys be wyth-inne þe plase.

¶ Þis is þe Castel of Perseueraunce, þat stondyth In þe myddys of þe place; but lete no men sytte þer, for lettynge of syt; for þer schal be þe best of all.

Est.
Deus
[s]kafold

¶ Coveytyse copbord be þe beddys feet schal be at þe ende of þe Castel.

Wes[t].
Mund[us]
skaffo[ld].

¶ Mankyndeis bed schal be vnder þe Castel, & þer schal þe sowle lye vnder þe bed tyl he schal ryse & pleye.

Northe-est.
Coveytyse
Skaffold.

Northe.
Belyal
skaffold.

¶ he þat schal pleye Belyal, loke þat he haue gunne-powder brennyn[ge] In pypys in his handis & in his eris, & in his ers, whanne he gothe to bat[tel].

þe iiij dowteris schul be clad in mentelys; Merci in wyth, Rythwysnesse in red, al togedyr; Trewthe in sad grene, & Pes al in blake; & þei schal pleye in þe place al togedyr tyl þey brynge up þe sowle.

hell. To the east is a scaffold for God (heaven)[1]; to the South sits Caro (the Flesh); to the west, the World; and to the north-east sits Covetousness. Man is born naked into a world bounded by heaven and hell and beset by the evil forces represented by the World, the Flesh and the Devil.[2] The Seven Deadly Sins work with these evil forces for his downfall.

In this description of man's life we are struck by the very "placelessness" of the "place". This is a spiritual landscape, where the forces of Good and Evil are the protagonists. Mankind is the hero, but he

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[1]This is, of course, the same position as God's "toure" in Langland's landscape. Heaven was traditionally to the east in any dramatic or pictorial representation. See Hotson, op. cit., p. 237 et seq. Also Frank Kendon, Mural Paintings in English Churches during the Middle Ages (London: The Bodley Head, 1923).

Hell Mouth and Cauldron were always painted on the left of the west wall (in Day of Judgement scenes) or on the north wall.

[2]This kind of theatre is also found in the Cornish "Rounds", parts of which still survive today. They are large stone and earth arenas used for the Cornish Mystery Plays; one can be seen at St. Just, Cornwall. See E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1903), Vol. II. pp. 85, 123, 135.
R. Southern, op. cit., p. 60-69.
A similar type of play is found in the Digby MS., Mary Magdalene [reprinted in J.Q. Adams, Chief Pre-Shakespearean Drama (Boston: 1924) and The Digby Plays, ed. F.J. Furnivall (London: E.E.T.S., 1896).]
In Mary Magdalene we are not given a definite plan of the theatre, but the stage directions make it clear that each of the following characters: the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, Caesar, Herod, Pilate, Cyrus and Simon have a definite position in the playing area so that journeys from one to the other are referred to in the following terms i.e. "Here xal Satan go hom to his stage, and Mari xal entyr in-to þe place alone, save þe bad Angyl and al þe seven Dedly synnes xal be conveyyed into þe howse of Symont Leprovs; þey xal be a-rayyed lyke vij dylf: þus kept closse ..." Another example: "Here xal entyr þe prynse of dylles In a stage, and Helle ondyr-neth þat stage, þus seyyng þe dylfe" (The Digby Plays, op. cit., pp. 76 and 77).

Cyrus's stage is a Castle, later he gives this to Mary Magdalene and it is called the Castle of Maudelyn. Mary is in this castle when it is beseiged by the Seven Deadly Sins until Mary is persuaded by Lechery to go to Jerusalem. She is given a Good and a Bad Angel to advise her. On the way she meets Pride, who is disguised as a gallant, called Curiosity. She falls in love with him and is corrupted into sin. Stage directions also provide for an arbour and a tavern and it is possible that the "place" represents Jerusalem. See J.Q.Adams, op. cit., p.236.

is also their battle-field and his life is seen not in day-to-day detail, but in these large terms where the questions of sin, redemption and salvation are all-important.[1]

The Castle of Perseverance

This play is one of the earliest and one of the greatest Moralities. It spans the whole life of man, his birth, his sins, his death and his redemption. Before we analyse the play in detail a brief summary is necessary. The scaffolds stand round the "place". Each power "pomps" from his scaffold to the audience. With his treasurer, Covetyse, (Avarice, Covetousness), the World has attained complete dominion over all the peoples of the earth:

> (1.164) For, bothe be see & be londe, my sondis I haue sent;
> al þe werld myn nam is ment,
> al a-bowtyn my bane is blowe,
> In euery cost I am knowe,
> I do men rawyn on ryche rowe
> tyl þei be dyth to dethys dent

The World is accompanied by Lust-liking, Folly and a boy; Satan (Belial) by Pride, Wrath and Envy; Flesh by Lechery, Gluttony and Sloth. Covetyse is alone on his scaffold. Satan and World are external forces, while Caro, the Flesh, is not, but they all use Man's weakness to conquer him. Caro says:

> (1.237) I am mankyndis fayre flesch, florchyd in flowris;
> my lyfe is with lustys and lykynge I-lent;
> With Tapytys of tafata, I tymbyr my towris;
> In myrth & in melodye, my mende is I-ment;
> þou I be clay and clad, clappyd vndir clowris,
> ȝet wolde I þat my wyll in þe werld went ...

When the evil powers have vaunted themselves to the audience, a small figure speaks from the centre of the "place". He is Humanum Genus,

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[1]Another interesting example of this kind of spiritual action is John Lydgate's The Assembly of Gods, or The Accord of Reason and Sensuality in the Fear of Death, (c. 1412) ed. O.L. Triggs (London: E.E.T.S., 1896). The battle is between Virtue and his supporters (Baptism, Imagination, Righteousness, Prudence, Strength, Temperance, Mercy, Hope, Peace and many good people, Christians and Holy Hermits etc.) against Vice with his supporters (Sensuality, The Seven Deadly Sins, Sacrilege, Simony, Manslaughter, Murder, etc.). Their field of battle is called Microcosm. Sensuality sows the field with his unnatural seed which makes the ground slippery, but Virtue and his men shield themselves from Vice's arrows with the Shield of the Holy Trinity and finally Freewill repents to Conscience; Prescience pursues Vice to the gates of hell with a fiery sword; Virtue makes Reason his lieutenant and gives him charge over Microcosm; and Sensuality is guided by Sadness.

he had been born helpless and naked into the world:

(1.275) aftyr oure forme faderis kende
þis nyth I was of my moder born.
Fro my moder I walke, I wende;
Ful feynt & febyl, I fare ȝou be-forn;
I am nakyd of lym & lende,
as mankynde is schapyh & shorn;
I not wedyr to gon ne to lende,
to helpe my-self mydday nyn morn:
for schame I stonde & schende.
I was born þis nyth in blody ble,
& nakyd I am, as ȝe may se.
a! Lord God in trinite!
Whow Mankende is vnthende!

He has been given a Good and a Bad Angel to advise him. The Good Angel wants him to serve God, but the Bad Angel promises him riches and all kinds of delights if they go to the scaffold of the World. The Good Angel reminds him to "þynke on þyn endynge day", but the Bad Angel persuades him that there will be time to be good later on. Man says:

(1.425) I am but ȝongë, as I trowe,
for to do that I schulde ...

When Mankind is persuaded by the Bad Angel, Lust-liking and Folly came down from World's scaffold to guide them. The group crosses over to the western scaffold, leaving the Good Angel forgotten in the arena. Man climbs into World's scaffold and is clothed by Lust-liking and Folly. He is taken by Back-biter (a new character) to Covetyse where he meets and retains all the Seven Deadly Sins. Mankind is intoxicated by all his new Vices and is unable to understand the note of doom which is apparent in their speeches. Lechery says:

(1.1185) in louë, þi lyf schal be led;
be a lechour tyl þou dye;

Later as she climbs up to him she says:

(1.1207) I may soth synge:
'Mankynde is kawt in my slinge.'

The Good Angel, alone and deserted, mourns for Man: "Alas! Mankynde is soylyd & saggyd in synne!" Suddenly two sombre figures step into the arena, one carrying a long lance. They are Penance and Shrift. Shrift asks Man to acknowledge that he has done wrong, but Man is unrepentant:

(1.1371) ȝa Pelyr! so do mo!
we haue etyn garlek euerychone
. . . .
I dyd neuere so ewyl trewly,
þat oþer han don as ewyl as I.

Penance pierces him in the heart with the point of his lance, and Mankind is stricken with remorse. He turns to the audience: "Lordyngys! ȝe se wel alle þys ..." He descends from the scaffold and gives himself over to Shrift.

However, the World, the Flesh and the Devil are not done with him

yet. They make ready for war and their knights assault the Castle of Perseverance where Mankind has taken refuge. The castle stands in the middle of the "place". Mankind is defended by the Seven Cardinal Virtues (Meekness, Patience, Soberness, Busyness, Chastity, Charity and Generosity), who repulse the Vices by pelting them with red roses, the symbol of Christ's purity and His passion. Man is safe as long as he remains within the castle, but he is an old man now ans he is tempted by Covetyse to forsake his perseverance in the pursuit of virtue. Covetyse says:

(1.2492) Petyr! þou hast þe morë nede
To hauë sum good in þyn age:
markys, poundys, londys & lede,
howsys & homys, castell & cage...

He leaves the security of the virtuous life for worldly security. Largity appeals to the audience:

(1.2645) now, good men allë þat here be,
haue my systerys excusyd, & me,
þou Mankynde fro þis castel fle:
wyte it Coveytyse.

The World vaunts himself triumphantly because Covetyse is his especial knight:

(1.2698) For I, þe Werld, am of þis entayle,
In hys moste nede I schal hym fayle,
& al for Coveytyse.

This is to prove too true. Man, now very old, is given a great deal of money by Covetyse which he proceeds to bury. He becomes greedy, insatiable and recklessly devoted to the gaining of more and more money. Suddenly a figure approaches from the far side of the arena. It speaks to the audience:

(1.2787) My name in londe is lefte a-lone;
I hatte 'drery Dethe'

Mankind cries out:

(1.2844) A, Deth, Deth! drye is þi dryfte.
ded is my desteny!

He pleads with the World to help him, but the World merely sends a boy, "I-wot-neuere-who" to pick up his beloved gold. Mankind dies pleading for mercy, but his body is dragged off by the boy, and his soul, which appears now from under a bed beneath the castle (1.3008!), is carried off by the Bad Angel whose parting words are: "haue good day! I goo to helle" (1.3129).

The final section contains an epilogue which closely resembles a Coventry Mystery play called The Parliament of Heaven[1] and both these use as their text the 85th Psalm, v. 10, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other". In this scene God speaks for the first time, but it is probable that he watches the performance from the beginning, and that his continued presence as spectator to Man's struggle on earth emphasises His omnipotence and His glory. Mercy pleads to God for Mankind's soul, while Justice and Truth maintain that Mankind has deserved his fate. Nevertheless God's mercy

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[1]The Parliament of Heaven in modern translation: Religious Drama II, Mystery and Morality Plays, ed. E. Martin Browne (New York: Living Age Books, Meridian Books Inc., 1958). The Coventry Plays are not pageants, but are stationary performances around a "place". See E.K. Chambers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 421. The cycle is late, dated 1468; see Timothy Fry, "The Unity of Ludus Coventriae", Studies in Philology, VIII (1951), 527. In fact this theme is considered to be a Morality rather than a Mystery theme; see introduction to, John Skelton, Magnyfycence, ed. R.L. Ramsay (London: E.E.T.S., 1908). Ramsay distinguishes between four types of Morality plot:

The Debate of the Body and the Soul
The Battle of the Virtues and Vices
The Coming of Death
The Parliament of Heaven.

The Castle of Perseverance is the only Morality which contains all these plots, but all Moralities are built round at least one of them. In The Parliament of Heaven, Contemplation says that Man is damned by Adam's sin. He prays to God to come down to see the sorrow of Mankind, captive in hell. Mercy and Truth pray to God to help Mankind. Justice says Man has offended "Him that is endless" and therefore his punishment shall be endless. Man has forsaken God and can therefore never be saved. Peace suggests that they ask God to decide who is right. Gabriel announces that God says that in order to restore Mercy and Peace on earth, a second Adam must die, but he must be without sin so that hell cannot hold him. Truth, Justice, and Mercy search all heaven and earth, but they cannot find anyone "of that charity" in heaven, who will suffer death for Mankind, and on earth there is no-one who is without sin. Peace says they will pray God to give Himself for the task. The Voice of God commands Gabriel to find Mary, the Voice of the Son tells Gabriel to say that He will be her son born in the world to destroy the work of Satan and the Voice of the Holy Ghost says He will accomplish all this. Peace speaks joyously:

(p.91) Now is the loveday made of us four finally,
And we may live in peace as we did formerly,
Mercy and Truth are met together;
Justice and Peace have kissed each other.

This play is followed directly by the Annunciation scene.

is infinite and the Four Daughters of God are sent to fetch the soul of Man from hell and bring him to sit in heaven with God. The play is over, but the actor who played God now speaks to the audience as a player only;

(1.3644) all men example here-at may take,
to mayntein þe goode, and mendyn here mys:
þus endyth oure gamys!
To saue ȝou fro synnynge,
Evyr at þe begynnynge
Thynke on ȝoure last endynge!
Te, Deum, laudamus!

Discussion of the Play

It has been said that the action of the play is spiritual action. The allegory reveals to us the spiritual state of a man's (Everyman's) mind when he is inevitably corrupted by the world and falls into sin; the only non-allegorical characters are the great and powerful figures of God and Satan. In order to dramatise this the writer has made use of accepted religious symbolism and symbolic action. We shall discuss the play under the following headings:

(i) The Castle and the Battle of the Virtues and the Vices,
(ii) The Coming of Death,
(iii) The Parliament of Heaven,
(iv) Symbolic Action and Costume,
(v) The Relationship between Actor and Audience.

(i) The Castle and the Psychomachia

A representation of a castle was used extensively as an emblem to denote security. Male[1] writes that on the North Porch of Chartres (Thirteenth Century) stand, near the Last Judgement, the fourteen sublime gifts of the soul. Each Beatitude is represented by a graceful and noble queen, crowned and aureoled. Each queen carries a sceptre in one hand and touches with the other a great shield ornamented with an emblem. Security is represented by a strong castle.

Owst[2] shows that the Castle symbol figured prominently in sermons

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[1]Emil Male, Religious Art from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), p. 92-93.

[2]G.R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), pp. 77-85.

and homiletic literature as a fortress for Good.[1] Hell is also represented as a castle whose gates are burst open by Christ during the Harrowing of Hell. We remember the Castle of Care, the abode of Satan in Piers Plowman. Later, when the dreamer searched for Do-wel, Wit tells him that Do-well dwells in a castle mady by Kynde, in which is enclosed Anima (the soul). Her keepers are Do-well, Do-bet and Do-best and the Constable of the Castle is In-Wit (Conscience).

(Pass IX,1.48) And þat is þe castel þat kynde made · caro it hatte,
And is as moche to mene · as man with a soule;
And þat he wrouȝte with werke · and with worde bothe,
þorugh myȝte of þe maieste · man was ymaked.
Inwit and alle wittes · closed ben þer-inne,
For loue of þe lady anima · þat lyf is ynempned;

When Mankind leaves the Seven Deadly Sins and descends to Shrift (Confession) he is given absolution. His concern now is that he should not sin again:

(1.1542) þe werld, þe flesche, & þe deuyll of hell
schul sekyn my soule for to sloo
In-to balys bowre;
þerfore I prey ȝou puttë me
In-to sum place of surëte
þat pei may not harmyn me
with no synnys sowre.

Shrift's answer is to send him to the Castle of Perseverance, which, he says, is stronger than any in France. It is also called the Castle of Goodness and in the spiritual sense it stands for a perseverance in the good life. He is surrounded by the Seven Cardinal Virtues, which he must practise in order to be safe against sin.

When the Vices rally themselves into an army to attack the castle, Mankind prays to Christ to keep his soul safe. This is a significant use of words, as we are immediately forced to think of the battle in spiritual terms although we can see all this action on the stage. That we are able to believe in the castle both as a spiritual state and as a real castle is due to the delicate balance in language and action between the physical reality of the story and its spiritual significance. The Vices raise their

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[1]The examples are too numerous to mention. Christ enters the Blessed Virgin who is represented as a feudal stronghold protecting Him from the Devil. (MSS. Worc. Cath. Library F.132, fol. 118; F.41; etc.) Grosstete uses the symbol as the Sacraments of Holy Church around whose walls of Confession and Penance flow the waters of Baptism etc. (MS. Bodl. 830, fol.43.)

banners and blow a horn. The battle is about to begin. Humility appeals to her other sisters to shield and guard Mankind: "Fro dedly synne & schamely schot". She says:

(1.2039) ȝyt forsoþe neuere I sy
þat any fawte in vs he fonde,
but þat we sauyd him fro synne sly,
If he wolde be vs styfly stonde
In þis castel of ston.

In this passage the two levels of meaning are so close that it is almost impossible to separate them. The castle remains a physical reality although it is clear that the allegorical meaning is far more important than the literal one.

Addressing her sisters, Humility bids them throw their red roses. Pride, under his banner, attacks with much noise and many threatening speeches, but Humility sets against him the meek King crucified on Calvary. Wrath challenges Patience, but she also calmly relies on Christ. She answers his threats with the assurance that if he comes to her:

(1.2145) I schal þe cachë fro þis crofte
with þese rolys swete and softe,
þeyntyd with pacyens.

Satan's Vices are entirely vanquished. In spite of the spiritual nature of the battle and the symbolic weapons used by the Virtues, the Vices are crippled with pain.

(1.2220) I am al betyn blak & blo
With a rose þat on rode was rent;
My speche is almost spent.
hyr rosys fel on me so sharpe,
þat myn hed hangyth as an harpe ...

Flesh rallies his army, and again the corresponding Virtues have only one weapon, the purity and passion of Christ. The physical aspect of the battle is emphasised by the language which is violently alliterative. Belial says:

(1.2195) Dashe hem al to daggys!
Haue do, boyës blo & blake!
Wirke þese wenchys wo & wrake!
Claryouns cryith up at a krake,
& blowe ȝour brodë baggys!

This physical violence is always countered by the quiet assurance of the Virtues who rely solely upon Christ, their saviour.

At last only Covetyse is left. His attack is more subtle. He

does not challenge his corresponding Virtue, but appeals to Man himself. Generosity, who must defend the castle from his attack, is panic-stricken. She speaks twenty lines on Covetyse, his strength and power, and prays to Christ to help her. This fear and uncertainty is in contrast to the quiet assurance of the other Virtues. Covetyse seizes his advantage. He tells Generosity to keep quiet as he did not speak to her. Again he addresses Mankind:

(1.2471) how, mankynde! Cum speke with me!
Cum ley þi loue here in my les!
Covetyse is a frend ryth fre,
þi sorwe, man, to slake & ses.

Man is pathetic, like a child. He is getting old, he is dressed in a "sloppe". His body is feeble, racked with pain. Covetyse promises that he will give Man the security of material goods:

(1.2495) markys, poundys, londys & lede,
howsys & homys, castell & cage;

This "castle" is of course in direct contrast to the Castle of Goodness which will assure his salvation in Christ. Mankind knows this very well. He says that he is unwilling to leave the ladies of goodness:

(1.2508) & þow I be a whyle in dystresse,
Whanne I deye, I schal to blysse.

Covetyse replies that in this world money is his best friend and Mankind cannot resist this argument. He prepares to leave the castle. His Good Angel appeals to the Virtues to keep Mankind in the castle, but as Mankind descends to Covetyse, the Virtues say that this is beyond their power. Humility says:

(1.2558) Good Aungyl, what may I do þer-to?
hym-selfë may his sowlë spylle.
Mankynde, to don what he wyl do,
God hath ȝouyn hym a fre wylle.

After the noise and triumph of the battle this capitulation is quiet and tragic. Man can fight long and successfully against the Vices of Pride and Sloth, Lechery and Gluttony, Avarice, Wrath and Envy in an earnest attempt to live a good and pure life and yet finally, in his old age, his longing for security in the world can triumph over his hopes of salvation.

The Virtues are never more attractive than in this play. They

are gentle and yet forceful, without being pompous. Perhaps it is because the Virtues come out so well that the Vices seem less attractive than usual. They are fraught with evil and are never amusing like the Seven Deadly Sins in Piers Plowman or in Handlyng Synne.[1] They are not human characters, but forces of damnation and they never forget that for them sin is not an end, but a means to an end. Later Moralities, especially a debased Morality like Mankind (c. 1461), make fun of the Virtues and use the Vices as clowns. Even in The Castle of Perseverance the Vices are a spectacle for thrills and laughter. Belial is instructed to provide enormous excitement during the battle scene: "he þat schal pleye Belyal, loke þat he haue gunne-powder brennyn(ge) In pypys in his handis & in his eris, & in his ers, whanne he gothe to bat(tel)" (p.76). In spite of this part of their rôle, they remain instruments of the Devil and bring with them a spirit of evil which casts an ugly pall over all their actions. In the same way the Elizabethan villain is ultimately horrible in spite of the fact that the audience have enjoyed many of his speeches.[2]

(ii) The Coming of Death

(1.2791) I hatte 'drery Dethe'.

When Death appears on the scene we are not surprised. We have been waiting in anxious apprehension for just this moment. Only man is surprised:

> A, Deth, Deth! drye is þi dryfte.
> ded is my desteny!

Yet it is not that he hopes to escape death, he only hopes to be able to

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[1] Robert of Brunne, Handlyng Synne, (c. 1303), (A translation of William of Waldington's "Manuel des Pechiez"), ed. F.J. Furnivall (London: E.E.T.S., 1901).

[2] See Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York: 1958), for a discussion of the relationship between the mediaeval Vice and the Shakespearean stage villain. In Shakespeare we are always aware of the underlying evil in characters like Edmund (King Lear) and Falstaff (Henry IV) and know that they must ultimately be rejected however much we are, at times, attracted to them. Jonson is even more ruthless in the exposure of his villains and his laughter is never sympathetic, see e.g. in Volpone such characters as Voltore and Corvino and even Volpone himself.

put it off a little.[1] Before he meets Death, Man is obsessed with Covetousness:

(l.2767) me þynkyth, neuere I have I-now;
. . . .
'more & more' ȝit I say,
& schal euere, whyl I may blow;
. . . .
'more & more' þis is my steuene.
if I myth al-wey dwellyn in prosperyte,
Lord God, þane wel were me!
I wolde, þe medys, forsake þee,
& neuere to comyn in heuene.

He is willing to exchange eternal blessings for present prosperity.

This attitude would immediately electrify an audience much pre-occupied with death. Life in the Fifteenth Century was an uncertain journey: almost a hundred years before the play, the Black Death had killed off about half the population of England[2] and still ravaged the country from time to time. In Paris, at the Churchyard of the Innocents, the Danse Macabre had just been painted.[3] It is a frieze of pairs, in each pair a living man (King, Knight, Pope, etc.) is being taken away by

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[1]Everyman's surprise at Death's coming is similar. His is pre-occupied with the world and exclaims:

"O Death! thou comest, when I had thee least in mind;"

"Everyman", Six Anonymous Plays, ed. J.S. Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1905), p. 97.

Cf. also C. Marlowe, Dr Faustus, ed. John D. Jump (London: Methuen & Co., 1962). Faustus tries to forget his inevitable Death, yet the play continually reminds us of it. In the last scene, time becomes a dramatic force, giving urgency to the coming moment and intensifying his terror. Cf. Sc. XVIII, 57:

Hell claims his right and with a roaring voice
Says, 'Faustus, come; thine hour is almost come';

and especially the speech in Sc. XIX which starts (l.133) when the clock strikes eleven:

Ah, Faustus,
Now has thou but one bare hour to live,

at l.163 the watch strikes half past eleven and at l.183 the clock strikes twelve. He screams:

O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,

and at the end,

My God, my God! Look not so fierce on me!

[2]Death mentions this in the play:

(l.2816) In þe gretë pestelens,
þanne was I wel knowe.

[3]See Emil Male, op.cit., p.142 et seq. also plates 33 and 34. The Dance of Death is dated 1424.

a dead man (his dead self). The dead man is not Death, but a grinning, worm-eater cadaver. All the serious religious thought of the ordinary man is concentrated in the exclamation made by Man's Good Angel at the beginning of the play: "Man! þynke on þyn endynge day."

We must, however, notice a definite distinction between Man's body and his soul. The body (and with it are included all the world's pleasures and vices) will rot in the ground, and its very instability is a a reminder of the importance of the soul. Everyman must descend into the grave; he loses all his physical attributes and only his Good Deeds remain with him when he presents himself before the throne of God. In a sermon on the fickleness of the world,[1] the Lady de Blacworth is reported as saying:

> I was a lady; now am I non.
> I hadde worchepes; now it ys begon.
> I was fayr and gentil both.
> Now ich man wyle my body loth.
> My frendys, my godes me hav forsake.
> To wyrmes mete now am I take.
> Of al the wor(l)d now haf I noȝth
> bitt gode dedes that I wrogth.
> Only tho schuln abyde wit me.
> Al other thynges arn vanyte.

The physical details of the rotting corpse are stressed in a revulsion from the material world. In Handlynge Synne, the glutton who likes good food and wine is told that his body will stink more highly because of his vice.[2] Richard Rolle,[3] in a beautiful poem, writes

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[1]See G.R. Owst, op.cit., p.530, quoted from MS. Worc. Cath. Library, F.10, fol.208, c. 1390-1410. The following discussion illuminates much of Hamlet's preoccupation with death, especially with the physical aspect of death. His disillusionment and unhappiness result in a revulsion against physical beauty and life itself. See V, i, 186: "Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come." Indeed the grave yard scene is a culmination of this kind of imagery within the play (e.g. II, ii, 307, "What a piece of work is man ...", III, iv, 212, "I'll lug the guts into a neighbour room").

[2]Handlyng Synne, op.cit., l.6753 et seq.,

> And þou þat fedyst þe so rychely,
> Ouer mesure yn glotonye,
> þynk þat þou schalt stynk & rote,
> And wurmës shul fyl þy þrote,
> And þe fouler shal þy body stynke
> For thy ryche metë and þy drynke.

[3]Richard Rolle de Hampole in Religious Pieces in Prose and Verse, ed. G.F. Perry (London: E.E.T.S., 1867), p.81, l.84.

(c. 1349):

> What so it be, þat we here see,
> Þe fairhede of thi face,
> Thi ble so bryghte, thi mayne, thi myghte,
> Þi mouthe þat myrthis mase.
> All mon als was to powdir passe,
> To graue whene þat þou gase,
> A grysely geste, þan bese þou preste,
> In armes for to brace.
> With I and œ for leue þow me,
> Bese nane, as I þe hete,
> Of all þi kyth dare slepe þe with,
> A nyghte vndir þi schete.

Man achieves an anonymity in the grave. He is no better than his fellow man in any material sense. His soul has to be judged by a different standard than that used by the world. In a story in Handlyng Synne a bondsman speaks to a knight:

> (1.8695) þe lorde þat made of erþë erles,
> Of þe same erþe made he cherles;
> Erlës myȝt and lordës stut,
> As cherlës, schal yn erþe be put;
> Erlës, cherlës alle at ones,
> Schal none knowe ȝoure, fro our bones.[1]

Dr Rossiter[2] suggests that the rotting corpse as a memento mori, a reminder of death, was amphoteric, it symbolised at the same time a different attitude to life, a memento vivere, a reminder to enjoy life as much as possible because it was so short. This may be true of the secular literature of the time, but we have not found it among the homiletic literature of the Fifteenth Century, and certainly not among the Moralities (few though they are) of the period. Sin, ugly and evil, has become associated with the body because it is of this world, and all things of this world are as impermanent as the body. In Wisdom who is Christ (c. 1460)[3] the soul (Anima) is disfigured by the Vices and when

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[1]See again Hamlet, V, i, 89, "Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them?"

[2]A.P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans (London: Hutchinsons University Library, 1950), p.93.

[3]"Wisdom who is Christ - or, Mind, Will and Understanding", The Macro Plays, ed. F.J. Furnivall and A.W. Pollard (London: E.E.T.S., 1904).

Mind, Will and Understanding see her changed state they are shocked into reformation. Everyman, (c. 1480), creeps into the grave (a physical reality) having been deserted by all his worldly standards of Wealth and Beauty, Fellowship and Strength and finds true values only in God's presence.

In the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u> the language of the play follows this distinction between Body and Soul. On the one hand physical death, in unsparing crudity, will put an end to Man's brief stay on earth and all his pleasures. He knows this and so do the Vices. In the beginning, when man is still young, the Good Angel begs him to remember: "Whanne þou schalt be closyd vnder clay!" while the Bad Angel says:

(1.418) With þe Werld þou mayst be bold
tyl þou be sexty wynter hold.
wanne þi nosë waxit cold,
þanne mayst þow drawe to goode.

When Lust-Liking clothes him in rich clothes he says:

(1.638) Syr, I say.
in lyckynge & in lust
he schal rust,
tyl dethys dust
do him to day.

Pride tells him to hold himself proudly and dress fashionably:

(1.1071) & holde no man betyr þanne þi selfe;
tyl dethys dynte þi body delfe.

When Mankind joins Covetyse and leaves the Castle of Perseverance, World is triumphant. He has betrayed Mankind into losing his soul.

(1.2689) Mankynde wyl neuere þe Werld for-sake,
Tyl he be ded, and vndyr molde
. . . .
For I, þe Werld, am of þis entayle,
In hys moste nede I schal hym fayle,
& al for Covetyse.

This theme reaches its climax with the entrance of Death. Speaking to the audience, Death makes his way slowly across to Mankind, who is probably below Covetyse's scaffold. He says:

(1.2827) þer ne is peny nor powmde
þat any of ȝou schal savë sowmde;
tyl ȝe be grauyn vndyr growmde,
þer may no man me werne.

When Mankind sees Death he is dismayed. He appeals to World to help him;

hysterically be begs:

> (1.2857) Werld! my wyt waxyt wronge;
> I chaunge boþe hyde and hewe;
> myne eye-ledys waxyn al outewronge;
> but þou me helpe, sore it schal me rewe.
> . . . .
> Werld, for oldë aqweyntauns,
> helpe me fro þis sory chauns!
> Deth hathe lacchyd me with his launce!
> I deye but þou me helpe.

But World has been waiting for this moment. He says suavely:

> (1.2870) Owe, Mankynde! hathe Dethe with þee spoke?
> a-geyns hym helpyth no wage
> I wold þou were in erthe be-toke,
> and a-nother hadde þyne erytage!
> oure bonde of loue schal sone be broke;
> In coldë clay schal be þy cage.

He calls to a boy to throw Mankind out of his house and to take over his heritage. The boy thanks World and says he shall be glad to get rid of Mankind as he is already beginning to stink. He will keep all his goods for himself and says it might be a good idea to put him in a winding sheet. The boy is obviously necessary to take the body away from the acting area, but the author makes this scene a dramatic climax of the play and exploits all the possibilities of the situation. The boy begins to drag Mankind away. He says laconically:

> (1.2922) Whou faryst, Mankynde? art þou ded?
> by Goddys body, so I wene,
> he is heuyer þanne any led.
> I wold he were grauyn vnder grene.

and "I am com to haue al þat þou hast." (1.2935)

Mankind is still enmeshed in this world. He says unhappily that he would like "sum nyfte or sum cosyn" to inherit his goods. Who is the boy? He answers:

> (1.2968) Loke þat þou it not forȝete.
> My name is 'I wot neuere whoo'.

Man, thoroughly disillusioned, sees clearly that all the goods he has valued so highly are given by the World to strangers. He appeals to the audience to take him as an example and puts himself at the mercy of God. As he is dragged off it seems almost as if the young boy is a visitation of his younger self, the uncaring man who was willing to forgo everything for riches and prosperity in this world.

On the other hand, Death not only implies decay of the body and loss of material pleasures, it also implies judgement of the soul and damnation for all sinners. The Devil says he will not be happy until Man is destroyed and brought to hell. Flesh says:

(1.266) be-hold þe Werld, þe Deuyl, & Me!
with all oure mythis, we kyngys thre,
nyth & day, besy we be,
for to distroy Mankende.

And his birth Mankind is aware that the Bad Angel will draw him to the Devil and prays to Christ to help him to follow the Good Angel. When the Bad Angel prevails on him to go to the World, he announces Mankind's visit to World in the following terms:

(1.548) help hym, fast he gunne to thrywe;
& whanne he wenyth best to lywe
þanne schal he deye, & not be shrywe,
and goo with us to hell.

The Vices represent certain vices in Man, but they are also in league with Satan; in fact Wrath, Envy and Pride are the servants of the Devil. All the Vices are intent on one purpose, to bring Man's soul to hell. They are helped in this by Pleasure and Inclination (Lust-liking) and Folly (Stulticia) who are servants of the World.[1] In spite of his knowledge of damnation, Man is reckless of his fate. He says:

(1.610) What schulde I recknen of domysday,
So þat I be ryche & of gret a-ray?

The Vices are not intent on his body, but on his soul. Folly says:

(1.647) In worldis wyt
þat in folye syt,
I þynkë ȝyt.
His sowle to sloo

Man promises Covetyse that he will think wholly of himself. In an oath of allegiance he swears:

(1.874) I schal neuere begger bede
mete nyn drynke, be heuene blys;
rather or I schulde hym cloþe or fede,
He schulde sterve, or stynke I-wys
. . . .
I make a-vow, be Goddys blod,
Of Mankynde, getyth no man no good

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[1] In a later play, John Skelton, Magnyfycence, op.cit., Folly and Fancy are the two companions who corrupt Magnyfycence into reckless disregard of true values. In "Mundus et Infans", Six Anonymous Plays, ed. J.S. Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1905), another later Morality, Folly is the incarnation of the Seven Deadly Sins. These characters re-appear constantly in the later drama.

This oath is important, not only because he swears to Covetyse in the name of Christ's passion, but also because he has sworn to do all the things which will lead him to everlasting damnation. In The Last Judgement, God says to the good souls:

> When I was hungry, ye me fed,
> To slake my thirst your heart was free;
> When I was clotheless ye me clad,
> Ye would no sorrow on me see [1]

In promising to be unkind to his fellow men Mankind is promising to be unkind to God, who is represented by all suffering humanity. He swears this damnation on himself with oaths that emphasise all that he has given up - by heaven's bliss, by God's blood. Covetyse says:

> (1.883) Mankynd! þat was wel songe.
> . . . .
> blyssyd be þi trewë tonge!
> . . . .
> here I feffe þee in myn heuene
> with gold and syluer, lyth as leuene;

This juxtaposition of true values with false ones gives an ambiguity which is both blasphemous and damning.[2]

When Mankind leaves the Castle of Virtue, Patience says: "He brewyth hym-selfe a byttyr galle." From now on the image of the bitter drink, which he will receive from Satan when he is damned, occurs frequently. After Mankind's death, his soul emerges with the words:

> (1.3011) but Mercy helpe me in þis vale,
> Of dampnynge drynke, sore I me doute.
> body! þou dedyst brew a byttyr bale,
> to þi lustys whanne gannyst loute!
> . . . .
> to me þou hast brokyn a byttyr jous;
> so welaway þe whyle!

The Bad Angel is triumphant:

> (1.3076) I schal þee brewe a byttyr jous;
> In bolnynnge bondys þou schalt brenne;
> In hyë helle schal be þyne house;
> In pycke & ter, to grone & grenne ...

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[1]"The Last Judgement": York cycle, mod. translation in Religious Drama, op.cit., p.263.

[2]This technique is not unknown in other Moralities. In Wisdom, who is Christ, op.cit., 1.575, Will, who has given himself to Lechery, says: "A woman, me semyth an hewynly syght." When the Rennaissance Faust cries to Helen in his final damnation: "Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips" (op.cit., Sc. XVIII, 1.104.), Marlowe is using a Morality technique in the same way.

The image of the bitter drink reminds us of the Harrowing of Hell sequence in Piers Plowman.

(Pass.XVIII, 1.359)

Now bygynneth þi gyle · ageyne þe to tourne,
And my grace to growe · ay gretter & wyder.
Þe bitternesse þat þow hast browe · brouke it þi-seluen,
Þat art doctour of deth · drynke þat þou madest!
For I, þat am lorde of lyf · loue is my drynke,
And for þat drynke to-day · I deyde vpon erthe.
I fauȝte so, me þrestes ȝet · for mannes soule sake;
May no drynke me moiste · ne my thruste slake,
Tyl þe vendage falle · in þe vale of iosephath,
Þat I drynke riȝte ripe must · resurreccio mortuorum,
And þanne shal I come as a kynge · croune d with angeles,
And han out of helle · alle mennes soules.
. . . .
And my mercy schal be shewed · to manye of my brethren.
. . . .
Ac my riȝtwisnesse & riȝt · shal reulen al helle,
And mercy al mankynde · bifor me in heuene.

The bitter drink is naturally related to God's sacrifice: "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke, 22, v.42) and to His mercy and therefore to The Parliament of Heaven.[1] The close connection between these different religious concepts is demonstrated by the fact that they are all present in the extract quoted from Piers Plowman. The second theme connected with the coming of Death, i.e. judgement and punishment for sin, leads us therefore to our next point for discussion, i.e. The Parliament of Heaven.

(iii) The Parliament of Heaven

In a poem called "The Devil's Parliament", c. 1430,[2] Christ says:

I am lord and king of blis,
Ouer-comer of deeþe, myghti in fight!
Euerlastynge ȝatis, openeþ wight!
Boþe pees, mercy, trouþe, & right,
I brouȝt them at oon, & made þem to kis;
Euerlastynge ȝatis, openeþ on hight,
And lete in ȝoure king to take out his!

The idea of the debate of the Four Daughters of God occurs frequently in mediaeval literature. An important point made in the Coventry play is that without the intervention of God, chaos will reign on earth. Peace says:

(p.88) Though Truth & Justice says great reason,
Yet Mercy saith best to my pleasing.
For if Man's soul should abide in hell,
Between God and man ever should be division;
And therein might not I, Peace, dwell.

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[1]See note 1 page 12.

[2]Hyms to the Virgin and Christ, op.cit., p.49, 1.258 et seq.

Gabriel repeats this theme:

(p.89) This is Godès word, you shall confess.
Adam died once for his transgression,
That truth & also righteousness
Might be preserved from violation.
Now to restore mercy & peace,
A second Adam must die on earth;
So Godès mercy to man shall not cease,
And the reign of peace shall come to birth.

God's mercy is infinite and it is only through His mercy and His sacrifice that divine order can be restored and a new heaven and a new earth be created. This heavenly harmony is founded in mercy and becomes in later plays a blue-print for man's attitude to his fellow men. Justice must always be tempted with mercy just as God's justice is ever merciful.[1]

In our play, as in the Coventry play, Mercy and Truth, Peace and Righteousness are seen as four women; the Four Daughters of God. We are told that Mercy is dressed in white, Righteousness in red (the colour of justice), Truth in "sad" green and Peace in black. Mercy has heard Man call her name with his dying breath, but Justice says he deserves to stink in hell for his misdeeds. Truth agrees that Man's good deeds shall be weighed against his bad deeds to see whether he shall go to heaven or to hell. Peace suggests that they ask God, who died on a tree to save Mankind. Each pleads his case before God, who says, finally, that Mankind shall not be damned, but dwell in heaven and "set hym here be my kne",

(1.3527) I menge with my most myth,
alle þes, sum treuthe, & sun Ryth,
And most of my mercy.

The element of debate was central to the Morality Play which was

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1 The two most famous examples occur in <u>Measure for Measure</u>:

(II, ii,73) Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once,
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy: how would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgement, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that,
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

and <u>The Merchant of Venice</u>:

(IV, i, 92) But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthronéd in the heart of kings,
It is an attribute of God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy season's justice:

problematic in its conception.[1] It is for this reason that Owst says that the origin of the Morality Plays can be found in such written debates as that between Dives and Pauper (c. 1400).[2] For this reason also the Morality became, as it developed, an ideal vehicle for the Catholic-Protestant controversy, or a mouthpiece for social reform. A debased reference to the Four Daughters of God can be found in a much later play, one of the few Catholic Moralities: Respublica (1553).[3] When the Vices learn that Respublica is being helped by Mercy and Truth, they ask in terror: "Have they kissed?" But this is far removed from the solemn involvement with the problem of Justice and Mercy which occupied our author and the men of his time. In the same way the concept of death as, on the one hand, the crude and cruel picture of the stinking corpse and, on the other, the earnest belief in the inifinite mercy of God towards the repentant sinner, was never again to be presented with the same clarity and simplicity of vision in Tudor or Elizabethan drama.

(iv) Significant Symbolic Action and Costume

(a) Action. In our study we have been concentrating mainly on the language of the play, its significance in its context and its relation to other literature of the same period. We must remember, however, that this is dramatic allegory and, because it is an allegory acted before an audience, certain gestures or actions or ways of dress will become visual symbols to the audience. The action moves from the central acting "place" to the different scaffolds and it is not strange for the audience to hear hell referred to as "high hell" because the Devil has a scaffold to himself like all the others. When characters move from one scaffold to

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[1]In the Dutch plays this element of debate is even more important. Moralities were written to demonstrate or discuss a central moral truth and in the Rederyker competitions many plays were written on the same subject. Later English writers who visited Holland were influenced by this tradition, especially the reformers who sought refuge in Holland during the reign of Henry VIII and Mary.

[2]Op.cit., p.544.

[3]"Respublica", Recently Recovered "Lost" Tudor Plays, ed. J.S. Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1907).

another, they are moving from one state of mind to another and their journey is important as a visual enactment of their spiritual story.

Examples of this kind of significant action are numerous. When Mankind leaves the castle and descends to Covetyse below, his journey is a dramatic representation of his rejection of a life of abstinence for worldly security. When Man leaves his Good Angel and accompanies his Bad Angel to World's scaffold, he has taken sides, and we see this happen. From World's scaffold, accompanied by Backbiter, he moves to Covetyse's scaffold. Here he promises to think only of himself: "Of Mankynde, getyth no man no good" (1.881) and Covetyse calls all the other Deadly Sins to join them.

(1.902) Ouer hyll and holtys ȝe ȝou hyȝe,
to com to Mankynde and to me ...

Each Vice replies in turn from his scaffold and receives the blessing of his guardian, who is either Flesh or Satan, and each Vice is invited by Mankind to join him on his seat on the scaffold. In this way the degeneration of man is acted out for us as the Vices process towards him, are received by him and finally cluster round him. At the very moment at which he is surrounded by the Vices, he is pierced by Penance with his lance and filled with remorse. The dramatic entrance of Penance and Shrift is described by Richard Southern.[1] They do not come from a scaffold, but enter the arena from outside, where they have been waiting in the pavilion for their entry. (The pavilion is referred to by name in a much later Morality, The Satyre of the Three Estaitis (c. 1550),[2] but we must assume such a changing room for all actors who have not been given a specific place in the arena.) Southern writes:

> Suddenly there pace into the arena, from the opposite side, two sombre figures, one carrying a high lance.
> The Good Angel pauses, struck by the sight. The murmuring on Covetyse's scaffold is stilled. The Bad Angel gives one sharp glance and looks away, and sits with eyes lowered. The two stride on with even step, the lance's pennon steadily flickering aloft. Every eye in the ring will be turned to them as they pass from the entrance at the Gap and begin to make their way straight along the lane to the Good Angel in the centre.

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[1] Richard Southern, op.cit., p.179.

[2] Sir David Lyndsay, "The Satyre of the Three Estaitis", The Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay, ed. George Chalmers (London: 1806), Vol.II, p.28.

The ways in which characters move towards each other and form patterns of meaning through their relationship with each other express visual and dramatic metaphors. This form of dramatic metaphor became a feature of the Morality Plays and is used extensively in the later drama. Ideas and relationships are expressed through significant action in the play and this action is born from the allegory itself. In our study of the later drama we hope to show the development of this convention and its influence on the language of Elizabethan drama.

(b) Costume. Another important part of the visual impact of the allegory is the costume of the actors. The only reference to costume in the stage directions of the play is the specification for the colours of the robes worn by the Four Daughters of God, but there is much that we can assume from the text and from information about costume which we find in other plays of the period.[1] Many of the allegorical figures were already stereotyped and can be found in intriguing lists of expenditure, such as amounts paid to actors for their parts in a play or pageant. See for example the following bill:

God 3s 4d
4 Angels 1s 4d
3 Patriarchs 1s
3 White Souls 1s 6d
3 Black Souls 2s
2 demons 2s
2 worms of conscience 1s 4d.[2]

The Virtues were often played in clerical dress and Death himself would be represented as a skeleton, while the Devil dressed in a hairy pelt or

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[1]For reference to costume and symbol see:

1. Honor Matthews, Character and Symbol in Shakespeare's Plays (Cambridge University Press: 1962).
2. Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages (London: Routledge & KeganPaul, 1963), Vol. II, Pt. I
3. G.R. Kernodle, From Art to Theatre (3rd Impression; University of Chicago Press: 1947).
4. Anne Richter, Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962).
5. T.W. Craik, The Tudor Interlude: Stage, Costume and Acting (Leicester University Press: 1958).
6. Allardyce Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and Miracles (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1931).

[2]See Allardyce Nicoll, op.cit., p.192.

feathers with an ugly, large, misshapen nose.[1]

It is possible that conventions of dress growing up with the drama became closely associated with certain Vices. For example, Avarice always carried money-bags. In later plays he would wear a cloak to conceal his identity and change his name, but his true identity could be discovered when the cloak was removed. Pride was always dressed as a gallant and his clothes were too rich and too elaborate to denote a good man. This identification of elaborate dress with evil is found in earlier literature, e.g. Piers Plowman describes Lady Meed as being gorgeously clad:

(Pass.II, 1.15) Hire robe was ful riche · of red scarlet engreyned,
With ribanes of red golde · and of riche stones;
Hire array me rauysshed · such richesse saw I neuere;

Yet Lady Meed is the daughter of False (The Devil) and is to be married to Falsehood by the help of Flattery and is given all the Deadly Sins as a wedding present. Any costume that is too gorgeous could denote sin. In King Lear, the rough, unmannerly, but true Kent is contrasted with the villainous fop, Oswald, and the wicked daughters are especially well and fashionably dressed.

Even more significant for our study are changes of dress or of appearance. In the Tudor Moralities, dress was often used as a form of disguise when a Vice wished to assume a more acceptable rôle, but, in the early Moralities, dress was the outward manifestation of a state of mind. In The Castle of Perseverance, Man's acceptance of worldly values is given concrete shape when he is clothed, at World's command, by Lust-Liking and Folly. We can assume that his nakedness, his innocence, is now covered by rich clothing. When he confesses his misdeeds and is given absolution by Shrift, we can surely assume that he puts on a garment of penitence in the

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[1]See Allardyce Nicoll, op.cit., p.187 et seq. When Ithamore says in The Jew of Malta:

(III,iii,8) I have the bravest, gravest, secret, subtle, bottle-nos'd knave to my master, that ever gentleman had.

he is referring to the devilish quality in the Jew.

same way that Everyman changes his gay clothes for the garment of sorrow after he has done penance for his sins. In Wisdom, who is Christ, Mind, Will and Understanding are shocked when Anima appears "in þe most horrybull wyse, foulere þan a fende" and it is only after they have repented and confessed their sins that they re-appear "all in here fyrst clothynge, her chapplettys and crestys, and all hauynge on crownys, ..."[1] It is this same belief in the manifestation of inner reality in the outer-seeming which confuses Lear and finally disillusions him so that he feels that clothes are merely a disguise for the essential man.

Clothes and costume became increasingly important in the theatre as symbols of the part one was to play in life so that they later became incorporated into the imagery of the play. For example Angus says of Macbeth:

(V, ii, 20) now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

The theme of dress and change of dress will re-appear constantly in our study of the Morality genre, and we shall have more to say on this subject in later chapters.

(v) The Relationship between Actor and Audience

Finally we must remember that this play is didactic in intention, which gives it a very special relationship with the audience. The play has the same intimacy with the audience as a preacher has with his congregation, and the characters are continually stepping out of their rôles in order to point out to the audience the moral of the situation. In a sense each character is his own chorus. However much he may deceive his fellow actors, he is always completely honest with the audience. Before Mankind dies he appeals directly to the audience:

(1.2996) Now, good men, takythe example at me!
do for ȝoure self whyl ȝe han spase!
for many men þus seruyed be,
þrowe þe werld, in dyuerse place.

When God has given judgement on Mankind he becomes, once again, the poor

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[1] Wisdom who is Christ, op.cit., after 1.906.

player, himself, and concludes the play on a note of warning:

(1.3646) þus endyth oure gamys!
To saue ȝou fro synnynge,
Evyr at þe begynnynge
Thynke on ȝoure last endynge!
Te, Deum, Laudamus.

This continual shift from dramatic representation to moral teaching, from the story to the allegorical and moral levels of meaning is something we expect the reader of an allegory to be doing for himself, but it is a new experience to see it working on the stage and working so well. This awareness of different levels of meaning by the audience was, of course, greatly to enrich the later drama.

Perhaps we can distinguish another important element in the Morality drama which helped the author to achieve unity and urgency of dramatic effect in spite of his difficult didactic task. We remember that the hero of the early Morality is Mankind or Everyman; this means that the hero is every one of us and that each member of the audience could be called the protagonist of the play. Our author knows this very well. In one among many examples, Back-biter explains his profession to the audience:

(1.659) Mannys bane a-bowtyn I bere.
I wyl þat ȝe wetyn all þo þat ben here,
for I am knowyn, fer & nere,
I am þe werldys messengere;
my name is Bacbytere.

Mankind always excuses himself by saying that everyone does as he has done:

(1.1252) I se no man but þey vse somme
Of þese vij dedly synnys.

In this way the audience is never forgotten. The spectators represent the large world and the play is the world in miniature. Each man in the audience could identify himself with Mankind because Mankind was himself. The audience could also become part of the play e.g. in crowd scenes when the World needs to appeal to a large audience, or when God speaks to the world. The very physical proximity of actor to audience (whether played in the round, in innyard or castle hall, the acting space was necessarily small, the audience crowded round) ensured that the audience could be drawn into the action without damaging in any way the illusion created by the story. The audience were not watching a story within a picture, they were involved in the drama both by its didactic nature and by the physical

contact of actor with audience. How exciting it must have been when the Vices beseiged the castle and Belial, with his gunpowder, leaped among the audience, how terrifying when Mankind was carried off to hell, how fearful the Devil must have been and how the audience must have shrieked whenever he came near them.

This involvement of the audience in the action is reflected in other plays of the same period. In Wisdom, who is Christ, the Devil entices Mind, Will and Understanding away from Wisdom and exits: "Her he takyt a screwde boy with hym, & goth his way, cryenge" (1.551). Obviously he has taken a young lad from the audience, perhaps an accomplice, to increase their fear of him. It was this involvement in the action which led to the legend that when Dr Faustus was once played, an extra devil was seen on the stage. In another example of the intimate relationships of actor with audience, E.K. Chambers relates a story of how the young Thomas More "would he at Christmas tyd sodenly sometymes stepp in among the players, and never studinge for the matter, make a parte of his owne there presently among them".[1] This story reflects the kind of relationship between actor and audience which we are trying to show.

It can be seen therefore that, from their beginning, the Morality Plays created, through their treatment of their subject matter, the kind of theatrical illusion which depended on an intimacy between actor and audience. It was possible for the audience to be included in the play or (as in The Satyre of the Three Estaitis) for the actors to become part of the audience, in the play within the play. It was possible too for the actors to confide in the audience and to tell them things which other actors could not hear, or to explain themselves in a natural manner. All the Vices do this in the play: they explain their treachery and their desire for Man's soul. When the Good Angel says:

(1.1267) Weleaway! weder may I goo?
Man doth me bleykyn blody ble;
his swete sowle he wyl now sle;
he schal wepe al his game & gle
at on dayes tyme.

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[1]E.K. Chambers, op.cit., p.193.

> ȝe se wel al sothly in syth,
> I am a-bowte boþe day & nyth,
> to brynge his sowle in-to blis bryth;
> & himself wyl it brynge to pyne.

he is not speaking a soliloquy or an aside as we hear them on the stage to-day, but is talking directly to the audience, expressing his feelings to them and using them as confidants so that his speech becomes more than a monologue; it is almost a dialogue, and we can imagine the actor coming closer to the audience and giving the impression that he is speaking to each member individually.

In our play, Mankind is not a recognizable person, but an abstraction. In spite of this he has a surprising amount of humanity in him. Perhaps this is because we always know what he is thinking, he always explains himself to us and we sympathise with him because we know our own frailty. We know also that he will be betrayed by the World and we know how defenceless he is:

> (1.284) I was born þis nyth in blody ble,
> & nakyd I am, as ȝe may se.
> a! Lord God in trinite!
> Whow Mankende is vnthende!

x x x

In this chapter we have tried to show how the author of The Castle of Perseverance has used images and ideas which were common to the didactic literature of the period. The Dance of Death, the mediaeval debate, the Morality Plays were, like the vernacular sermons and the didactic poetry, a product of their age. What the Morality Play offers which is new, is the visual dramatisation of the theological conventions of the time and the special actor-audience relationship which drew the audience intimately into the story.

The author and his contemporaries lived in a world full of pitfalls for the soul, where life at its best - the best life - was one of abstinence and penitence. It was a world populated by a proliferation of creatures, angels, demons and men, but its almost chaotic variety was held together by a single golden thread of meaning, a Jacob's ladder which ran from the footstool of God himself down to the meanest creature. On

this ladder all signposts for mortals pointed to the grave and the inevitable Beyond. There all material happiness and wealth ended. There a new life began. But, man, too frail not to sin, could only depend on God's mercy for salvation, and this ladder, itself so strenuously climbed, was nonetheless merely a scaling of the heights and depths of Divine Grace.

This attitude towards life did not last unbroken into the Sixteenth Century. Life became, it seemed, more complex, not because of the addition of further complications, but because the golden thread, the Jacob's ladder, seemed to disappear. Man was never again so simply and so grandly committed to a universe in which heaven and hell seemed more real than earth itself.

CHAPTER TWO

The Middle Period: A Study of Three Moralities, c. 1510

About seventy-five years after The Castle of Perseverance, Henry Medwall, "chapleyn to the ryght reuerent father in god Johan Morton somtyme Cardynall and arche byshop of Canterbury", wrote a play called Nature[1] which bears a close resemblance to it. Working within the Morality framework, portraying the life of Man from birth to age with the same dual movement of repentance at middle age followed by a further lapse into sin, this play is both strikingly similar and strikingly dissimilar to the earlier Morality. This chapter will discuss Nature and two other plays of approximately the same date, the anonymous Mundus et Infans[2], and Magnyfycence[3] by John Skelton. In the discussion of these plays we shall try to show how much of the original Morality framework was retained and what changes were introduced.

Nature

The play was probably written for an indoor performance. The "stage" is empty at the beginning of the play, but there are two thrones or seats placed at some distance from each other. It was possibly performed in a hall in front of the screen below the minstrel's gallery. This would provide the actors with two entrances and give them some kind of backing, but would not destroy their closeness to the audience. There is no reference to height in the play, nor to "going up" to another position, so that an alternative position for the actors would be the

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[1] Reprinted A. Brandl, Quellen des Weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare (Strassburg: 1898).

J.S. Farmer, Early English Dramatists (London: 1907).

The edition used in this discussion is that of Brandl. The play, written between 1490-1501, was printed by William Rastell and an original copy is in the British Museum.

[2] "The World and the Child" (Mundus et Infans), Six Anonymous Plays, ed. J.S. Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1905).

[3] John Skelton, Magnyfycence, ed. R.L. Ramsay (London: E.E.T.S., 1908).

centre of the hall with seats placed as thrones for the main characters and a space left for actors to walk through the audience when it was their turn to enter the action.

Part One

First to enter is World accompanied by Worldly Affection who carries a cap and a gown and a girdle for Man. World sits down in silence. Then Nature, Man, Reason and Innocence [and Sensuality?] enter. Nature takes her place on the other throne. She explains her position as God's minister and caretaker on earth. She speaks directly to man saying:

> (1.73) Namely thow Man / I speke to the alone
> Byfore all other / as chyef of hys creance
> Thynke how he / hath made the to thys semblance
> Pluck vp thyn harte / and hold thyn hed vpryght
> and euer more / haue heuen in thy syght

Man has again been born into a divided universe. He is a "passenger",

> (1.97) That hast to do / a great and longe vyage
> and through the world / most be thy passage

He is given two guides; Reason and Sensuality, but Reason must be his chief guide. Innocence will go with him to keep him from sin.

Man thanks God for his creation, for the delights of the earth and for his position as crown of creation, for his free choice which makes him "halfe angelyke" although he shall "haue my funerall", and prays that God will keep him from sin. This speech is beautifully phrased and has the dignity one would expect from a man who has not yet sinned, while his references to flowers, fruit and animals evoke the image of a Garden of Eden, giving him the status of Adam, the first created man. We are almost watching another creation and another fall, and this resemblance is further emphasised by the fact that man is naked[1], clothed

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[1]R.L. Ramsay (Introduction to John Skelton, Magnyfycence, op.cit., p. cxli), assumes that not only is Worldly Affection the Vice of the play, but that he is also Covetyse under a new name. It is undoubtedly true that Worldly Affection is the leader of the Vices, but I do not think the text is explicit about a specific rôle for him. Although it is true that the Vice, Covetyse, does not appear in the subsequent action, he is however referred to by name and masquerades under the title, "Worldly Policy". Another character, Sensuality, is assumed by Ramsay to be the Bad Angel. This is also dubitable. Sensuality has already appeared in the Digby Mary Magdalene (which also includes a Good and a Bad Angel) and in the poem by Lydgate, to which we have already referred, The Assembly of Gods. It is possible, however, that the dichotomy, Reason vs. Sensuality is more in keeping with the new Morality apparent in these plays and that the Good and Bad Angels have been left out in favour of a more philosophical approach to the problem of Man's compromise between this world and the next.

only in innocence, a fact which the World is later to point out as unsuitable to his new status.

Nature assures Man that God has heard his prayer, and sends him on his journey, with a final word of warning that he must subdue his Sensuality to his Reason. Sensuality objects strongly to his bondage to Reason: "I am the chyef perfeccyon of hys nature", (1.175). He speaks angrily to Nature:

(1.190) ye clepe hym lorde / of all bestys lyuynge
And nothyng worthy / as far as I can se
For yf there be in hym / no maner of felynge
Ne no lyuely quyknes / what lorde ys he
A lorde made of clowtes / or karued out of tre
and fareth as an ymage / graued out of stone
That nothyng ellys can do / but stande alone

Nature replies that Sensuality will be given a part of Man's Nature, but Man must be led by Reason to virtue and grace. Turning to Man, she warns him:

(1.225) God and I Nature / haue set the in better case
Than any creature / vnder the fyrmament
Abuse not man / abuse not thy grace
Of god almyghty / that from aboue ys sent
Thou shalt be the fyrst / that shall repent
If euer thou fle / Reason and sue foly
Whan onys thou felest / the smert of mysery

Nature shows Man where the World sits and tells him to go to the World. With a final blessing she leaves the stage. Man is left alone with Reason, Sensuality and Innocence, but before he has time to go to World, Sensuality again speaks against Nature and her commands. He has no doubt that the World will support him against Reason. In the flyting match which develops between Reason and Sensuality, the debate between Nature and Sensuality is continued. In spite of their arguments however, the truth is that Man is free and will himself choose by whom he shall be governed.

Innocence now speaks for the first time. She (we shall refer to her sex later in our discussion of the play) assures them that Man is as yet innocent of all folly:

(1.356) ... he ys yet vyrgyn,
Both for dede / and eke consent of syn
And lengar wyll not I be of hys aquayntaunce
Than he ys vertuouse / and of good lyuyng

When Reason and Innocence have finished speaking, Sensuality speaks directly to the audience and crudely comments on all their high ideals:

(1.369) That one chatreth lyke a pye / that other lyke a iay
And yet whan they both / haue done what they can
Maugry theym teeth / I shall rule the man

Man has remained a spectator in this dispute and he comments on it as a spectator. He sees the action on the allegorical level and interprets it for us. He prays:

(1.372) O blessyd lord / what maner stryf ys thys
Atwyxt my reason / and sensualyte
That one meneth well / and that other amysse
In one ys sekernes / and in tother great fraylte
And both they be / so annexed to me
That nedest I must / wyth one of theym abyde
Lorde as thou thynkest best / for me do prouyde

The procession moves across to World's throne. Much to Sensuality's chagrin, Man appoints Reason as his adviser and spokesman. Mankind is welcomed by the World as an Emperor, the crown of creation:

(1.429) Mankynde syr / hartely welcom ye be
Ye are the parsone / without faynyng
That I haue euermore / desyred to se
Come let me kys you. O benedycyte
Ye be all naked / alas man why thus
I make you sure / yt ys ryght perylous

Suddenly we see the next move in the game. Man is now in the world and Sensuality has already pointed out that the World is his friend. Man says Nature has clothed him in the garment of innocence. Innocence too speaks up to say that this garment will save him from stormy weather. World speaks with the voice of commonsense.

(1.442) Be pece / fayre woman ye ar not very wyse
Care ye not / yf thys body take cold
Ye must consyder / thys ys not paradyse
. . . .
Also he must nedys / do as the World doth
That intendeth any whyle / here to reygne
And folow the gyse that now a day goth
As for as hys estate / may yt mayntayne
And who doth the contrary / I will be playne
He is abyect / and dyspysed vtterly
and standeth euer baneshed / from all good company

World has won the first round. Man remains silent as he is dressed by World in a gown, cap and girdle. As World puts on each garment he names it (perhaps holds it up to the audience as he takes it from

Worldly Affection). Man is told to sit down and is given possessions by World. Man then blesses World for his bounty and prays that World will not allow him to become poor again, but he still wishes to live without sin:

(1.484) For certes yt ys / myne hartys desyre
So to demayn me / in thys lyfe present
As may be most / vnto thy pleasure
And vnto nature / not dysconuenyent

Although this scene has much in common with The Castle of Perseverance, where Man is clothed by World after he has disobeyed his Good Angel and gone over to World's scaffold, we are reminded, as in the early scenes of the play, of Adam's sin. The World is not Paradise, as World has said, and Man cannot now go clothed in the garment of innocence. Just as Adam clothed himself after he had fallen from innocence, Mankind is clothed in order to be like the rest of the world's inhabitants. He has not yet lost his innocence and still hopes to strike a compromise between God's will and the way of the World, but he is dangerously near to sin. Ironically, World, in giving him possessions and authority and power, is giving to Mankind, in a worldly sense, what has already been granted to him by God, through his deputy, Nature, as crown of creation.

Reason and Innocence exhort Man to do nothing which will cause him shame. He must never consent to folly or sin. Man is seated with World now and it is World who answers for him, again with the urbanity of the worldly. Surely Man will not be debarred from all pleasures. Has Innocence such a "spyced conscience" that "euery mery thought" will be deemed sinful? Man need not listen to rebukes from Reason and Innocence as he has never been "spotted" by sin. He now needs servants to keep up his estate according to his dignity. Man says that he has retainers already, and explains that they are Reason and Innocence, but World persuades him to take Worldly Affection as his servant. He also especially recommends Sensuality, and tells Man not to scorn Sensuality's advice:

(1.612) Thynke that ye be here / a worldly man
and must do as men / that in the world dwell
Ye ar not bounde / to lyue lyke an aungell
ne to be as god / alway immutable
Mannys nature / of hym selfe ys full myserable

It seems that World is here hinting at two arguments, not one. He says that Mankind cannot be perfect, he is not divine, but he also says that Man must live as his fallen state dictates and be satisfied with these standards. Man is hoping to come to some compromise between the World and God, but it is the second part of World's statement which makes a compromise impossible and which means that Man's sin will be inevitable.

Man gratefully accepts World's advice and opinion. World tells him that he will be everywhere despised if he does not get rid of Innocence. Innocence is so foolish, he knows neither Good nor Evil. Man agrees, giving the familiar argument that:

> (1.645) I suppose there ys no man here
> what soeuer he be
> That could in hys mynde be content
> all wayes to be called an innocent.[1]

As Innocence obdiently leaves Man, we recall her earlier speech:

> (1.358) And lengar wyll not I be of hys acuayntaunce
> Than he ys vertuouse / and of good lyuyng

Here we must pause to consider the implications of what has taken place. There has been very little action. Man has, in fact, merely moved a few feet across the stage, but there has been much interior action and much debate. Man has lost his Innocence, he has been clothed and seated by the World and has taken Sensuality and Worldly Affection as his chief advisers. All this has been shown to us visually through allegorical characters, significant action and symbolic use of costume. Like the hero of The Castle of Perseverance, Man is born naked into the World, but unlike Humanum Genus, it is not God who

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[1]Man's loss of innocence is marked by a definite change in metre. The stately rhyme royal has given way to a shorter line with a more closed rhyme scheme abbbaccodeced etc. The rhyme and metre of this play are not seriously used to reflect the meaning, but the Vices generally speak in a lighter line and the rhyme royal returns again at the end of the play when Man is regenerated.

advises Man, but Nature, his deputy.[1] Man, yet unborn, is given his Good and Bad Angels. They are now Reason and Sensuality, but nevertheless correspond closely in their actions to these two characters in The Castle of Perseverance. Even before Man is presented to the World they are striving for mastery over him. Man is lost almost without struggle. It is inevitable that he should accept worldly standards, and once having accepted them, it is inevitable that he should lose his innocence and become more and more deeply enmeshed in sin. The character of World has changed little from The Castle of Perseverance. He is urbane and persuasive and Man's excuse for sending away Innocence is identical with Humanum Genus's often repeated excuse for his behaviour: "We haue etyn garlek euerychone" (1.1372).

The episode of the clothing of Man, which takes place this time before the audience, is more cleverly handled than in the earlier play, in that Man's fate is spelled out in each action which World takes and the whole scene becomes laden with symbolic meaning. The language itself, however, is less purely symbolic. In spite of the references and allusions to the Genesis story, the imagery does not repeat itself in patterns recalling sermons and biblical quotations. In this first section the verse is a stately five beat line in rhyme royal (ababbcc): Nature quotes Aristotle and Ovid, and her speech abounds in descriptions of birds and flowers reminiscent of the courtly poets of an earlier age. We are reminded of Chaucer's "Parliament of Fowls" and of all the other dream gardens which he describes.

Medwall's ability to evoke a courtly atmosphere of beauty, serenity and classical allusion does not, however, preclude him from giving his Vices a far cruder language. He is able to surprise us into

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[1]God does not appear in this play and indeed does not appear in any Morality after Everyman (c. 1480). Possibly because of anti-Catholic feeling and the decline of the Mystery Plays, it was no longer possible to present God as a dignified figure with a golden beard. In the plays of John Bale, God is a disembodied presence who speaks, but is not seen (c. 1536). In other Moralities He is not present. For the background to this change in attitude see:

Harold C. Gardiner, Mysteries' End: An Investigation into the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage (Yale University Press: 1946).

Ward Williamson, "Notes on the Decline of Provincial Drama in England, 1530-1642", Educational Theatre Journal, XIII (1961), pp. 280-288.

laughter in spite of our knowledge of the seriousness of Man's position,

> (1.432) Come let me kys you. O benedycyte
> Ye be all naked,

and his long line is able to express disgust in colloquial language as we have already shown, (see 1.369). Later the Vices talk in short lines with less complicated rhyme schemes, and sometimes they even talk in prose. This is an advance on The Castle of Perseverance which keeps almost completely to the set rhyme scheme and where the characters hardly ever talk for less than the fourteen line stanza i.e. where characters do not break up a line or stanza between them.

For the next six hundred lines Reason remains silent. We have no stage directions for him. Perhaps, like the Good Angel in The Castle of Perseverance, he remains as a silent reminder of what he represents and when he finally expresses his unhappiness it is from a forgotten corner of the stage. Man gives Worldly Affection the stewardship of his lands and houses and asks him to engage more servants. His servants, of course, are the Seven Deadly Sins and Pride is the first to enter.[1] He is an abominable character who reveals himself by his own words, a vain, cruel, crude gallant, who is much more a type or vice of his own time than the Vices who appeared in The Castle of Perseverance. All the Vices in Nature are real people who have one besetting sin. They are seen in their own environment and are closer to the Jonsonian Humours than the abstract Vices of The Castle of Perseverance.[2]

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[1]Here we can perhaps begin to agree with Ramsay (see note 1, p.37), that Worldly Affection is fulfilling the same rôle as Covetousness in The Castle of Perseverance. He is looking after Man's goods and he is introducing Man to all the other Deadly Sins; but his rôle has not been clearly specified as that of Covetousness and he is more definitely linked with Man's worldliness, his eagerness to be part of the world and to do as the World expects him to do.

[2]Although this kind of figure is not found in the earlier Morality drama, we are reminded of the vivid and the humorous portraits of the Vices in Piers Plowman. See e.g. the description of Glutton, Pass V, 1.353 (op.cit.). Glutton has been drinking with his friends instead of going to church. He is on his way home:

> And þanne gan he go • liche a glew mannes bicche,
> Some tyme aside • and somme tyme arrere,
> As who-so leyth lynes • forto lacche fowles.
> And whan he drough to þe dore • þanne dymmed his eighen
> He [stumbled] on þe thresshewolde • an threwe to þe erthe.
> Clement þe cobelere • cauȝte hym bi þe myddel,
> For to lifte hym alofte • and leyde him on his knowes;
> Ac glotoun was a gret cherle • and a grym in þe liftynge,
> And coughed vp a caudel • in clementis lappe;

In spite of this new topicality the play has not lost its moral seriousness and Pride is damned by his own words. We are aware of the disgust at ostentatious wealth which was part of mediaeval Puritanism and we listen with loathing to Pride. A masterpiece of innuendo, his speech is worth quoting extensively.

(1.756) I loue yt wel to haue syde here
Halfe a wote byneth myn ere
For euer more I stande in fere
That myne nek shold take cold
I knyt yt vp all the nyght
And the day tyme kemb yt down ryght
And then yt cryspeth and shyneth as bryght
as any pyrled gold
My doublet ys on laced byfore
A stomacher of saten and no more
Rayn yt snow yt neuer so sore
Me thynketh I am to hote
Than haue I suche a short gown
Wyth wyde sleues that hang a down
They wold make some lad in thys town
a doublet and a cote
. . . .
Than haue I a sworde or twayn
To bere theym my selfe yt were a payne
They ar so heuy that I am fayne
to puruey suche a lad
Though I say yt a praty boy
It ys helfe my lyues joy
He maketh me laugh wyth many a toy
The vrchyn ys so mad
I begate the horson in bast
It was done all in hast
Ye may se there was no wast
He occupyed no great place
Sometyme he serueth me at borde
Sometyme he bereth me two hand sword
Com forth thou lytell lyk tord
Loke in thy faders face

Pride has been talking to us, the audience, as he makes his way to Man. He says to Sensuality that he is commonly known as "Worship". This is the name by which Man will know him and he promises Sensuality that he will get rid of Reason. A feature of plays in this middle period is that the Vices masquerade under more acceptable names. This is new to the Morality and is part of a new approach to Evil. Good and Evil are not juxtaposed in the simple direct fashion of the earlier plays. Man's choice is therefore made harder by the deceit practiced by the Vices who wish to trap him into sin. Together with a growing worldliness in morality (man must live a good life in the world and on the world's terms), comes a growing awareness of the worldly Vices which masquerade under pleasant and important-

sounding names. The writers were now much more impatient of the society in which they lived and this device of changing the names of the Vices became very useful to later writers, who were bent on satirising the vices of their time and who used the Morality framework to do so.

Pride will make Man so proud, through praise and flattery, that he will not listen to Reason: "He shall trust all to hys own brayne," (1.883). From now on the play is cluttered with allegorical characters who represent Mankind's personal attributes or states of mind, and each spiritual change, either for good or ill, heralds the approach of yet another allegorical character. It is not surprising, therefore, that the moment Man wants a character, he should appear, as later Shamefastness appears the moment Man regrets what he is doing. Man is lost in a welter of abstractions and the allegorical characters cluster round him like a swarm of bees. It is far more difficult to summarise the action of Nature than to summarise The Castle of Perseverance because characters are continually being re-grouped in order to convey states of mind or metaphors in a dramatic, allegorical form.

Sensuality engages Pride for twenty shillings, promising him that he will not, even for forty shillings, reveal the plot to oust Reason. Is it far-fetched to see in these references to money an oblique reference to the betrayal of Christ? This is a serious play and Man is being betrayed into Deadly Sin by Sensuality and Pride.

It is inevitable that this degeneration and lapse into sin should run smoothly because Man is in the world and is unable to swim against the stream. The Morality convention has also established a tradition that repentance comes after sin. Man is flattered by Pride and becomes boastful. He knows he is clever, he says, but Reason has forbidden him to make his own decisions. Pride says, surely Man is no longer a child who receives the cane; Reason is a fool anyway. Man admits that he has been "groged" by his subservience to Reason. Pride suggests that Man needs a new, very fashionable gown and Sensuality suggests that he and Mankind go to a tavern while Pride sees to the new clothes.

When they have left, Pride describes to Worldly Affection the

fanciful, expensive outfit that will be made for Man and he boasts that Reason has not once appeared since he (Pride) has been in Man's company. Sensuality returns to tell his two confederates (and the audience) the amusing story of Mankind at the tavern with "fleyng kat and margery". His friends cannot wait to hear the story, but Sensuality first prepares himself for the tale: "I shall anon had I wypt my nose"(1.1123).

The human, colloquial aspect of Nature is well illustrated here. It is a pity, as Ramsay says, that these scenes were not incorporated in the drama, but Sensuality evokes for us, both by his manner and by his vivid speech, the tavern brawl and the two wenches. Mankind had become terribly sick, and had to lie down:

(1.1135) and prayd me for the maners sake
That margery myght com hold hys hede

The ensuing dialogue, full of puns and double meanings, is a far cry from Lechery of The Castle of Perseverance. The scene is localised, filled with real people linked in a dramatic situation. While they were sitting in the tavern, Reason came in, but Man drew his sword and "smote Reason so on the hed". Sensuality describes his rôle as peacemaker:

(1.1167) Sometyme I clapped Reason on the pate
and cryed kepe the pece as fast as I coude

After this experience, Man is familiar with Bodily Lust (a more acceptable [?] name for Lechery) and the other Deadly Sins, who are all masquerading under worldly titles. Covetyse is Worldly Policy, Envy is Disdain, Gluttony is Good Fellowship, Sloth is Ease, and, Wrath is Manhood. Pride leaves to see how Man's clothes are progressing and Sensuality insists on accompanying him:

(1.1271) It ys accordyng for Sensualyte
Wyth Pryde for to go[1]

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[1] Apart from the fact that the author obviously wished to clear the stage so that Reason could be left alone to lament his sad position, we notice that this is an example of the growing pre-occupation with visual metaphors. Characters act out abstract relationships. This becomes a feature of the later Moralities and is present in the cruder Elizabethan dramas like Tamburlaine (See the Feast of Crowns [IV,iv], or Bajazeth as Tamburlaine's footstool [IV,ii]), but is later pushed into the bachground by a greater flexibility of language and imagery. Nevertheless it is possible that when we study Elizabethan plays we may find a new interpretation of events in terms of the action and the relationships of characters to each other, although obviously they will never be as straightforward as in the passage quoted above.

Worldly Affection decides to find Man so that he can make sure that Man will not repent, otherwise he fears, "He wyll no lengar me support". The Vices in this play are forces of evil, but they are also human vices, part of Man's own personality, and he "retains" them as he sinks deeper into degradation.

Reason is alone on the stage. He mourns:

(1.1293) O good lord / to whom shall I complayn
And shew the sorowes of my mynde

Man has become so "blynde" that he has despised and forsaken all reason. He follows his sensual appetite only, like a "brute best".[1] Reason decides to wait to see if Man shows any sign of shame.

Man enters with Worldly Affection and seems troubled. He enquires after Worship (Pride) and wonders what Reason will say about his new clothes. Worldly Affection tries to brush all remembrance of Reason aside, but Man repeats the words Reason has just spoken:

(1.1344) Man wythout reson ys but blynde
And yf I shuld speke after my mynde
I can well a dyfference fynde
Bytwyxt man and a beste
Whan he hath Reason in presence
and duely obeyeth hys law and sentence

Worldly Affection chides him for his "spyced conscyence", but Man sees clearly now where he is going and says he will no longer follow Worldly Affection, but will seek Shamefastness to redress his misdeeds.

Shamefastness enters immediately. There is no attempt to naturalise the allegory here. Man's states of mind are represented by the

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[1]The adjective "blind" to show a state of ignorance of true values is used so extensively that it could become a most interesting study. Among obvious examples, it is used in the New Testament and of course in Oedipus Rex. Coming nearer to our own study we recall Chaucer's Troilus, who laughs at the sorrow caused by "The blinde lust, the which that may nat laste" (V, 1.1824).

In King Lear, Gloucester's sensual blindness is partly the cause of his own blinding and the theme of blindness, both spiritual and physical is central to the play. See also Hamlet:

(III, iv, 65) Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
and batten on this moor? ha! have you eyes?
. . . .
What devil was't
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes with out feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope:

characters who surround him. However, Shamefastness's rôle is small, he speaks about "almysdedys" and shamefastness, but it is his presence merely that was needed, and he is on the stage for only twenty lines. The allegory creaks a little here. It is impossible to show all interior conflicts in a dramatic allegory and the poet has not yet learnt to rely on language alone to convey his meaning. Man prays to Reason to help him. He has sinned, but has also repented of his own accord:

(1.1398) Syth I forsoke your cumpany
I haue commytted myche foly
I am ashamed certaynly
whan I thynke theron
But now haue I refused vtterly
All suche maner of cumpany
and thys haue I done veryly
Of myne own mocyon

Reason replies that God is merciful and that, if Man leads a good life, God will soon send His grace. This is the end of the first part of the play. Reason turns to the audience:

(1.1428) And for thys seson
Here we make an end
Lest we shuld offend
Thys audyence ...

x x x

Part Two

The second part of the play (perhaps put on the next night or perhaps after the banquet) begins with a long exposition by Reason, which again reminds the reader of the imagery in The Castle of Perseverance. Man's life is compared to a continual siege against a strong castle. The body is the castle, the enemies are the World, the Flesh and the Devil.

(1.8) In suche case and maner of condycyon
Is wreched man here in thys lyfe erthly
Whyle he abydeth wythin the garyson
Of the frayll carcas and carynouse body
Whom to impugn laboreth incessantly
the world / the fleshe / the enemy / these thre
Hym to subdue and bryng into captyuyte

The World excites Man's Covetousness and Pride, the Flesh his sensual appetite, but Man's greatest enemy is the Devil, who looks upon Man with "enkankred malyce and enuy". Man's only safety lies in continual prayer, his avoidance of all sins and his acceptance of all virtue.

Poor Man does not remain long in a state of grace. Sensuality coaxes him back to his old life with tears and reproaches. All his friends miss him and will die of sorrow if he does not recall them to his company. Man agrees readily. He has had no fun since he took up the Good Life. Sensuality says Margery will be happiest of all at his return. She had become so mad with sorrow that she entered a religious house nearby, but the convent is more like a brothel, and Sensuality hints at this in his replies to Man's questions about it:

(1.125) Man: Be they close nonnes as other be
Sensuality: Close quod a nay nay parde
That gyse were not good
ye must beware of that gere
Nay all ys open that they do there

Man quickly sees the point:

(1.158) Forsoth thys ys a noble relygyon
It styrreth me to great deuocyon
For to se that place[1]

Before Man can leave he must call for Bodily Lust who, of course, arrives immediately. Bodily Lust has an alternative plan. He will show Man an even more delectable dish in the stews of London. Man speaks just like the Vices now, using luscious euphemism to mask his lust:

(1.199) For my loue let vs some nyght be there
at a banket or a rere supper
and get vs some wanton mete[2]

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[1]Cf. Hamlet, III, i, 121. Hamlet's repeated "To a nunnery go" is first expressed in good faith, but as the scene progresses his revulsion from all women, his distrust of purity and his belief in the corruption of all the world, which is born from his belief in his mother's corruption, gives this phrase the meaning which is present here.

(1.147) ... you jig, you amble, and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance; go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no marriage - those who are married already, all but one, shall live, the rest shall keep as they are: to a nunnery, go.

[2]This imagery for sexual appetite is, of course, used extensively in Elizabethan drama. A magnificent example of this is the passage where Antony refers with disgust to Cleopatra's infidelity and immorality:

(III, xiii, 116)
I found you as a morsel cold upon
Dead Caesar's trencher; nay, you were a fragment
Gnaeus Pompey's; besides what hotter hours,
Unregistered in vulgar fame, you have
Luxuriously picked out ...

When Bodily Lust leaves to arrange the evening, Worldly Affection chides Man for leaving Margery in the lurch. When he offers to go in Man's place, Man is furious at the suggestion: "Why syr by my trouth I mene but well" (1.242), protests Worldly Affection. The altercation which follows has nothing in common with a Morality Play; it is pure human comedy. Bodily Lust returns from the stews to report that the whore is already engaged. The story he tells is reminiscent of the Miller's tale in its crudity and gusto.

In spite of the topicality of the incidents, Part II of Nature is fragmentary. Characters come and go without any real planned order and the action is enlivened only by its obvious faithfulness to people and places in the underworld of London. We are introduced to the Seven Deadly Sins, a series of comic characters who must have delighted the audience. Sloth and Pride decide to look for Man. A little horseplay with the audience strings out the action. Pride asks the audience the way to the stews and then picks on a single man:

(1.409) Ye know the way parde of old
I pray the tell me whyche way shall I hold
Wyll ye se thys horson cocold
I trow he can not here
Now yt were almes to clap the on the crown

The poor man is to be teased even further. Man and Worldly Affection enter. Man asks if there are any cuckolds in town; to which Pride replies that they are certainly very many, and immediately apoligises to the man in the audience:

(1.416) but for god I cry you mercy
For by my fayth I wyst you not so ny

Man now has a new problem. Reason has gathered together a company to bring Man into captivity and take away his liberty. Man tells Ease to call all his retainers together to help him defend himself against Reason. The battle, a Psychomachia in reverse, never takes place, but we are treated to a medley of short scenes, where the Vices reveal their true characters; Man appears in a fantastically fashionable garment (the suit is ready at long last) and continues his mad rioting. He talkes to Gluttony and once again to Lechery.

Meanwhile Wrath and Envy are ready for battle, but Bodily Lust will have none of it:

(1.679) And yf I shuld to the warre
And ly in myne harnes as other men do
wyth hunger and thurst a day or two
It shuld me vtterly marre

Gluttony will be the victualler of the army and comes in with a cheese and a bottle:

(1.790) But I may serue to be a vyteler
And therof shall ye haue store
So that I may stand out of daunger
Of gon shot ...

Ease is ill in bed at the very thought of battle. Pride arrives late and is tricked by Envy into thinking the battle is over and is persuaded to withdraw. Envy is delighted with this trick. He tells Sensuality what he has done. Sensuality is puzzled: "But in fayth what moueth the therto."

Envy's answer is revealing:

(1.930) Mary cause had I none
but only that yt ys my guyse
Whan I se an other man aryse
Or fare better than I
Than must I chafe and fret for yre
and ymagyn wyth all my desyre
To dystroy hym vtterly

Surely we have here the Elizabethan Machiavellian in embryo; Iago had no more "reason" than this for destroying Othello. It is important to notice that the Vices are unable to co-operate for the overthrow of Good. Later Moralities stress this aspect of the Vices. In Shakespeare's tragedies too, Evil is self-destructive, and can never triumph permanently.

Finally, Sensuality brings the news that Man is now reconciled with Reason. Age has brought about this change of heart. Sensuality paints a new picture of Man; it is an emblematic one of an old man.

(1.953) Hys stomak fayntoth euery day
Hys bak croketh hys hed waxeth gray
Hys nose droppeth among
Hys lust ys gone and all hys lykyng
I se yt well by euery thyng
He may not lyue long
and all maketh age as I sayd byfore

Gluttony and Bodily Lust have left Man's service. Covetyse will stay a little longer without Reason's knowledge. Sensuality and Envy go to assemble their company to discuss the next move. They never re-appear.

Man enters in the company of Reason, who counsels him to look for the opposites of his sins as medicine for his wrong doing. He must work out his own salvation. If he shows sincere repentance, God will show him grace. The dignified metre of the beginning of the play has returned. Man's redemption is shown by the appearance of Meekness (to conquer Pride), then Charity (vs. Envy), Patience (vs. Wrath), Good Occupation (vs. Sloth), Liberality (vs. Covetyse), Abstinence (vs. Gluttony), Chastity (vs. Lechery). Finally Reason returns to announce to the audience that Man, who has left the stage in the company of Chastity and Abstinence, is on the road to redemption:

(1.1380) I here say / to my great ioy and gladnes
that accordyng / to my counsell and aduyse
thys mortall creature / doth well hys besynes
to correct and forsake / all hys old vyce
. . . .
Lo syrs / are not we all myche behold
to our maker / for thys great pacyence
Whyche not wythstandyng / our synnes manyfold
wherein we dayly / do to hym offence
yet of hys mercyfull / and great magnyfycence
He doth not punyshe / as sone as we offende
But suffereth in hope / that we wyll amend

Man, he says, has been to Repentance, who brought him to Confession, and there he became acquainted with Heart's Contrition. A whole new set of allegorical figures has been substituted for the old Vices. He is now the child of Salvation and with Perseverance he need not fear his spiritual enemy. Reason asks the audience to sing together and pray that they may rise above sin.

"Then they syng some goodly ballet"

x x x

Conclusion

The emphasis of the play is on life and not on death; on Man's reason and good intentions rather than on the grace of God. In spite of Reason's final speeches, a compromise has been struck with the World.

Man says to Liberality:

(l.1297) I trow ye wold haue me to gyue away all
and leue my selfe nought
Liberality: I mene not so parde
For that ye wast / and synfull prodygalyte
take the myd way / bytwyxt theym two
And fle thextremytees / how so euer thou do[1]

Man's life need not be austere, but he will have to present a reckoning of his life on earth, on this he shall be judged:

(l.1324) Thou shalt receyue / after thy deseruyng
Joy or elles payn / to endure euer more

In this play, therefore, a Prudential ethic is advanced rather than the doctrine of salvation through grace, which formed such an important part of The Castle of Perseverance and which gave the earlier Morality a greater humility of purpose and a greater sense of wonder. Man will be rewarded according to his life on earth with either damnation or salvation. God's mercy is shown in giving Man time to amend his life.

It seems probably that Nature was written for a performance at court, certainly in a noble house. We have already pointed out references to a courtly tradition of scholarship. Another play by Medwall is recorded as being presented at court over Christmas 1514.[2] Certainly the Morality genus has gained not only in scholarship, but also in topicality. The low life of London intrudes into the story and many of the characters are comic sketches of typical people living in London at that time. Brandl[3] writes that Medwall has changed "die streng moralische Haltung des Typus in eine mehr humanistische, die predigtmässige in eine mehr akademische." This is certainly true. But this new topicality, almost localisation of the Morality, together with a change in the attitude of the author and actors to the audience, has been achieved at the expense of the massive unity of the earlier Morality, where everything was subordinated to the earnest desire

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[1]Cf. Everyman, op.cit., p.115, who gives half his goods to the poor: "In alms half my good I will give with my hands twain."

[2]See E.K. Chambers, op.cit., p.443.

[3]A. Brandl, op.cit.,p.xliv.

to portray Man and his world in relation to God. The audience are no longer able to identify themselves fully with Man. They are watching the play and are amused at the comic scenes and impressed by the allegorical tableaux, but we can no longer say that they can see themselves in the character of the hero of the play.

With the localisation of Man and the topicality of many of his Vices has emerged a new attitude to the audience. They are there to be joked with, to be gulled and to be preached to, but they are no longer included in the action in the way that we showed this to be the case in The Castle of Perseverance. The hero has been lost in a welter of microcosmic humours who make up his personality, and the play sometimes falls into a series of emblematic tableaux where characters must have labels in order to show us the changing kaleidoscope of the mind of Man.

We have noted that the play needs no elaborate set stage. There are no scaffolds, no heaven or hell. The "place", however, is still unlocalised and although vivid pictures are sketched by Sensuality of the tavern which Mankind visits, and by Bodily Lust of the London stews, the only stage properties needed are the thrones used by World and by Nature, and perhaps another for Man, and also the clothes which Man wears so significantly. The play does not need a large cast; it is possible as Brandl has shown[1] to act it with five men and a boy. The Vices double later as the Virtues, and the boy plays Innocence as well as Pride's son. Innocence is always referred to as "she", yet Sensuality remarks when she leaves:

(1.657) Let hym go to the deuyll of hell
He ys but a boy I warn you well

It is therefore safe to assume that Nature was played by a company of touring actors. We have come far indeed from the Mystery Plays, sponsored and acted by local guilds, and the early Morality Plays, which toured the countryside like a travelling circus, to this city play with its courtly erudition, city jokes and city characters.

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[1] Brandl, op.cit., pp. xlv and xlvi.

It is obvious that there is a marked resemblance between Nature and The Castle of Perseverance. Nature still portrays the whole life of Man from birth to old age (but not death). Man is again born into a divided universe where Good and Evil Angels (now in the guise of Reason and Sensuality) contend for his soul and where the World, the Flesh and the Devil make his fall an almost foregone conclusion. He is also stricken with remorse at middle age and takes refuge in a castle (his own body, which he must defend from his enemies, the World, the Flesh and the Devil). He leaves this fortress of his own free will and is surrounded by the Seven Deadly Sins. Man is also dressed by the World in clothes suitable for life on earth. Covetousness is also the sin of his old age. Even in his final regeneration he clings longest to Covetousness. Like Humanun Genus, who realises his mistake on his deathbed, Man's regeneration is due not so much to his own will as to the failing powers of age when Bodily Lust, Gluttony and the other Vices desert him one by one. Yet, in spite of the apparent similarity between the plays, he does not experience the anguished disillusionment of Humanum Genus, but the dying away of all material and physical desires.

It is not, however, necessary to agree with Brandl: "Es ist daher anzunehmen, dass die gemeinsamen Züge dieser drei Stüke auf einem verlorenen Urbild von Mundus und den Todsünden beruhen, das ihnen allen vorschwebte".[1] In Chapter One we tried to show that all the themes and symbols in The Castle of Perseverance were traditional commonplaces of religious thought and that

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[1] Brandl, op.cit., p.xli. Brandl draws a comparison between these two plays and Mary Magdalene, op. cit. Written late (c.1480), the play falls into two distinct parts. In the first, the World, the Flesh and the Devil are introduced to the audience in the manner of The Castle of Perseverance and are accompanied by their appropriate Vices; the World by Pride and Covetousness; the Flesh by Lechery, Gluttony and Sloth; the Devil by Wrath and Envy. Mary Magdalene is accompanied by a Good and an Evil Angel. The Castle has been left to her on her father's death and is besieged by the Vices and the three great powers, but Lechery enters and persuades her to go with her to Jerusalem. On the way she meets Curiosity, a gallant, who is really Pride, and is corrupted by him. Sensuality appears as the World's messenger. The Good Angel persuades her to repent and seek forgiveness from Christ. From then on the play portrays the miracle of the raising of Lazarus and in the second part it is a pure Miracle Play, which enacts the story of Mary Magdalene's life after Christ's death and the miracles she herself performs.

the author need never have seen another play to have written it. Just as nothing in The Castle of Perseverance is original, its beauty and dignity lie in its unity of purpose and its unity of imagery. It is possibly foolish to speculate on whether these plays are derived from an earlier play or whether The Castle and Mary Magdalene influenced Nature. They are part of a common genre and draw on a common heritage, which had been used in all religious and homiletic literature for the past two hundred years. When the dramatist works in the allegorical, Morality tradition, characters like the World, the Flesh, the Devil, and the Seven Deadly Sins are bound to appear and, as the Morality develops, it is logical that more subtle characters should be invented such as Reason, Innocence and Sensuality. In the later Moralities the allegorical characters become even further removed from the simple sin-redemption pattern and are sinister allegorical forces of their own time such as "Cloaked Collusion" (Magnyfycence, c. 1515), "Sedition" (King John, c. 1536), or "Murder and Cruelty" (Cambyses, c. 1560). These plays will all be discussed in greater detail at the appropriate time.

Mundus et Infans[1]

Mundus et Infans, an anonymous play written between 1500 and 1506, is also in this tradition. In it we are shown the life of Man from birth to age, his compromise with the World, his acceptance of the Seven Deadly Sins, his repentance, his second lapse into sin and his final redemption. It is a less complicated play than the other Moralities on the same pattern. In the first place it is much shorter and can be played by only two actors as it is a series of soliloquies and dialogues. Secondly, it is not a learned play, nor does it make use of any complicated metrical structure.

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[1]"The World and The Child", (c. 1500), Six Anonymous Plays, ed. J.S. Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1905).
"Here Beginneth a Proper New Interlude of the World and The Child, otherwise called Mundus et Infans, and it showeth the Estate of Childhood and Manhood."

Original and unique copy in Trinity College, Dublin printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1522. There are no line reference in the edition used, therefore only page references will be given.

Yet, although it is written throughout in a primitive rhyme scheme (abab, cdcd etc., with a tail-rhyme stanza abbba), the verse is flexible and in its light movement looks forward to the Elizabethan lyrics rather than to the more stilted dramatic verse of the past. Like Nature it makes use of the dramatised metaphor, but the imagery of the play is more serious and in its undeflected moral direction and its unity of purpose it is closer to The Castle of Perseverance.[1]

The Story

The play opens with Mundus alone on the "stage". He is a crowned king, seated on a throne, holding a sceptre and an orb.[2] He "pomps" to the audience in a manner which has become conventional for his rôle. He calls the audience to attention. He boasts of his power; and commands them:

(p.163) Lo, here I sit seemly in se,
I command you all obedient be,
And with free will ye follow me.

The Child enters. He does not at first address the World, but explains himself to the audience: "Now, seemly sirs, behold on me ..." Like Humanum Genus (The Castle of Perseverance), he has been born naked into the world and must go to the World for help. He described his birth:

(p.164) Forty weeks I was freely fed
Within my mother's possession:
Full oft of death she was a-dread,
When that I should part her from:
Now into the world she hath me sent
Poor and naked as ye may see,
. . . .
Now into the world will I wend,
Some comfort of him for to crave.

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[1]Cf. Henry Noble MacCracken, "A Source of 'Mundus et Infans'", P.M.L.A., XXIII (1908), pp. 486-496. In this article the writer shows close textual parallels between Mundus et Infans and The Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life, op.cit. (c. 1430). In the poem Man sees his life in a dream. He is both actor and audience. As he grows older his name changes to suit his new state (as in Mundus et Infans). Many of the names given to Man in the poem correspond to the names given to Man in the play, but the poem does not have the double movement of sin-repentance - sin redemption which has become a feature of this kind of Morality Play. The simplicity of the rhyme scheme and the compression of the play can be attributed to the influence of the earlier poem. However it cannot be over-emphasised that this kind of plot was a literary commonplace of the time and that direct influence of one poem or play by another can never be ascertained.

[2]See title page of original printed manuscript reprinted in The World and The Child, op.cit., p. 161. The World is shown seated in a kind of a raised box, dressed in rich robes and crowned. The box itself is decorated and, although it is not very high, bears a resemblance to the description of the scaffolds by R.Southern, The Medieval Theatre in the Round, op.cit., pp.91 et.seq.

The two senses of World have been conflated into one, he has been born into the world and will crave comfort of "him".

The Child hails the crowned king and introduces himself as Dalliance. The World gives him "gay" clothes on condition that he is obedient to the World and re-names him "Wanton". When he is fourteen he must return to World. In the meanwhile: "All recklessness is kind for thee." (p.165).[1]

Wanton bids the World farewell and, moving across the acting area, describes, in a long monologue, the kind of child he is. He loves games, but he is unkind to other children and disobedient toward his parents. He steals fruit, plays truant from school, is thoroughly undisciplined and irresponsible. Although this is part of his own nature, "This cunning came to me of kind", he is also fulfilling the commandments of the World:

(p.166) But, sirs, when I was seven year of age,
I was sent to the world to take wage,
And this seven year I have been his page,
And kept his commandment.

He returns to the World when he is fourteen, an adolescent. The World gives him a new name, "Love-Lust and Liking". He is in the spring-time of life and looks forward to:

(p.166) All game and glee, and gladness,
All love-longing in lewdness.
This seven year forsake all sadness ...

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[1]The meaning of "kind" in this passage is, of course, natural, or of your own nature. Ramsay, op.cit., p. civi, writes:
"This dramatist, evidently an adherent of the doctrine of original sin, begins his play with Mankind on the side of the Vices, and so omits the first two stages" [i.e. Innocence, and Temptation]. I do not think this is necessarily the case, although a little later when he explains his undisciplined childhood he says: "This cunning came to me of kind," (p.166). The child evidently wants us to realise that the evil which he performs does not come from outside, but from his own nature, which is, of course, the belief of all the writers of Moralities. That the child is never innocent, but proceeds directly to the World could be attributed to the compression of the play to which we have already referred. The Child is born naked and poor into the World, he must inevitably come to terms with the World and do as the World wants. This is shown to us without any inner struggle on the part of the Child, but this does not mean that the Child is on the side of the Vices, he is shown being slowly dragged into sin in the same say as this is shown in other plays we have discussed.

At twenty-one years he returns to the World and is re-named "Manhood Mighty". The World asks him to serve the seven kings of the world, the Kings of Pride, Envy, Wrath, Covetyse, Sloth, Gluttony and Lechery. Man swears by Saint Thomas to serve the King of Pride. When he has said this, the World dresses him in "robes royal" and dubs him a knight. As they part, the World gives Manhood Mighty a sword and promises him strength and might in battle. This is a climax in the play. Both characters therefore speak in turn to the audience and boast of their powers. First the world "pomps":

(p.169) Lo, sirs, I am a prince perilous y-proved,
I-proved full perilous and pithily y-pight:
As a lord in each land I am beloved,
Mine eyen do shine as lantern bright.
I am a creature comely out of care,
Emperors and kings they kneel to my knee:
Every man is afeard, when I do on him stare,
For all merry middle earth maketh mention of me
. . . .
For I am richest in mine array,
I have knights and towers,
I have brightest ladies in bowers.
Now will I fare on these flowers:
Lordings, have good day.

This extract will, I hope, justify the assertion that the verse of the poem looks forward to the Elizabethans. The author uses the alliterative line to add weight and shape to the poem, the rhyme scheme consists of simple alternate rhymes with a short envoy or "bob-wheel" to round off the stanza in a graceful manner. Within this scheme we find conscious convolution of language ("perilous y-proved" and "I-proved full perilous") forming complicated patterns of sound, which is so characteristic of the early Elizabethan sonnetteers. When Manhood boasts to the audience the technique is repeated:

(p.170) And Manhood Mighty am I named in every country.
For Salerno and Samers, and Andaluse:
Calais, Kent and Cornwall have I conquered clean,
Picardy and Pontoise, and gentle Artois,
Florence, Flanders and France, and also Gascoigne.
. . . .
And the king of pride full prest with all his proud presence,
And the king of lechery lovely his letters hath me sent,
And the king of wrath full wordily with all his intent,
They will me maintain with main and all their might:
The king of covetise, and the king of gluttony,
The king of sloth, and the king of envy,
All those send me their livery.

The alliterative catalogue of names of places he has conquered batters our ears, and our imagination is caught by the sweep of his powers, much as Marlowe is later to use names piled on names to create the godlike powers of Tamburlaine. There is, however, a sudden shift in values which shows up the emptiness of Manhood's boasting. When Manhood has finished cataloguing the cities and provinces that he has conquered, he catalogues his victims in terms of human beings. Here we are not sure that what he has done is admirable: "For I have boldly blood full piteously dispilled". When he says: "Breastplates I have beaten, as Stephen was with stones," we have our first reference to Christianity and are now quite sure that Manhood is not on the side of the righteous. His final catalogue of the kings of the world who are his friends damns him outright. He is the servant of the Seven Deadly Sins and wears their livery (clothes again), so that the final boasting lines are tempered by our knowledge that he is deep in sin.

At his climax of bombastic boasting, Conscience appears. His speech is clear and simple, without schematic alliteration. His dress probably matches his speech, the sober garb of a friar. He prays to Christ, who paid for all our souls on the "rood-tree", to save all the "comely company". His speech is free of all latinisms and there is no attempt to poke fun at him. His earnest simplicity is touching:

(p.172) Wherefore I reed you men, both in earnest and in game,
Conscience that ye know,
For I know all the mysteries of man.
They be as simple as they can,
And in every company where I come
Conscience is out-cast:
All the world doth Conscience hate,
Mankind and Conscience been at debate ...

In his appeal to the audience, Conscience is universalising the action of the play to include us all. The structure of the play (with only two actors and therefore a series of dialogues interspersed by monologues, while the other actor changes for his next rôle) has made it imperative that the old moralising technique be used to the fullest extent. The audience is of necessity a part of the play. The actors must explain themselves to the audience and point the moral and when they

do this they draw the audience into the action. When Conscience says that he is unknown among men wherever he goes, he draws us, the audience, into his indictment. The movement from "all the world" to "Mankind" is a beautiful illustration of the true Morality shift between the hero (as seen on the stage) and what he represents (all of us on this earth) which was so apparent in The Castle of Perseverance and which seemed to have been lost in Nature.

Another facet of the play, which has not yet been discussed, is the relation between action and language. Here a metaphor is worked out in dramatic terms in the same manner as in Nature, but it is more integrated into the action so that it carries with it the significance we found in the scene between Penance and Humanum Genus, where the Vices who cluster round Man cannot protect him from the point of Penance's lance. This is not symbolism (like the castle or the roses in The Castle of Perseverance), but dramatised metaphor, which is closely connected with language and which is to become an important technique of the later Moralities. For example, immediately after Conscience says that Mankind and Conscience are always "at debate", Manhood rudely accosts Conscience and we can assume a certain amount of knockabout: Manhood calls him "harlot", "Bitched brothel" and boasts of his own knighthood, but Conscience does not know him, and his ignorance of Manhood's person is an indictment of Manhood. Conscience says:

(p.172) Sir, though the world have you to manhood brought,
To maintain manner ye were never taught;
No, Conscience clear, ye know right nought,
And this longeth to a knight.

When Conscience says that he leads people to the Light of Spirituality, Manhood, who would like to see the Light, replies that he would like to be taught by Conscience if Pride will permit this. Conscience replies that he must abjure Pride, Lechery, Sloth, Envy, Gluttony and Wrath. Manhood is horrified at this advice:

(p.175) For thou counsellest me from all gladness,
And would me set into all sadness;
But ere thou bring me in this madness,
The devil break thy neck!

Surely, he asks, Conscience will not counsel him from the king of Covetise.

Conscience replies that Manhood misunderstands Covetousness:

(p.175) No, sir, I will not you from covetise bring,
For covetise I clepe a king.
Sir, covetise is good doing
In good in all wise.

Manhood swears to follow Conscience. At this Conscience gives Manhood a shortened version in rhyme of the Ten Commandments and counsels him to go often to church: "For this longeth to a knight." Manhood is saddened: "What, Conscience, should I leave all game and glee?" Conscience, a man of a different age from the Virtues in The Castle of Perseverance, who preached abstinence and prayer, replies:

(p.176) Nay, Manhood, so not I the,
All mirth in measure is good for thee:
But, sir, measure is in all thing.[1]

Continuing his sermon, Conscience says that Man must keep himself from Folly, who is the incarnation of the Seven Deadly Sins.[2] He sums up his advice in the following words:

(p.177) In what occupation that ever ye be,
Alway, ere ye begin, think on the ending for blame.[3]

Manhood is left alone. He says he will follow Conscience and be his knight, but he is still loath to give up the World.

(p.178) But yet will I him not forsake,
For mankind he doth merry make:

At this moment Folly enters. He is the Vice of the play. We have already been told that he is the incarnation of the Seven Deadly Sins. His costume probably indicated this. While Conscience could be dressed as a friar, Folly was probably dressed in the multi-coloured costume of a gallant, but with grotesque touches to distinguish him from Pride who

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[1]This concept of "Measure" gives a new emphasis to the philosophy of the Good Life. One can enjoy the good things in the world if one's enjoyment is taken in "measure" and the Ten Commandments are not broken.

[2]Folly is to be the Vice of the play. We notice that both World's companions in The Castle of Perseverance have found a place in the play. They are Lust-liking (Man's name when he was an adolescent) and Folly. These two characters are minor ones in The Castle of Perseverance, but Folly is destined to become a main character in both The World and the Child and Magnyfycence. He stands, I believe, for a world in which true values are perverted through sin and is therefore the incarnation of the Seven Deadly Sins.

[3]Cf. The Castle of Perseverance, op.cit.:
(1.408) Man! þynke on þyn endynge day
Whanne þou shalt be closyd vnder clay!

was, as we have seen in Nature, dressed like a very fashionable gallant. Perhaps he was dressed like a travelling tinker, or like Antolycus in The Winter's Tale: "His garments are rich, but he wears them not handsomely", (IV, iv, 744).

After some coarse by-play, Folly describes himself to Manhood. He has dwelt in London in the stews: "There men and women did Folly," (p.181) and with the friars: "And they crowned Folly a king." (p.181). He is called both Folly and Shame. Manhood remembers Conscience's warning, but Folly replies that all Mankind cherishes him and if Manhood were to refuse his service: "The world right wrath will be." (p.181). This is the same argument the World uses in Nature to get rid of Innocence. Finally Manhood is persuaded to take Folly as his servant. Folly is overjoyed and brings him wine. To the audience he confides:

(p.182) Ah, ah, sirs, let the cat wink,
For all ye wot not what I think,
I shall draw him such a draught of drink,
That Conscience he shall away cast.[1]

Manhood agrees to go with Folly to the stews as long as Conscience knows nothing of their visit. He will change his name so that Conscience will not know he has gone and Folly renames him "Shame". They leave in a special order:

(p.184)
Manhood: Folly, go before, and teach me the way.
Folly: Come after, Shame, I thee pray,
And Conscience clear ye cast away.
Lo, sirs, this Folly teacheth aye:
. . . .
Folly before, and Shame behind.
Lo, sirs, thus fareth the world alway [Exit Folly]
Manhood: Now, I will follow Folly, for Folly is my man:
Yea, Folly is my fellow, and hath given me a name:
Conscience called me Manhood, Folly calleth me Shame.

While the names of the characters weave themselves into patterns of ideas, Folly leads the way, as he must, with Shame following him. Conscience, who accosts Shame as he is leaving, cannot stop him, but stays to drive the lesson home to the audience. He "frames" the action into a moral example:

(p.185) Lo, sirs, a great ensample you may see,
The frailness of mankind,
How oft he falleth in folly
Through temptation of the fiend:

[1]Cf. The Castle of Perseverance image of the bitter drink which Humanum Genus has brewed for himself through his deadly sin. See Chapter One.

Afraid the Mankind will be judged a sinner at Doomsday, Conscience goes to Perseverance for help. Man, now called Age, enters. He has lost all his riches and goods and is dressed in rags. Too late, he mourns his folly:

(p.187) Alas the day that I was born!
For body and soul I have forlorn.
I clang, as a clod in clay,
In London many a day;
At the passage I would play,
I thought to borrow and never pay.
. . . .
Alas, death, why lettest thou me live so long?
I wander as a wight in woe and care;
For I have done ill.
Now wend I will
My self to spill,
I care not whither nor where.

Man has fallen into the final sin, Despair. When Perseverance enters, Age relates his life history and calls himself Shame, but Perseverance renames him Repentance and shows him the way to redemption. He must confess his sins, he must think on the lives of the saints, on the spiritual five wits which are the powers of the soul; Clarity of mind, Charity, Imagination, Reason and Compassion, and on the Twelve Articles of Faith. Man, sincerely repentant, is now ready for salvation, and Perseverance bids the audience farewell:

(p.192) I take my leave of king and knight,
And I pray to Jesu, which has made us all,
Cover you with his mantle perpetual. Amen.

Conclusion.

In spite of the simple Morality structure of the play and its restriction to two actors,[1] the play is distinguished by its clarity and unity of purpose, and by its use of language. The progress of Man's soul is clearly shown by each successive name which he is given and by the symbolic action of the characters, especially in the scenes between the Child and the World and in the scene between Manhood and Folly. It is at times over-didactic for the mordern reader, but this very resemblance to a dramatised sermon gives the audience a chance to participate fully in the

[1]There are never more than two characters on the stage together and there is always time for the actor who is "off" to make a slight alteration in his dress for his new rôle. Nevertheless it would be less of a rush if there were three actors.

action which is presented. They are always told that this is <u>their</u> sin and that they are watching a character who is universal, themselves.

In spite of the almost doggerel rhyme scheme, the verse is usually delicate and flexible and in such phrases as, "I clang as a clod in clay", the play retains some of the moral seriousness, founded in the reality of death, which makes repentance an urgent necessity. With its small cast and few stage properties, it was obviously written for a travelling company and possibly for indoor performances even at court; Perseverance says: "I take my leave of king and knight."

Like <u>Nature</u> the play preaches a worldly ethic. It does not present Man's death nor his judgement and it advocates a compromise with the world which is shown in Conscience's insistence on "Measure". In the final scene, Age is dressed in rags, his poverty and destitution are a result of his folly and shame and he is on the point of taking his own life. Even here we notice a more worldly emphasis to the Christian ethic; sin is shown to have disastrous consequences in this world also. In spite of this new emphasis, however, the play is not as topical as <u>Nature</u>, nor does it refer directly to spesific evils of the time. This can be said of <u>Magnyfycence</u> which was a play written for young King Henry VIII by his old tutor, John Skelton.

<u>Magnyfycence</u> (c. 1515)[1]

Before we discuss <u>Magnyfycence</u>, a short summary of the plot is necessary. The play definitely belongs to this group of middle Moralities in spite of the fact that it is satirical in intention. Magnyfycence is not only a typical Renaissance prince, he also represents all mankind, and in the play we see his corruption by evil forces, his inevitable downfall and his "cure" (the metaphor is Skelton's) by Goodhope and Redress.[2]

The play opens with a debate between Wealthful Felicity and Liberty on whether Measure should rule them. This is the moral of the play.

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[1]John Skelton, <u>Magnyfycence</u>, ed. R.L. Ramsay (London, E.E.T.S., 1908).

[2]I shall try to show that although Magnyfycence is a king and could be identified as Henry VIII, he is also an example to everyone on how a man may be led by evil company and his own Fancy to Poverty and Despair.

The play no longer has as its centre the relationship of Man to God, but a definite worldly philosophy which can be traced back to Aristotle in the same way that many of the names of the characters are humanistic rather than homiletic in their origin.[1] Much later in the play, Liberty is to sum up the ethic of the play in these words:

(1.2101) For I am a vertue yf I be well vsed,
And I am a vyce where I am on abused.[2]

Magnyfycence enters. He is a prince, richly dressed, who is introduced to Wealth and Liberty by his servant, Measure. He says:

(1.173) Conuenyent persons for any prynce ryall.
Welthe with Lyberte, with me bothe dwell ye shall,
To the gydynge of my Measure you bothe commyttynge;
That Measure be mayster, vs semeth it is fyttynge.

After some argument from the unwilling Liberty, Measure is commanded to take him away to rule him.

At this moment Fancy insinuates himself in Magnyfycence's company. He calls himself "Largesse", and although he is pert and lewd, he allays Magnyfycence's suspicions by giving him a forged reference from Sad Circumspection. His free, licentious manner of speaking confirms the assertion made by Ramsay[3] that Fancy is a court fool and therefore allowed

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[1]For influence of Aristotle on Magnyfycence, see Ramsay, op.cit., p.xxxiii. I mean by "Humanistic" that they are derived from the ideas of classical antiquity and are part of renaissance thought rather than of the Morality teaching of the middle ages.

[2]Cf. Aristotle (quoted Ramsay, op.cit., p.xxxiv), Nichomachean Ethics, "It seems that there is another natural principle of the soul which is irrational and yet in a sense partakes of reason. For in a continent or incontinent person we praise the reason, and that part of the soul which possesses reason, as it exhorts men rightly and exhorts them to the best conduct. But it is clear that there is in them another principle which is naturally different from reason, and fights and contends against reason ... But it appears that this part too partakes of reason, as we have said; at all events in a continent person it obeys reason, while in a temperate or courageous person it is probably still more obedient as being absolutely harmonious with reason. It appears then that the irrational part of the soul is itself two-fold; for the vegetative faculty (i.e. that part of the soul which we share with all living things) does not participate at all in reason, but the faculty of desire or general concupiscence participates in it more or less, in so far as it is submissive and obedient to reason ... In the temperate man then the concupiscent element ought to live in harmony with the reason, as nobleness is the object of them both."

[3]For a discussion of Folly and Fancy see Ramsay, op.cit., p.xxxix et seq. and p.xcvii et seq.

to take liberties in his speech with his employer. He is a dwarf,[1] a "natural" fool,[2] and is dressed in a fool's costume.[3] He is the main Vice of the play. Allegorically he represents the depraved part of Magnyfycence's own nature. His antecedents are Lust-liking in The Castle of Perseverance and the two early stages for Man in The World and the Child, Wanton and Lust-liking. When Magnyfycence accepts Fancy as his adviser, he is on the road to ruin and it is not long before Fancy brings in his friends to help him get rid of Measure.

Although Fancy is part of Magnyfycence's own nature, his friends represent the sinister forces in society which beguile the unsuspecting ruler. They are introduced to us as,

Counterfeit Countenance:	alias Good Demeanance
Crafty Conveyance:	alias Sure Surveyance
Cloaked Collusion:	alias Sober Sadness
Courtly Abusion:	alias Lusty Pleasure.

Although they represent different evil forces and although Cloaked Collusion is perhaps their leader, they seem like a group of carrion birds and one would like them to be dressed in a fashion which would suggest this.[4] We have a reference to dress when we first meet

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[1]See (1.288)
Magn: What! I have aspyed ye are a carles page.
Fancy: By God, Sir, ye se but fewe wyse men of myn age.
and (1.522)
Counterfeit Countenance: A rebellyen agaynst Nature -
So large a man, and so lytell of stature!

[2]See Ramsay, op.cit., p.xlviii. See adjectives like, "Fancy Small-Brayne" (1.583), "frantyke Fansy" (1.1024), "feeble-fantastical" (1.1073). He is gulled by Folly (1.1103 ff.) into exchanging purses, "sight unseen", with the result that he loses all he has.

[3]Folly greets Fancy:
"What frantyke Fansy! in a foles case?" (1.1047).

[4]Ramsay, op.cit., suggests that the figures are derived from Skelton's earlier court satire Bowge of Court, which owed its inspiration to Barclay's, Ship of Fools (1509, tr. of Narren Schiff by Brant), see p.lxxviii et seq. Ramsay also suggests that all these four Vices are special aspects of Cardinal Wolsey's own character and that the portrayal of each Vice is directed in turn towards Wolsey. See p.cxii et seq.

the haughty Cloaked Collusion. There is something clerical about his attire and yet it is of an extravagant length.

(1.601)
Crafty Conv.: What is this he wereth? a cope?
Cloaked Coll.: Cappe, Syr? I say you be to bold.
Fancy: Se howe he is wrapped for the colde.
Is it not a vestment?
. . . .
Syr, and yf ye wolde not be wrothe -
Cloaked Coll.: What sayst?
Fancy: Here was to lytell clothe.
Cloaked Coll.: A, Fansy, Fansy, God send the brayne!

The Vices, although they are all friends, do not appear together, but are introduced one by one to Magnyfycence.[1] Finally Folly appears. He is also dressed in cap and bells and plays an instrument. He is not a "natural" fool, but someone who assumes the habit of a fool as his profession.[2] He represents a world in which all values are turned upside down. He will make Man forget all reasonable behaviour:

(1.1261) For with Foly so do I them lede,
That wyt he wantyth when he hath moste nede.

He represents what Mankind will finally become when he is ruled by Fancy. His antecedents are Folly in The Castle of Perseverance and in The World and the Child who was, as we know, the incarnation of the Seven Deadly Sins. He is an important character and we shall discuss him in detail later.

Under the influence of these new characters, Magnyfycence gives Largesse (Fancy) authority over Felicity (Wealth) and Liberty and the moral is pointed out explicitly: Magnyfycence says: "Syr, ye shall folowe myne and Appetyte and Intent" (1.1420). As a result, Measure has no longer any position of authority. Magnyfycence will act as his capricious Fancy guides him. He has now reached the height of delusion about his own grandeur. He thinks that he is impregnable, lord of all the world. None of the great heroes of the past, he believes, would dare to challenge him.

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[1]This is possibly due to a scarcity of actors. If we assume the usual cast of four men and a boy, the boy would play Fancy and some of the Vices would have to be played by the same actor. See Ramsay, op.cit., p.xlix.

[2]Crafty Conveyance acknowledges this:
(1.1213)
Crafty Conv.: And for a fole a man wolde hym take.
Folly: Nay, it is I that foles can make;

Courtly Abusion (Lusty Pleasure) introduces him to the sins of the flesh and encourages complete wilfulness in Magnyfycence. He is a prince and may always do just as he pleases. When he is displeased he must rage to get his own way:

(1.1595) What so euer ye do, folowe your owne Wyll,
Be it Reason or none, it shall not gretely skyll;
Be it ryght or wronge, by the aduyse of me,
Take your Pleasure and vse free Lyberte;
And yf you se eny thynge agaynst your mynde,
Then some occacyon or quarell ye must fynde,
And frowne it and face it, as thoughe ye wolde fyght;
Frete yourselfe for anger and for dyspyte,
Here no man what so euer they say,
But do as ye lyst and take your owne way.

Under pressure from Cloaked Collusion (who has deceived Measure into thinking he will be his advocate), Magnyfycence outlaws Measure from his sight. He is now persuaded by Cloaked Collusion to give up Largesse. He must be generous only to his friends, not to the world at large. He must learn deception:

(1.1761) Largesse in wordes, - for rewardes are but small;
To make fayre promyse, what are ye the worse?

Magnyfycence gives Cloaked Collusion the stewardship over Wealth, Liberty and Largesse. He has now given himself over completely to these carrion birds: "And suche as you wyll shall lacke no promocyon." (1.1789). At this stage Folly enters and gives Magnyfycence a picture of a world which is devoid of all order. He speaks in the nursery rhyme, apocryphal language of the fool:

(1.1823) The houndes ranne before, and the hare behynde.
I sawe a lòsell lede a lurden, and they were bothe blynde.
I sawe a sowter go to supper, or euer he had dynde.

Fancy enters in haste to bring the news that Liberty and Felicity have both gone. To his horror, Magnyfycence learns the real names of the people he considered his friends.

(1.1866)

Magn.: Why, is this the Largesse that I haue vsyd?
Fancy: Nay, it was your Fondnesse that ye have vsyd.

We have been told that Liberty and Felicity have left Magnyfycence, but now we are to see this on the stage in another form. Magnyfycence trembles as a new character enters: "Alas, who is yonder, that grymly lokys?" (1.1873). He is Adversity. Like Death in the older Moralities,

or Fate or the Furies in Greek drama, this character is part of Man's experience, but not part of the world. The Wheel of Fortune has turned and Magnyfycence who boasted that he feared nothing from Fortune is "Beten downe and spoylyd from all his goodys and rayment" (1.1875). Poverty becomes his companion and he is forced to beg for his living. He, who had been clothed in silk and expensive materials, is covered by Poverty and is "scabbed, scuruy, and lowsy" (1.2019). He is forced to beg from his erstwhile friends, but they have no use for him now. They bequeath him only tooth-ache, bone-ache, gout and sorrow and return to their greasy and carnal pleasures. This stripping of the hero of all his worldly status is, of course, part of the whole philosophy surrounding the picture of The Wheel of Fortune. We find it in Lydgate's The Fall of Princes and in the later English history, The Mirror of Magistrates. Although Fortune is capricious and deserts both the innocent and the guilty, Magnyfycence is morally responsible for his own downfall and in this visitation by Adversity he approaches the tragic hero who is forced to face up to his essential self in a tragic situation.[1]

But greater temptation is still to follow. Despair enters to tell him that he has nothing more to live for and that God will never show him mercy. Magnyfycence wishes himself dead and immediately Mischief enters with a knife and a halter to help him to murder himself.[2] Just as Magnyfycence is about to stab himself, Despair and Mischief reveal themselves in their panic to escape from a new character, Goodhope; they are devils. Despair cries: "Out harowe! hyll burneth! Where shall I me hyde?" (1.2324).

Goodhope counsels Magnyfycence to flee from Despair. Using the

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[1]We can compare here Everyman who loses everything he has, his Worldly Goods and Friendship as well as his bodily gifts (Strength, Beauty) in his confrontation with Death and is left with only his Good Deeds to accompany him to the grave. Later tragic heroes are also faced with the same situation, Faustus in his final hour is reduced to bargaining with everything he has believed in so passionately to put off his own death and Lear too loses everything which gave him power and importance.

[2]Cf. Dr Faustus, op.cit., Sc.xviii, 1.56, where Mephistophilis encourages him to take his own life.

image of God as a physician,[1] Goodhope describes himself as the apothecary; Magnyfycence is being punished for his sins, he has been "purged" by Poverty, he will be soothed by the "rubarbe of Repentaunce", the "drammes of Deuocyon" and the "gommes goostly of glad herte and mynde." God shows His grace by helping Man to prove himself through Adversity. Magnyfycence understands this (a measure of his new state of grace) and is willing to repent and ask forgiveness.

Redress enters with a blessing. He asks Goodhope: "Syr, is your pacyent any thynge amendyd?" (1.2387). When he is assured of Magnyfycence's true contrition, he tells him to stand up and clothes him in new clothes.[2] Redress says that Magnyfycence must first amend his "wanton excess" and restore order in his life and therefore in his kingdom. Magnyfycence is now a changed man and is willing to admit to Sad Circumspection that it is his own fault that he was beguiled by Fancy and Folly: "My wylfulness, Syr, excuse I ne can".(1.2432). He is told to beware of his former friends, and Perseverance enters to help him. Each solemn figure turns to him with advice for the future. Their voices form a choric comment on the moral that has been shown to us. Perseverance speaks first:

(1.2494) And euer let the Drede of God be in your syght,
And know your selfe mortal for all your Dygnyte;
. . . .
Set not all your affyaunce in Fortune full of gyle;
Remember this lyfe lastyth but a whyle.

When each figure has spoken, Magnyfycence accompanies Redress and the others back to his palace where Felicity and "noble sport" await him. Redress turns again to the audience with the final couplet:

(1.2566) And ye that haue harde thys dysporte and game,
Jhesus preserue you frome endlesse wo and shame.

x x x

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[1]The medical image was also used in <u>Nature</u> when Reason tells Man that each Vice may be "cured" by its opposite Virtue.

[2]These clothes are symbolic of a new state of grace, just as Everyman is clothed in the garment of sorrow, or Anima (<u>Wisdom who is Christ</u>) is re-clothed in all her former white raiment. But Magnyfycence is still a prince and he is soon to be re-instated, so he will probably be re-clothed in robes fitting to his "degree".

Conclusion

i) Morality or Satire?

In 1516 the young King Henry has been on the throne for seven years and his reign had marked the rise of Cardinal Wolsey. Skelton, who had been Henry's tutor, probably felt himself entitled to give advice to his former pupil and chose a Morality play as a vehicle for this advice. It is a Morality in which the hero is a prince[1] and the Vices (Cloaked Collusion, Courtly Abusion, Counterfeit Countenance etc.), are no longer the Seven Deadly Sins, but specific vices[2] known to the audience. Much of the topicality is lost to us, but it is surely possible that a clever actor could imitate mannerisms of both Wolsey and the other well-known personages at court. In the character 'Magnyfycence', many of Henry's virtues (his fun-loving nature, his good looks), must have been apparent, and his uncontrollable temper is made a feature of the play.

Nevertheless Magnyfycence remains a Morality for many reasons. Although the play is undeniably satirical, it remains universal, as its hero, in spite of being a prince (perhaps ever our own Prince Henry!), is much more a man like other men, a representative of all mankind, than he is of a specific rank of position. The playwright, in true Morality tradition, is always pointing this out to the audience; Adversity says:

(1.1896) Lo, Syrs, thus I handell them all
That folowe theyr Fansyes in Foly to fall;
Man or woman, of what estate they be,
I counsayle them beware of Aduersyte.

This point is emphasised in the final choric epilogue, where each character sums up the moral in a couplet which is repeated at the end of each stanza, like the chorus to s song; Perseverance's couplet has in its

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[1]In the primitive fragment, c. 1400, Pride of Life the main protagonist is also a king.

[2]The scene where Measure is betrayed by Cloaked Collusion, whom he believes is pleading for him, is the kind of vignette which shows a definite relationship with what must have been happening at the time.

second appearance a significant change. In the first verse it runs:

(1.2538) To day a lorde, to morrowe ly in the duste;
Thus in the worlde there is no erthly truste.

in the second stanza the refrain runs:

(1.2545) To day a <u>man</u>, to morrowe he lyeth in the duste;
Thus in this worlde there is no erthly truste.
[underlining mine]

The Morality atmosphere is re-inforced by the "placelessness" of the action. It takes place somewhere outside the palace and there are no stage properties - apart from clothing and Folly's musical instrument. Magnyfycence's princeliness is therefore not enhanced by any of the trappings of a court and this also serves to make him more like other men.

ii) <u>The Concept "Measure"</u>

We noticed in <u>The World and the Child</u> that the Aristotelian principle of "Measure" had shifted the emphasis of the Morality ethic. Manhood says:

(1.176) What, Conscience, should I leave all game and glee?
Conscience: Nay, Manhood so mot I the,
All mirth in measure is good for thee:
But, sir, measure is in all thing.

In <u>Magnyfycence</u> this principle is developed even further. Magnyfycence has Measure as his chief adviser, and it is his rejection of Measure that leads to his downfall. Just as in <u>Nature</u>, Reason was to guide Man's Sensuality, so in this play, Measure is to restrain both Man's Wealthful Felicity and his Liberty. The Greek principle of moderation is the philosophy of the play and when Man pursues his capricious Fancy, he plays into the hands of all the courtly Vices who are part of the world in which he lives.

iii) <u>Fortune</u>

For the first time, the idea of Fortune makes it appearance in a Morality Play. It was, of course, widely accepted as a way of explaining sudden changes in material happiness; especially in the wealthy or powerful. Biographies of great men (like <u>The Fall of Princes</u>) were written to show Fortune in action and this was not always an act of retribution, it could also be a trick played by Fortune on the happy,

succesful man. It was generally accepted that there is an uncertainty in life which can bring a man from the height of power and riches to the depth of poverty and unhappiness.[1] In Magnyfycence the moral is linked to this idea of Fortune, Fickle Fortune is described in the final choric comment on the play:

(1.2520) This lyfe inconstant for to beholde and se:
Sodenly auaunsyd, and sodenly subdude,
Sodenly Ryches, and sodenly Pouerte;
Sodenly Comfort, and sodenly Aduersyte;
Sodenly thus Fortune can bothe smyle and frowne,
Sodenly set vp, and sodenly cast downe.

However, in spite of its apparent novelty in the form, the figure Adversity, is linked with the Morality tradition. We remember in the earlier Moralities how Man's life was ended by death and his fear was for his judgement after death:

"Man! þynke on þyn endynge day" (Castle of Perseverance, 1.408),

"Alway, ere ye begin, think on the ending for blame" (Mundus et Infans, p.177).

Magnyfycence, who boasts of his power and invulnerability:

(1.1459) Fortune to her lawys can not a abandune me;
But I shall of Fortune rule the reyne,
I feel nothynge of Fortune's perlexyte,

is nevertheless visited by Adversity. This grim figure calls himself

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[1]I must emphasise that the idea of Fortune was by no means novel, it is only a newcomer to the Morality drama. Boethius, translated by Chaucer, makes Fortune say: "I torne the whirlynge wheel with the turnynge sercle; I am glad to chaungen the loweste to the heyeste, and the heyeste to the loweste. /The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robinson (London: Oxford University Press), Bk.II, Prosa 2, 11.56-60./

Dante too writes about Fortune:

For her your science finds no measuring-rods;
She in her realm provides, maintains, makes laws,
And judges, as do in theirs the other gods.

Her permutations never know truce nor pause;
Necessity lends her speed, so swift in fame
Men come and go, and cause succeeds to cause.

Lo! this is she that hath so curst a name
Even from those that should give praise to her -
Luck, whom men senselessly revile and blame;

But she is blissful and she does not hear;
She, with the other primal creatures, gay
Tastes her own blessedness, and turns her sphere.

/Hell: op.cit., Canto VII, 11.85-96./

"The Stroke of God". He is God's retribution for sin. Death, in The Castle of Perseverance, is another awful figure; people are afraid to talk about him:

(1.2790) My name in londe is lefte a-lone:
I hatte "drery Dethe".

However Death does not call himself an instrument of God,[1] he is an impersonal power who is incorruptible and who comes to all, regardless of virtue or vice, riches or poverty, "a-geyns me is no defens ..." (1.2815). In comparison, Skelton's Adversity seems to be a combination of the earlier figure of Death and the classical Fate and is closely linked with the idea of Fortune. When Magnyfycence bemoans the loss of all his worldly goods he cries: "O feble Fortune, O doulfull Destyny", (1.2048), yet even in this speech the strange marriage of the Christian and classical ethic is apparent. Man follows up his first lament with an Ubi Sunt in the Christian tradition, which is the rejection of temporal for spiritual values:

(1.2055) Where is nowe my Welth and my noble estate?
Where is nowe my treasure, my landes and my rent?
Where is nowe all my seruauntys that I had here a late?
. . . .
Where is nowe all my Pleasure and my worldly good?

and his final couplet in this scene puts the responsibility for his destruction squarely on his own shoulders. In spite of the topicality of the story and is very real connection with the court politics of the time, Magnyfycence knows, as we all do, that the allegorical level of the play is more important than the satirical:

(1.2062) Alasse my Foly! alasse my wanton Wyll!
I may no more speke tyll I haue wept my fyll.

iv) Language

The language of the play makes sophisticated use of patterned speech. To emphasise the mutability of the world the "good" characters moralise in language which is repetitious and in which the words, in their formal pattern, give an aesthetic distance from the story and "frame" the

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[1]Although in Everyman, Death is called God's "Messenger" (op.cit., p.95).

moral. Characters speak in "figures" in which words are repeated in a different order by each speaker and form a counterpoint to the speech which has just been made. These formal patterns can underline the tragedy of a situation, like an echo that sighs back the essential sadness of a sentence. When Magnyfycence is told by Fancy that he has lost both Wealth and Liberty, he exclaims:

(1.1865)
Magnyfycence: Why, is this the Largesse that I haue vsyd?
Fancy: Nay, it was your Fondnesse that ye haue vsyd.

The reader is bewildered by the wealth of metrical devices which Skelton uses. Metrical patterns change almost with each scene, and in each pattern the character and action is assimilated into the movement of the verse. The following examples must suffice:

Counterfeit Countenance talks in a villianous doggerel verse which must have been a joy to the audience:

(1.466) Counterfet prechynge, and beleue the contrary;
Counterfet conscyence, peuysshe pope holy;
Counterfet Sadnesse, with delynge full madly;
Counterfet Holyness is called Ypocrysy;

Cloaked Collusion speaks in an uneasy alliterative verse which is regular enough to establish a pattern, but which never quite satisfies this pattern:

(1.719) I flatered them with fables fayre before theyr face,
And tolde all the Myschyef I coude behynde theyr backe,
And made as I had knowen nothynge of the case, -
I wolde begyn all myschyef, but I wolde bere no lacke.

Courtly Abusion, the dandy, speaks in an elegant, tripping, mannered verse:

(1.856) Abusyon
Forsothe I hyght;
Confusyon
Shall on hym lyght
By day or by nyght
That vseth me -
He can not thee.

When Magnyfycence reaches the height of his pride and sinfulness he vaunts himself in heroic alliterative cadences:

(1.1494) Hercules the herdy, with his stobburne clobbyd mase,
That made Cerberus to cache, the cur dogge of hell,
And Thesius, that prowde was Pluto to face, -
It wolde not become them with me for to mell;
For of all barones bolde I bere the bell;
Of all doughty I am doughtyest duke as I deme.

Still in the alliterative tradition, but with a rhyme scheme that has nothing heroic about it, Despair addresses Magnyfycence:

(1.2291) What! lyest thou there lyngrynge, lewdly and lothsome?
It is too late nowe thy synnys to repent.
Thou hast bene so waywarde, so wranglyng and so wrothsome ...

v) Folly

Folly is the most interesting character in the play. He is the court jester, who has license to speak the truth at all times. He stands for the kind of perverted values which Magnyfycence has finally embraced and his language evokes a topsy-turvy world where logic no longer exists. He foretells Magnyfycence's ruin:

(1.1613) And, Syr, as I was comynge to you hyder
I saw a fox sucke on a kowes ydder;
And with a lyme rodde I toke them bothe togyder.
I trowe it be a frost, for the way is slydder;
Se, for God auowe, for colde as I chydder.
Magnyfycence: Thy wordes hang togyder as fethers in the wynde.
Folly: A, Syr, tolde I not you howe I dyd fynde
A knaue and a carle, and all of one kynde?
I sawe a wethercocke wagge with the wynde!
Grete meruayle I had, and mused in my mynde.

The scene is full of overtones of tragedy. Magnyfycence is soon to be exposed to this cold weather. Later Folly says:

(1.1829) I shall gyue you a gaude of a goslynge that I gaue,
The gander and the gose bothe grasynge on one graue;
Than Rowlands the roue ran, and I began to raue,
And with a brystell of a bore his berde dyd I shaue.

In this allusive language (Skelton was later to use similar "nonsense" in "Speak Parrot"), the speech, laden with fear and unease, prepares us for the dreadful news that is to come and gives us the reason for that news. Magnyfycence and his world have become infected by disorder, where a knave and a churl are indistinguishable and nothing is predictable.

vi) The Allegory

When Magnyfycence is portrayed with his good and evil councellors and is forced to acknowledge the importance of Measure in all things, we seem to see a shift in the application of the Christian ethic. It is true to say of all the plays in this group that God does not brood over the plays as he does over the earlier Moralities. Nevertheless, Magnyfycence's sin and redemption are still seen in allegorical, Morality terms. We have already pointed out how the allegorical level breaks through the superficial story when Magnyfycence takes on himself the

blame for his poverty and misery instead of blaming Fancy and his evil counsellors. Unlike Adversity, who is a hybrid figure, Poverty is in the true Morality tradition, he is the state of poverty, the essence of Poverty, an abstract idea manifest in physical reality. In the allegorical tradition, ideas follow the logic of the man who is suffering; Despair says: "Dyspare is my name, that Aduersyte dothe followe" (1.2284) and he is accompanied by Mischief. Goodhope, arriving just in time, is told by Magnyfycence:

> (1.2331) Alas, Syr! so I am lapped in aduersyte
> That Dyspayre well nighe had myscheued me;

This is a development in the Morality which was noticed both in Nature and in The World and the Child. Action on the stage is used to dramatise in visual terms the psychological and spiritual concepts which are described by the language. This dramatic allegory largely replaces the imagery based on Christian concepts which formed the basis of the earlier drama.

In the earlier Morality it was impossible to think of sin, redemption and death without remembering Christ and His suffering on the cross. He cried: "I thirst", and meant his thirsting for man's eternal soul. He was given a bitter drink, as bitter as the drink which Mankind brews for himself when he gives in to evil forces. As with all biblical allegory, the suffering of Christ was interpreted as the suffering of Christ for each individual soul. Each sinner made Christ suffer on the cross and each sinner received His blood as a sacrifice for his sins. Christ's suffering and His harrowing of Hell were not events which had happened in history; they were eternally present and the earlier Moralities showed this in their language and symbolism. The middle Moralities however substitute dramatic allegory or dramatised metaphor for most of the deeper anagogical meaning of the earlier drama. They substitute a patterned language and conscious use of words and metaphors for the archetypal symbols and imagery they no longer use.

Summary

In our study of these plays we find that, although they are all in the Morality tradition and make use of the conventions of Moralities like

The Castle of Perseverance, they show interesting changes in attitude and staging.

A. Change in Staging

These plays seem to have been written for indoor performances and have all been written for a small cast, of, at the most, five men and a boy. The cast is the size of a small touring company and the plays could have been performed either at noble houses or at court. There is no elaborate staging, at the most "thrones" are provided for the main characters, and much use is made of clothes as symbols of a spiritual change and as symbols of the kind of abstract Vice or Virtue the characters represent, e.g. Conscience in The World and the Child is dressed as a friar; Cloaked Collusion in Magnyfycence is dressed in a very long cloak with very little underneath it. Characters carry various stage properties with them; Folly in Magnyfycence plays an instrument, and the same character in The World and the Child gives Manhood a glass of wine. There is, therefore, no attempt to portray a particular place, the action could be taking place anywhere near London.

It is apparent however that these plays assume a familiarity in their audience with the taverns and "stews" of London, and they are all topical in the sense that they refer to specific places and vices of the period. In Nature this is particularly apparent, but in both the other plays the erring hero is introduced to the sins of the city by the Vices. Magnyfycence, in addition, is dependent on the audience's ability to recognise in the characters a reference to the famous personalities of the time. It is in its intention satirical, although it does draw a general moral lesson from the action it portrays.

B. Change in Language

As the authors have been unable to rely on processions or pitched battles, or any massed crowd scenes, they have begun to rely more on language, which although it has become less stilted, has also become more formal and more rhetorical. The archetypal images and symbols, especially the symbols for Christ and His passion, and direct references to death and decay have been replaced by clever manipulation of word patterns and

significant changes in metrical and rhythmic structure. The most significant change, however, is the increasing tendency to dramatise metaphors in the action on the stage. Words and actions are combined in a dramatic allegory, the purpose of which is to express in action and language, simultaneously, such moral truths as, "Shame Follows Folly", "Despair will make you do Mischief to yourself", or "In Age your Bodily Lust will leave you." Symbols become emblems because they lack a deeply felt belief which will raise them from the superficial to the siginificant.

C. Change in Attitude.

These plays are governed by a Prudential ethic. They are not rooted in a belief in the grace and mercy of God and a deep gratitude for His sacrifice, and have therefore lost the sublimity of the earlier plays in which action and language combined give us the one great "Message". Nevertheless they are still plays which teach and preach a moral lesson. They still portray the battle of the Vices and the Virtues for the soul of Man and they still show Man, an innocent, born into a world in which material values are considered more important than spiritual ones. In these plays Man is allowed to compromise with the World, that is inevitable, but he must remember that he will be judged by his deeds on earth and that he must act with moderation and Reason. In all these plays Man repents before he dies so that God's mercy is shown in so far as He gives Man opportunity for repentance. Man is struck down by Age or Adversity, realizes his sins and is led back to God by such characters as Reason, Conscience or Goodhope.

D. Change in Allegory

In addition to the concentration of these plays on the dramatic representation of metaphors used in the allegory, they show a change in their portrayal of the Vices. Although Covetyse was the main Vice figure in The Castle of Perseverance, he was accompanied by such awful figures as the World, the Flesh and the Devil and could not be called the Vice of the play, i.e. he does not epitomise in himself the totality of Evil. Because these plays are shorter than The Castle of Perseverance, the great supernatural figures are largely cut out of the action. Only the World appears in The World and the Child and in Nature; in Magnyfycence

he too is absent. A new character emerges from these plays; he is not yet called The Vice in the list of characters, but he epitomises Evil and has an absolute influence for Evil; He is Worldly Affection in Nature, Folly in The World and the Child and Folly and Fancy in Magnyfycence. He is an abstract character, representing all the evil Vices in a new rôle. Folly (who had appeared in The Castle of Perseverance) stands in The World and the Child for the incarnation of all the Seven Deadly Sins; in Magnyfycence he stands for the perversion of all just and decent values. This character will appear in later Moralities. It is not possible, however, to agree with Spivack that his only descendants are the Machiavellian characters like Richard III and Iago etc.[1] The Witches in Macbeth and the Fool in King Lear stand in close relation to this character and any analysis of their rôles must take the earlier Vice into account. We shall return to this point when discussing the heroic Moralities.

Another important change in the portrayal of the Vices will become an integral part of the later Moralities. We noticed in The Castle of Perseverance an implicit faith in the interdependence of appearance and reality. In these later plays the evil characters disguise themselves by giving each other acceptable worldly names: Pride in Nature appears as Worship; Folly in Magnyfycence is called Consayte or Wit, Imagination; Courtly Abusion is called Lusty Pleasure; Fancy appears with a forged testimonial from Sad Circumspection. While in the earlier Moralities the issues were clear-cut and Man had a straight choice between Good and Evil, in these plays he is often duped into sin by characters who seem to present a reasonable worldly ethic, but are in reality Deadly Sins. They do not yet disguise themselves, a change in name seems sufficient for their purpose, but in later Moralities much of the action is written towards "unmasking" the evil characters and stripping them of their disguises.

x x x

[1]See Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare the Allegory of Evil (London: O.U.P., 1958).

Because the Morality has lost the sublimity of the earlier great Moralities, the representation of moral truths often degenerates into the factitious representation of moral truisms. This becomes increasingly evident in the later Moralities. Nevertheless these plays pave the way for a new kind of drama, which, although cast in the Morality framework, has little to do with the problems of the early Morality. Skelton has shown, with success, the possibilities of the Morality for satire. It is with such uses of the Morality that we shall be concerned in the next chapter, rather than with plays which remain predominantly vehicles for the representation of moral clichés.

CHAPTER THREE

The Morality and the Reformation: a Discussion of John Bale's "Three Laws" and Nathaniel Woodes's "The Conflict of Conscience".

Mundus et Infans is the last Morality Play which tries to portray the life of man from birth to old age. In the Sixteenth Century the Morality Play developed in various ways. Interludes on moral subjects continued to be written and plays such as Like Will to Like[1] or Trial of Treasure[2] enact moral precepts such as "Virtue is a Treasure", or "Inclination must be shackled by a Just Man in order that he may live a Good Life." One of the last of this type of play, Liberality and Prodigality,[3] was performed before Queen Elizabeth herself. These plays are mainly comic, and although the allegory is always interesting (the Twentieth Century reader delights in characters called Consolation or Greedy-gut) they are dramatically a dead end. Even the school plays, like John Redford's Wit and Science,[4] in which Wit is misled by Ignorance and Idleness from the true pursuit of knowledge, charming as they are, deserve to be called Interludes as they are far

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[1]Like Will to Like, c. 1562-1568 by Ulpian Fulwell. "An interlude intitled 'Like Will to Like quoth the Devil to the Collier', very godly and full of pleasant mirth. Wherein is declared not only what punishment followeth those that will rather follow licentious living, than to esteem and follow good counsel: and what great benefits and commodities they receive that apply them unto virtuous living and good exercises."
The Dramatic Writing of Ulpial Fulwell, ed. John S.Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1906).

[2]Trial of Treasure, c.1567.
"A new and mery Enterlude, called the Triall of Treasure, newly set foorth, and naver before this tyme imprinted."
A Select Collection of Old English Plays, ed. W.C.Hazlitt (London:1874), Vol III.

[3]Liberality and Prodigality, c. 1567-1568: "A pleasant Comedie, shewing the contention between Liberalitie and Prodigalitie. As it was playd before her Maiestie..."
A Select Collection of Old English Plays, op.cit., Vol VIII.

[4]Wit and Science, c. 1536-46, John Redford.
Recently Recovered "Lost" Tudor Plays with Some Others, ed. J.S.Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1907).

removed from the urgent questions which face mankind and which are the stuff of great drama.

The Morality Play received a new impetus and a new direction when it was used as a vehicle for the expression of deeply felt convictions in the religious struggles of the Sixteenth Century. We have already seen in Skelton's Magnyfycence how characters like Crafty Conveyances and Cloaked Collusion became linked with persons and parties at Henry VIII's Court. Once the tradition of the battle of the Virtues and the Vices for the soul of man had been established, this pattern could be used to discredit any contemporary movement.

In Respublica[1] an anti-Protestant play the Vices are:

Avarice: alias Policy, the Vice of the Play
Insolence: alias Authority, the Chief Gallant
Oppression: alias Reformation, another Gallant
Adulation: alias Honesty, the third Gallant

These four deceive the unhappy Respublica (a widow) into letting them ruin the country, and People (the common citizen) is both despoiled and tyrannised by them. Eventually Mercy, Truth, Justice and Peace come to set the State in order and the villains are tried by Nemesis (Queen Mary?), who tempers Justice with Mercy and restores England to "th' old good estate". In this kind of play the contemporary scene is analysed allegorically and traditional Morality characters are used to illustrate and influence the most burning issues of the time.

John Bale

On the other side in the reformation struggle was John Bale, (sometimes called Bilious Bale), who wrote and performed plays with Lord Cromwell's men and was exiled as early as 1540 for his extreme views. From the list of his works, of which only five survive, it is obvious that he was concerned, not only in showing up the evils of the Roman Catholic

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[1]Respublica: "A Merry Interlude, Entitled Respublica, Made in the Year of our Lord 1553, and the First Year of the Most Prosperous Reign of our Most Gracious Sovereign Queen Mary the First", Recently Recovered "Lost" Tudor Plays with Some Others, ed. J.S.Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1907).

Church but also in writing what could be called Protestant Mystery Plays. The Mystery Plays had by this time become suspect in Puritan circles because they were termed "Popish"[1] and Bale may well have been attempting to provide plays to take their place. In writing The Temptation of Our Lord or John the Baptist he uses a sermon technique which draws the moral from the story:

> (p.149) If ye do penance, do such as John doth counsel;
> Forsake your old life, and to the true faith apply.
> Wash away all filth, and follow Christ's Gospel.
> The justice of men is but an hypocrisy;
> A work without faith, an outward vainglory.[2]

Bale's work is interesting, not only because he is a writer of brilliant invective doggerel, but also because he shows a very rare appreciation of dramatic form and technique. Another play, The Chief Promises of God unto Man[3] is an adaptation of the Prophet plays. There are seven acts and each act is a dialogue between God and some of the great Old Testament figures. He speaks in turn to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah and John and each act follows the same pattern. God is angry with Man, but the prophet pleads for and defends Man. After some debate, God promises future redemption for sinful Man. The prophet then praises God and sings in His praise and this praise is taken up by the choir and organ at the end of each act. Significantly, the music sung at the end of each act is the Antiphon, taken from the Magnificat sung on the seven days before Christmas Eve. Each Antiphon was written for one of those seven days and is proper for only that day of the church year. Bale establishes a liturgical pattern (each act follows the same movement;

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[1] See H.C.Gardiner, Mysteries End: An investigation into the last days of the Medieval Religious Stage (Yale studies in English: Yale Univ. Press, 1946).

[2] The Dramatic Writings of John Bale, ed. J.S.Farmer (London: Early English Dramatists, 1907)

All references must, of necessity, be page references as the lines are not marked. This applies to all plays both in the Early English Dramatists series and in A Select Collection of Old English Plays, ed. W.C.Hazlitt, op cit.

[3] The Chief Promises of God unto Man," The Dramatic Writings of John Bale , op. cit.

attack, defence, debate, promise, praise and Antiphon), and builds up the tension by using religious music closely associated with the Christmas season. In the seventh act, when God speaks to John the Baptist, Christ is very near, and we hear the Antiphon normally sung on the day before Christmas Eve. It is as if pre-Christian History is merged with present time in this new creation, the play.[1]

1.

The Three Laws[2]

Bale constructs his Morality Play, A Comedy concernynge thre lawes of nature, Moses and Christ, corrupted by the Sodomytes, Pharysees and Papystes, with the same symmetry and careful pattern.

The Story

Act I

This Act has a static quality, the figures stand like a group in a pageant and speak at the audience rather than at each other. God summons His three laws, but He is no longer the impressive figure with the golden beard whom we find in the Mystery Plays. He says:

(p.4) I am Deus Pater, a substance invisible,
All one with the Son, and the Holy Ghost in essence.
To angel and man I am incomprehensible;
A strength infinite, a righteousness, a prudence,
A mercy, a goodness, a truth, a life, a sapience.

God instructs the three laws to guide Mankind to live a life most pleasing to Him and most like His own life. Although they appear separate they are really only one law. Man is given three laws, because he will not understand the one law, just as he does not understand the Trinity which is,"Distinct in person, and one in the deity." (p.6).

He explains that the law of Nature is Man's conscience, his own

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[1]See E.S.Miller, "The Antiphons in Bale's Cycle of Christ", Studies in Philology, XLVII (1951), p.629.

[2]The Dramatic Writings of John Bale, op.cit.

conviction of what is right and wrong. After the fall of Man, the age of innocence was past, and the time of exile began. This time consisted of three periods; the periods from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham and from Abraham to Moses. The law of Nature lives in the heart of Man and as a sign (or emblem) of his function he is given a heart by God.

The second law, the law of Moses, represents the laws given by God to Mankind. After the time of exile came the time of punishment and this time too was divided into three periods; from Moses to David, from David to the exile of the Jews, and from the exile to Christ. He will live, says Deus Pater:

> (p.8) With such hard rulers as will the people compel
> Our minds to fulfil, without vain gauds or fables.

As an emblem of his function he is given the hard stony tables, on which are written the inviolable laws of God.

The law of Christ is the final and greatest law which will continue until the end of the world. He will dwell with the faithful and takes as his emblem the New Testament, which is a token of God's promise that: "They that believe it shall live for evermore," (p.8).

Finally God gives them His blessing:

> (p.9) Thou, law of Nature, instruct him first of all;
> Thou, law of Moses, correct him for his fall;
> And thou, law of Christ, give him a godly mind;
> Raise him unto grace, and save him from the fiend;

Although these three laws seem to have been sent to Man at different periods in time, according to the history of God's revelation to him, the play has both an historical and an allegorical meaning. Mankind needs all these three laws, which are one law of the good life, "Our laws are all one ...." Bale is thus making use of the generally accepted mediaeval concept that the story of Man's sin and redemption is repeated in the life of each man, the microcosm, so that Christ dies for each sinner in turn and each man is responsible for His death. This point will become clear when we discuss specific speeches in the play, where the allegorical meaning is clearly stated alongside the historical meaning.

In this act we have a tableau in which God, invisible, speaks to

the static figures of the three laws. One is struck by the pictorial quality of the scene. Each law carries an emblem which conveys to the audience the nature of the law, and his place in the history of Mankind. The three figures are like a sculptured frieze on a cathedral doorway, or part of a pageant set up in the streets to impress a visiting monarch. Later, when the Vices appear, and each law is corrupted by them, it is possible that the action takes place on the foreground and that God continues to watch the action from an unseen height. In this way the corruption of God's laws forms a worldly commentary on God's merciful concern for Mankind, adding a satiric overtone to the action. This method reminds one of the Rederyke stage, with which Bale was perhaps familiar,[1] where pictures were shown to the audience and a commentary spoken about them.

Act II

In this act Infidelity corrupts the law of Nature. We have no directions for Infidelity's costume, but he is called the son of the Pope in other anti-Catholic plays[2] and he has all the conversational overtones of a priest, but a scurrilous one; he swears by St Antony, St Stephen and the Blessed Book. He describes the Law of Nature as an old man with a beard (p.11). Naturae Lex meets Infidelity and, on finding out who he is, leaves the stage in horror. This gives Infidelity time to call up Sodomy and Idolatry, "kitchen slaves of the Devil" to help him corrupt Naturae Lex.

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[1]Dutch and German "Latin" plays were well known in Britain, and Bale himself said that his King John was a translation and an adaptation of Naogeorgus's (Thomas Kirchmayer) Anti-Christ play, Pammachius. See Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p.368.
See also for the Rederyke stage: G.R.Kernodle, From Art to Theatre (3rd impr; Univ. of Chicago Press: 1947).

[2]Cf. "King Darius", Quellen des Weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare, ed. A.Brandl, op. cit., p.390. ll.770-780 and l.788.
In this play the Vice, Iniquity, says he is the son of the Pope.

We know the costumes of these two characters because they are given in a stage direction at the beginning of the play which reads: "Let Idolatry be decked like an old witch, Sodomy like a monk of all sects", (p.1). Idolatry is obviously played by a man and bawdy jokes are made about this in the play, while Sodomy's costume was probably a conglomeration of the colours and girdles of all the Roman Catholic orders. Infidelity remarks on this:

(p.23) The fellow is well decked,
Disguised, and well necked,
Both knavebald and piepicked:
He lacketh nothing but bells.

It is not only Sodomy's costume, however, which links them to the Roman Catholic Church. Idolatry boasts that her charms and witchcraft have been adopted by the Pardoner and the church, so that the church has become steeped in this shallow and filthy witchcraft:

(p.20) Give onions to Saint Cutlake,
And garlic to Saint Cyriac
If you will shun the headache-
. . . .
A dram of a sheep's turdle,
And good Saint Francis's girdle,
With the am'let of an hurdle,
Are wholesome for the pip.

Sodomy, in his turn, asserts that the clergy at Rome have fallen into his vice. As he enumerates his successes, Infidelity explains appreciatively: "Marry! thou art the devil himself!"(p.23).

Armed with relics, beads and a stool to hear confessions, they set out, Sodomy to corrupt Man's body (God's image) and Idolatory to pervert his soul. In a high voice Infidelity chants in Latin:
(p.25, tr. note p.343)

Almighty and Everlasting God, who has formed the laity in our image and likeness; grant, we beseech thee, that as we live by their labour, so by their wives, their daughters, and their maid-servants we may obtain perpetual delight. Through our lord the Pope.

When this blasphemous prayer dies away and the two have left the acting area, Infidelity gloats over the work that they will do in the world. He already has news of the way in which the whole world is being infected by their vicious sins:

(p.25) The law of Nature they will
Infect, corrupt, and spill
With their abomination;
. . . .
These two will him so use,
Each one in their abuse,
And wrap him in such evil
That, by their wicked cast,
He shall be, at the last,
A morsel for the devil.

When Infidelity has left the acting area, Naturae Lex enters. The pure, holy man is now diseased by leprosy. He tells the audience about the beastly practices which Sodomy has taught the clergy; Mankind has been perverted by Idolatry from loving God; the Pope is "Master of Gomor and of Sodom". Naturae Lex is powerless against this general corruption and can only pray to God to pity him and to restore him to his former position in Man's heart when He brings about a new heaven,and a new earth.

Nothing has been said in this last act about"The years of transgression" or "The time of exile". The action takes place at the time when the play was written and the Vices (sic) are the Vices of the time. The pure old man who seemed so powerful and so dignified has been afflicted by a foul and filthy disease, which is a result of the foul and filthy practices of the Church. When the Vices speak, their talk is always of filthy acts or relics, "Rags, rotten bones, and sticks"; words such as " infect corrupt and spill", "filthiness", "abominably" recur in the filthy tales they tell of Popish corruption and bestial living. We have been prepared for the spectacle of the leprosy-stricken Naturae Lex by the filthy stories and language with which the Vices plotted his downfall. Just as the emblems that each law carried were tokens of their place and kind, so the disease with which Naturae Lex is stricken is a token of the filthiness with which the pure heart has been infected. The disease of his body reflects a similar disease of the pure faith and love of God which is the natural law for Mankind.

We are not allowed to forget that we are watching an allegory. Naturae Lex has been diseased, but his disease is a result of Mankind's falling into sin and it is Mankind who must be saved by God. Naturae Lex says:

(p.27) With man have I been which hath me thus defiled
With idolatry and unclean sodomy;
And worthy I am from God to be exiled.
Pity me yet, Lord! of Thy most bounteous mercy...

The play's hero is still Everyman or Mankind. Although he is an unseen hero, yet it is his actions which bring about the tragic change in Naturae Lex and it is his fate which lends urgency to the question of whether God will save him from the fiendish Pope and his "whorish kingdom", so that he may remember that he is created in the image of God and live according to His holy law.

It is obvious, therefore, that the audience have been accepted as part of the play, they are necessarily <u>there</u> and their presence inhibits Sodomy from making love to Idolatry, or provokes Infidelity into teasing Idolatry about her sex. When Naturae Lex enters at the end of the act he speaks directly to the audience:

(p.26) I think ye marvel to see such alteration,
At this time, in me whom God left here so pure!
Of me it cometh not, but of man's operation;
Whom, daily, the devil to great sin doth allure;
And his nature is full brittle and unsure.

This is the sermon technique, in which the allegory is explained directly to the audience and the moral is drawn from the action. Mankind remains the focal point of the play and the abstract law of Nature becomes a diseased old man, pleading mercy in terms of the allegory.

<u>Act III</u>

Act III follows the same pattern as Act II. When God saw His natural law corrupted, he sent the law of Moses, a law "of rigour and of hardness" to correct Mankind and to punish the unjust and those who are not obedient to God. Once again Moses Lex meets Infidelity and leaves the stage hurriedly to fetch judges and kings to subdue him. In his absence, Infidelity calls up two more of his devil children to destroy Moses Lex. They are Avarice, who is dressed, "like a pharisee or spiritual lawyer," and Ambition, "like a bishop," (p.1). These two Vices are not as clearly differentiated as Idolatry and Sodomy. They are sins of the world and will make the church a worldly church which aims merely at worldly gain for money or for power. They will deceive all Mankind, regardless of the consequences, so long as they may profit

by Mankind's fall:

(p.36) We lead them in the dark,
. . . .
And laugh full merrily
To see such company
Run headlong to the devil.

In the same way that the Philistines left Abraham's pits unclean with mud and mire, Ambition will hide the purity of God's law and the key of knowledge to that law (the Bible) with "filthy glosses and dirty expositions." Avarice will spread a veil,

(p.40) ...upon the face of Moses,
That none shall perceive the clearness of his countenance:

Then Ambition explains how he will make the Ten Commandments meaningless:

(p.40) Whereas God doth say, No strange Gods thou shalt have:
With saints worshipping that clause we will deprave;
And though He command to make no carved image,
For a good intent yet will we have pilgrimage.
. . . .
No Sabbath will we with God's word sanctify,
But with lip labour, and idle ceremony.

Avarice explains that they will drown the laws with Superstition, Sophistry, Philosophy and Logic. The priests will never be allowed to think:

(p.41) Let them have long matins, long evensongs, and long masses;
And that will make them as dull as ever were asses.

The sermons must all be in Latin so that the common people will know nothing of Christ or of Paul. In fact Avarice will make them a new creed in English, which will bring much money to the church

(p.42) First, they shall believe in our holy father Pope;
Next, in his decrees, and holy decretals;
. . . .
In purgatory then, in pardons and in trentals,
. . . .
They shall believe also in relics and religion,
In Our Lady's Psalter, in free will and good works;
In the ember days, and in the Pope's remission.

Infidelity enthusiastically welcomes this new creed and shouts that they will burn those who do not believe in it: "That into the ditch the blind the blind may lead." (p.43).

When Infidelity is left alone, he assures the audience that Ambition and Covetousness have so obscured God's Holy Law that:

(p.46) On the face of Moses
A veil have they cast; doubtless
The light of the law to hide.
Lest men to Christ should come ....

When Infidelity leaves the acting area, Moses Lex enters. He is now a pitiful, blind cripple. He, who was sent to guide men to Christ, is now so blind that he is unable to fulfil his function:

(p.47) Ye Christian princes! God hath given you the power,
With sceptre and sword all vices to correct.
Let not Ambition, nor Covetousness devour
Your faithful subjects, nor your offices infect.
. . . .
God gave me to man, and left me in tables of stone,
That I, of hardness, a law should specify;
But the Pharisees corrupted me anon,
And took from me clean the quiverness of body,
With clearness of sight, and other pleasures many.

In this brilliant third act the fall of Moses Lex is foretold throughout in language which is a perfect foil for the events which take place. In an allegory such as this, where the action is static and is either described or seen to have taken place, the author depends largely on visual and verbal patterns to re-inforce his meaning. The hard law of Moses is uncompromising and is shown to be so by his pronouncements and by the stony tables he carries, but the Vices know that if this law can be obscured by them, Mankind will be at their mercy. In the allegory, Moses Lex is blinded by the Vices and is unable to see and judge Mankind. On another level the law itself is obscured and Man is blind because he is unable to understand or read the law. Without the guidance of the law, he is on a headlong course towards damnation. Avarice, with his mock learning, will lead the people to the devil. He will spread a veil over the face of Moses, so that none may see <u>his</u> countenance (i.e. know the law). In the same way, Ambition, with his filthy glosses will hide the key of knowledge (the Bible) from Mankind. Moses's blindness, therefore, symbolises both the blindness of Mankind and the impotence of the law. Once again the action takes place at all periods in time. These Vices are the proud and avaricious Sadducees and Pharisees who crucified Christ, but they are also the clergy of Rome in the Sixteenth Century. Mankind, as always, is left to seek blindly for salvation in a society cruelly controlled by greedy and unscrupulous priests: "That into the ditch the blind the blind may lead." (p.43).

Act IV

Evangelium, or Christ's Gospel now enters in a final bid to save Mankind. "Unfaithfulness /Infidelity/ hath corrupted every law," but the Gospel promises full forgiveness in the blood of Christ. Although he is a sinner, Man may be saved by love of Christ alone.

However, Infidelity has made a home for himself in the world, while Evangelium, Christ's Gospel, has become a stranger to the world. Evangelium realises this and, turning to the audience, he delivers a stern message:

> (p.52) But this first will I say, before this audience.
> Easier will it be, concerning punishment,
> To Sodom and Gomor, in the day of judgment,
> Than to those cities that resist the verity
> At the suggestions of Infidelity.

Evangelium is speaking to all Mankind. Although they have been misled by Infidelity and his Vices (the church), they are not exonerated from blame; for those who do not profit from God's word, "No prayer remaineth, nor expiation for sin," (p.53). With this solemn warning, Evengelium leaves the acting area and Infidelity is left alone.

Infidelity calls up two more children, False Doctrine, dressed "like a Popish doctor," and Hypocrisy, "like a grey friar." (p.1). He informs them that the people begin to rebel and compare the clergy to dogs and swine:

> (p.58) Thine order, they say, is sprung even out of hell,
> And all this knowledge, they have now of the Gospel.

Pseudodoctrine and Hypocrisy determine to destroy the Gospel (Evangelium). Just as they pursued Christ, tried to discredit Him, and finally had Him put to death, so they will destroy the Gospel for fear that he will deprive them of their livelihood: "Better one were lost than we should perish all," (p.59).

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[1]Cf. St John, Chapter 11, v. 49 and 50.

49) And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all.

50) Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

When Evangelium re-enters, Infidelity escapes, muttering: "Ha! it is the Gospel; from him God us defend," (p.61). From this point in the act, the action resembles the trials, interrogations and histories about which one reads in Foxe's Book of Matyrs.[1] Christ's Gospel will be called an heretic and burned, but first False Doctrine and Hypocrisy must trap him in "heresy".

When Evangelium announces that although he has no authority from Pope or Bishop, he was sent by God to "preach before this company", because "God's word never taketh his authority of man," (p.61), False Doctrine forbids him to preach. Hypocrisy adds that this is a feast day and there will be a procession with "the blessed Rood", incense, mass, holy water, holy bread, etc. Evangelium asks quietly whether God has commanded any of this, but he is told to leave them alone: "Canst thou say but they are good significations?" (p.62).

Evangelium damns these ceremonies. God never commanded them and the church holds them merely to make money. He is incensed by their "mangy mutterings", their "beggary", their Latin services:

(p.63) Why then prefer ye your draffish ceremonies
To the Gospel preaching? O damnable injuries!

Hypocrisy and Pseudodoctrine prepare to drive Evangelium away, but Infidelity enters with a pardon that must be read and indulgences from the Pope. False Doctrine gives him permission to read the pardon, but Hypocrisy argues that it is his day to speak on his brotherhood. Evangelium asks who will preach the Gospel, but False Doctrine replies angrily: "I would thy Gospel and thou were both now in hell!" (p.63). Infidelity begins to sell his relics and pardons and Pseudodoctrine and Hypocrisy crowd round to buy bells and letters from him.

At this moment Evangelium stands up to preach against them:

(p.64) Woe, hypocrites, woe! for here ye trifle and mock
With Christian people, and the kingdom of heaven uplock.
Ye count it a game to lose that Christ hath bought
With His precious blood, and here most dearly sought.
O, ye are wretches, and pestilent Antichrists,
Ministers of Dagon, and most deceitful papists!
. . . .

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[1] John Foxe (c.1516-1587), The Acts and Monuments of the Church; containing the History and Sufferings of the Matyrs (London: Fullarton, 1850).

Woe, Pharisees, woe! ye make clean outwardly,
But inwards ye are full of coveteousness and baudry.

As a result of this speech, False Doctrine arrests Evangelium for an heretic and they deprive him of his clothes and dress him in rags. They demand that if he does not abjure his faith, he will be burnt. Evangelium replies calmly:

(p.66) Though you, for my sake, imprison men cruelly,
Famish them, stock them, and them with faggots fry,
Hurt me ye shall not, for I can never die;
And they, for my sake, shall live perpetually.

In spite of this speech, False Doctrine and Hypocrisy take Evangelium out to burn him and Infidelity is left alone In the tradition of the Vices in the Morality Plays, he gloats gleefully over "this gear". He feels he has done good work in bringing the three laws to their dreadful ends and that he will be able to live happily on earth for evermore. He is suddenly in a tavern. He calls for the hostess to fill all the pots and send his lover to him:

(p.67) The law of Nature I kest first in a lepry,
By the secret help of idolatry and sodomy.
The law of Moses I made a cripple blind;
Avarice and Ambition, to help me, were not behind.
And now Christ's law I have burnt for heresy,
By help of false doctrine, and my cousin Hypocrisy.
On these same three laws all other laws depend,
And cannot prevail, now these are at an end.

In Acts II, III and IV, Bale establishes a pattern for the drama. Each law meets Infidelity and then retires from the acting area. This gives Infidelity a chance to summon the appropriate Vices, and these Vices, unseen by the audience, corrupt the law. In Acts II and III this corruption is seen only in its consequences, but in Act IV there is a variation in this pattern. Evangelium attacks the Vices publicly and is taken to be burnt as an heretic; he is not corrupted by them. In this act, Evangelium emerges not only as Christ's Gospel, but also as a type of every reformer of the church of God. In Act III, Infidelity says that those people who do not believe in Avarice's new "creed" shall be burnt, leaving the people without a leader: "the blind the blind may lead". In Act IV, Evangelium _is_ such a reformer and the Protestant doctrine is a cornerstone of Evangelium's law. The Protestant contention that man is saved by faith alone is stated as Evangelium's main message to Mankind:

"Such a power of God as saved all that believe," (p.47). Christ's church is not the established church, but an invisible, living church consisting of all true believers in all countries. Evangelium's resemblance to the early reformers is emphasized when Infidelity sets up a typical outdoor pulpit to persuade the people that they should buy Indulgences and relics, and it is from this pulpit that Evangelium denounces the Vices for whited sepulchres, just as the reformers preached openly against the old established church.

Act V

Infidelity is still enjoying himself at the tavern when Vindicta Dei appears to him. Like Adversity in Magnyfycence, he is sent by God to punish the wicked. The innocent matyrs cry for revenge on Infidelity. For Sodomy and Idolatry (children of Infidelity), God drowned the world and so Infidelity will be punished by water. The stage direction reads: "His Infidelitatem lympha percutit," (p.70), translated by note: "Here he souses Infidelity with water", (p.345).

Infidelity is undeterred by this sousing and irrepressibly declares that after the flood he found a place to stay in Cham and continued, although Moses's law had come. Vindicta Dei announces that Moses's law was destroyed by Avarice and Ambition and for a punishment the Israelites were banished by the sword. Here he strikes Infidelity with a sword.

Infidelity remains undeterred. He was still present in Judas when Christ preached and now he is with the Antichrists, the Papists. Vindicta Dei says that the blood of the innocents calls continually for revenge on False Doctrine and Hypocrisy and he drives Infidelity from the stage with fire. Infidelity is sure where he is going: "To the devil of hell, by the mass! I ween I go." (p.71).

Now the disembodied Deus Pater speaks to His laws and to the faithful Christians. He has established a new heaven in Man's faith, a new earth in Man's understanding and a new Jerusalem in a new and faithful church. The laws step forward to the throne of God. The law of Nature is purified anew and retains the heart as an emblem of his place and function. Moses Lex is commanded to take the veil

from his face and his body is healed; his tables are still a token that the law shall continue for ever. God exiles all Hypocrisy and False Doctrine from the law of the Gospel and restores it as the salvation of Mankind. The three laws praise God and sing to His glory.

Now that the "great whore of Babylon" is destroyed, Christian Faith is appointed to govern the congregation according to the three laws. Each law speaks in turn on what the effect of obedience to him shall be:

(p.76) Nat Lex: The effect of me is for to know the Lord

. . . .

Moses Lex: The effect of me is for to worship the Lord

. . . .

Christi Lex: The effect of me is for to love the Lord...

Christian Faith appeals to the audience:

(p.77) Good Christian people! to these three laws apply:
First know that ye have a living God above;
Then do Him honour, and His name magnify;
Worship Him in spirit, as the Gospel you doth move;
Then obey your king, like as shall you behove,
For he, in his life, that Lord doth represent.

Finally, Moses Lex tells us that Henry VIII has restored the three laws, banished Idolatry, Sodomy, Avarice, Ambition, False Doctrine and Hypocrisy from the land, and brought Christ's Truth to light. Christi Lex repeats this message and Christian Faith prays for Henry and Katherine that they and the nobles may bring the nation to Christ.

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Although the texture of the verse is crude, John Bale is surely a master of invective doggerel. The rhymes and rhythm are vigorous and comic and he does not spare us from all the filthy stories that he knows. The play is a masterpiece of propaganda in which, by an unscrupulous use of all the most scandalous gossip, a clever manipulation of allegory, together with a great deal of historical juggling, he has managed to discredit the Roman Catholic Church and makes us welcome Henry VIII as the guardian of Christ's gospel!

In spite of the risk of repetition, it is necessary to point out the use Bale makes of the various levels of allegory and try to show how he has utilised history, allegory and metaphor to re-inforce his message.

A. The Historical level of the Allegory

The different ages in which God sent His different laws are clearly defined in Act I and Act V. Infidelity is punished according to the punishment meted out by God in each separate period in time; the flood destroyed those who disobeyed Nature's law, so Infidelity is punished by water; the exile by the sword punished those who destroyed Moses's law, so Infidelity is punished by the sword; finally, Infidelity is destroyed by fire just as the earth will be consumed by fire on the Day of Judgment:

> (p.71) ....for the wickedness of thee
> The earth to ashes by fire shall turned be.

However, this large span from Creation to the Day of Judgment is too unwieldly to be pressed too far. It is the formal "frame" for the allegory and lends the play an archetypal quality which is important. God cannot be used as anti-Catholic propaganda. He appears only in the first and last acts which refer specifically to this larger "frame", but He lends weight and dignity to the play, without which it would become cheap and scurrilous.

B. Another Aspect of the Historical Level

Another reason why the historical level cannot be pressed too far is because the sins which Infidelity engenders are palpably Sixteenth Century sins of the established church. The Vices are dressed like monks and friars and they talk in detail about the corruption of their church. In this way, Bale connects the church with Infidelity, shows up the malpractices of the church at that time and associates these with the long history of Infidelity in the Bible. The confusion of time sequences is most apparent in Act IV. Here False Doctrine and Hypocrisy plan to destroy Christ's Gospel just as they destroyed Christ. Evangelium, who, without permission of the Bishop and without ordination by the Bishop, has been sent by God to preach the way of salvation to Mankind, denounces the "Antichrists", the "Ministers of Dagon" and "Pharisees" and is led away to be burned but not before he has promised perpetual life to all those who are matyred for His sake.

In this sequence Bale has managed to link all the evil figures and false religions in the Bible to the Roman Catholic Church and has

juxtaposed them to another linked complex of names; Christ and His preaching, the New Testament, and the reformers.[1] He has brought the whole history of the Old and New Testaments on to the side of the reformers and, although Infidelity is left to pomp and boast at the end of Act IV, we know that Evangelium has stated that he can never be destroyed, and therefore that God must now interfere on the side of Mankind against the oppressors of the laws of God.

Finally Infidelity is punished both for his historical rôle and for the sins of the world of that time. Both levels are here merged into one and Henry VIII is seen as God's divine monarch appointed as guardian of the true faith. The action becomes weighted and solemn and is seen as a culminating act of God, after a long history of sin and corruption of God's law.

C. The Allegorical Level

On the allegorical level, Infidelity maims, blinds and infects the laws of God and on this level, Bale makes much use of static emblematic devices. The first two laws do not act, they merely are what they seem to be and are transformed, in their absence, into the leprosy-diseased Naturae Lex and the blind cripple, Moses Lex. When they re-appear on the stage, they cry for pity, and show us, the audience, what Unfaithfulness has done to them.

This pageant-like drama is enriched by a language which makes interesting use of repetition and thematic imagery and which, to a large extent, compensates for the lack of action. Each act contains a thread of metaphors and repeated phrases. In the second act we are made aware of all kinds of diseases; words like "rotten", "filthy", "corrupt", etc. appear in abundance. They are part of the sin of Idolatry and Sodomy, but they also foreshadow the diseased Naturae Lex. In the third act blindness recurs as a metaphor for ignorance, and the Vices reiterate

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[1]Evangelium is spoiled of his garments and dressed in rags, surely an oblique reference to Christ.

phrases like "A veil will I spread upon the face of Moses", "And into the ditch the blind the blind may lead." Moses Lex is indeed blinded and his eyes are covered. This thread of repeated images and adjectives dominates the language of each act and explains in advance the complex emblematic changes which are about to take place.

D. The Moral Application

The subject of the play was deeply felt by the author who was determined to preach to his audience in the manner of a sermon. For this reason, the audience play, once again, an important part in the play. We have mentioned that Mankind (the audience) is the unseen protagonist of the play. He is the reason for God's concern and it is his sin which blinds and maims the laws of God. Finally, in Act IV, the audience are included in the play, they are transformed into a group of townspeople who are urged by Infidelity to buy indulgences and warned by Evangelium that the unfaithful will be lost for ever. This urgency of purpose and appeal to the common man was perhaps something we missed in the factitious court plays that we discussed in the last chapter. The audience have been restored (if only briefly) to their former rôle and the play is about a burning contemporary issue rather than a stale "momento mori," enlivened only by amusing sketches of local characters.

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The Religious Moralities (or perhaps it would be better to call them the Controversial Moralities) took one type of Morality plot, i.e. the conflict of the Vices and the Virtues, and identified the Vices with the people whom they wished to discredit. A tradition had already also been established (although it is not used to any extent in Three Laws) that the Vices would disguise themselves as ordinary and good citizens. Characters changed their names and their dress and were not what they appeared to be. Under the Cloak of Policy, the deluded Respublica[1] might find the bags of Avarice. In The Satyre of the Three

[1] Respublica, c. 1553, op cit.

Estaitis, the Friar's habit could conceal Flattery, and the Prioress, under her clothes, "Is turnit in ane cowclink" [prostitute],[1] while the three prelates are shown up when stripped of their habits as "bot verie fuillis".[2]

It is, perhaps, because the truth could be so easily disguised that symbolic action was needed to show up the characters to the audience and to those people in the play who would correct Vice and promote Good. This can be seen as a new development in the Morality technique if we compare it to The Castle of Perseverance where the symbolism was direct and archetypal. For example, a stage direction in The Satyre of the Three Estaitis reads: "Heir sall the thre estatis cum fra the palzeoun; gangand backwart, led be thair vyces".[3] Unaware that they are doing anything extraordinary, they say: "Wee think wee gang richt wonder plesantly",[4] but John the Commonwealth, who has suffered under their misrule is quick to blame his state on this very cause:

> Quat mervell thocht the threi estatis backwart gang?
> Quhen sic an vyle cumpanie dwels thame amang;
> Quhilk hes reulit this rout mony deir dayis,
> Quhilk gars Johne the common-weill want his warme clais:[5]

Bale's King John[6] uses a similar technique when the Vices, Dissimulation and Sedition, dispute with Private Wealth on who should "bring in" the next character, Usurped Power, and who should carry whom.

(p.209) Us.Power: Why, fellow Sedition! What wilt thou have me do?

Sedit: To bear me on thy back, and bring me in also,
That it may be said that, first, Dissimulation
Brought in Private Wealth to every Christian nation!
And that Private Wealth brought in Usurped Power;
And he Sedition, in city, town, and tower:
That some man may know the fetch of all our sort.

Us.Power: Come on thy ways, then that thou mayest make thee fort.
Dissim: Nay, Usurped Power, we shall bear him all three,
Thyself, he and I, if ye will be ruled by me -
For there is none of us but in him hath a stroke.

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1 The Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay, op.cit., II,104.
2 Ibid, II, 108.
3 Ibid, II, 28.
4 Ibid, II, 32.
5 Ibid, II, 37.
6 The Dramatic Writings of John Bale , op. cit., p.171.

Later in the play Commonality is presented as blind, "For want of knowledge in Christ's lively verity." (p.243).[1]

It is possible, therefore, to find, in all these Controversial Moralities, a growing distrust of the outer reality and a use of symbolic action or costume by which the inner struggle or pain or evil is mirrored or revealed.

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The Conflict of Conscience[2]

The last example of this kind of play, The Conflict of Conscience, mixes real historical characters with allegorical ones. Although it does not go so far as to identify the real characters with the allegorical ones (cf King John, Appendix), they are shown as existing together in the world. The play is based on an event which had taken place in Venice about 1545. Francis Spira, a wealthy lawyer, had been charged with heresy, but had recanted and was fined thirty ducats. Tormented by his conscience, he died soon afterwards, probably by his own hand. Aware that he had betrayed God and Christ, he felt that he was not one of the elect and that redemption through Christ's death was not for him. He is quoted as saying:

> But herein am I tormented: this is my hell, this is my confusion and desperation, that I knowe al grace to be taken from me, that I feele my heart hardened that I cannot believe in or hope anything at al of thatonement and mercy of God...but so that I could conceive

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[1]Although E.M.W.Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), largely discounts the influence of King John on the History plays and therefore on Elizabethan Tragedy, it nevertheless is possible to see King John as a milestone in English drama. For this reason, although it is outside the scope of this dissertation, a brief discussion of the play is included in the Appendix.

[2]Nathaniel Woodes, "The Conflict of Conscience", A Select Collection of Old English Plays, ed. W.C.Hazlitt (London: 1874), Vol. VI. Unfortunately in this text no lines are marked and it is therefore only possible to give page references.

> never so lytle hope or trust of the mercy of God: I would most gladly chose to live ten thousand yeres and more, in all the paynes and tormentes of hell, for that at length I myghte hope for some ende.[1]

His case became a "Cause celebre", great scholars came to dispute with him and four of these wrote about their personal experiences at the bedside of Spira. These were published in 1549-1550, at Basel, with a preface by Calvin and a discussion of the case by Martin Borrhaus, and translated into English around 1570, where the book ran into two editions. Lily Bess Campbell writes that Spira became known as "an archetype of the man who having abjured the God in whom he believed, fell into the sin of despair and was doomed."

It is difficult to understand why C.F.Tucker Brooke should call The Conflict of Conscience, the "last, dullest and most inept of Tudor moral interludes."[2] Not only is it based on a most dramatic story, but it's hero's obvious affinity to Dr Faustus should fascinate any reader. The first three acts are perhaps dull, but the play gains momentum as the anguish of the main character increases. It is possible to say that this play, showing as it does a conflict within a character, is a milestone in the history of English Drama.

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The Story

The Prologue tells us that we are about to see a presentation of a true story of a man who almost lost his eternal salvation because he was overfond of the riches of this world. The author hoped, he continues, to make this story a universal one, and therefore he gave the hero a pseudonym, Philologus. As Philologus means nothing else than a

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[1] Lily Bess Campbell, "Dr Faustus: A Case for Conscience", P.M.L.A., LXVII (1952), p.226.
See also for a discussion of the Spira story and its relation to the play:
Celesta Wine, "Nathaniel Wood's [sic] 'Conflict of Conscience'", P.M.L.A., L(1935), pp 661-678.

[2] See Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), p.382.

man who loves to talk, and as we are also men who love talking, this play will be a lesson to us all and if the audience take it as such, the author will feel that he has achieved his aim. This speech by the Prologue places the play directly in the Morality tradition. The play is written for a universal moral purpose and the hero is still said to be Everyman, in that this could happen to any one of us if we are not careful to make the right moral choices. The play is a conflict between Conscience and the Flesh, resolved only by the grace of God.

Act I and Act II

Acts I and II set the stage for Philologue's temptation and, (like Bale) present to us a carefully linked set of characters, i.e. the church, the Vices and the Devil. Satan himself opens the action and tells us that he loves the Pope and explains how the Pope is his spiritual heir. This scene is important in order that we may realize the enormity of Philologus's sin when he recognises the Roman Catholic Church as the true church in spite of the promptings of his conscience. Satan has two champions, Avarice and Tyranny, but they are being threatened by people who wish to destroy him and therefore he sends Hypocrisy to help them.

After a great deal of knockabout and crude farce, Hypocrisy tells Avarice and Tyranny how they may gain power in this world. The Pope and he have devised a plan to destroy all truly religious people. Cardinals have been appointed to set up courts,

> (p.61) To see if with Avarice they may win the laity ;
> If not, then to threaten them with open Tyranny:
> Whereby doubt not but many will forsake
> The truth of the gospel, and our parties take.

In order that he shall not be recognised, they re-name Tyranny, Zeal. Tyranny comments on his new rôle: "Though they call me Zeal, they shall feel my Tyranny." (p.62). They dress him "handsomely", perhaps as a Doctor of Divinity, for Hypocrisy says: "Now to the devil's grace you me seem to give counsel." (p.62). Avarice is renamed Careful Provision, i.e. the kind of scruple which makes a man feel that he must provide for his own home before he gives anything away

and must not do anything which would jeopardise the security of his family. His money-bags will be covered by a cloak so that his true nature will not be discovered.

Throughout these two acts we meet Philologus only once. In Act I, scene ii, he and his friend Mathetes discuss briefly the purpose of suffering, and whether it is possible to distinguish between the wrath and the love of God. It is obvious that they are earnest students of theology, but it is also obvious (and the Prologue has already warned us of this fact), that their discussion is abstract and academic and has not the urgency of matyrs, who would witness for God's truth. They decide that suffering brings out the better qualities in man and is given to us by God to test our constancy and to show His power and is not always a punishment for sin. These conclusions form another ironic comment on Philologus's later refusal to accept suffering.

Except for this short scene, however, these two acts are taken up entirely by the Vices and are a general attack on the church and on society. When Avarice fears that he and Tyranny will be exposed by the reformers, Tyranny re-assures him that Hypocrisy has come to help them and that all will be well:

> (p.50) In the clergy, I know, no friends we shall want,
> Which for hope of gain the truth will recant,
> And give themselves wholly to set out Hypocrisy,
> Being egg'd on with Avarice, and defended by Tyranny.

Two other important points must be noted. Firstly, that, as in earlier plays, the Vices act out patterns of ideas which we have called dramatic metaphors, e.g. on the question of who is their leader, Hypocrisy says:

> (p.59) The end to be preferred all learned men wield:
> Sith therefore Hypocrisy of Tyranny is end,
> I must have preferment for which I contend.

Secondly, in the tradition of the Vices, they are extremely honest about each other's faults, e.g. when Avarice is terrified of being exposed, Tyranny exclaims:

> (p.51) But this is the good that cometh of Covetousness:
> He liveth alway in fear to lose his riches.
> Again, mark how he regardeth the death of his friend:
> So he hath his purpose, he cares for no mo:
> A perfect pattern of a covetous mind,
> Which neither esteemeth his friend nor his foe...

To enhance our critical attitude towards the Vices, the author also uses an interesting device by which one Vice observes and overhears the other two Vices and comments on their conversation. This is especially true of Act II, scenes ii and iii; here the conversation is counterpointed by an undertone of cynical comment on their villainy, e.g. when Tyranny tells Avarice that they will burn all those who go against them, Hypocrisy (in hiding) exclaims: "A popish policy!" (p.49), and when Tyranny continues that if anyone seeks to impair the status of the church, they will pay for it with their lives, Hypocrisy exclaims: "Anti-christian charity!" (p.49).

Act III

In this Act the Vices begin to act against the reformers. Tyranny shows Hypocrisy a commission, which orders him to see that all church ceremonies are properly observed and to punish all those who fail in this duty. We are introduced to a vicious caricature of a Scots priest, called Caconos, who does not believe in, "Hally water, pax, cross, banner, censer and candill," but thinks it is very good business. His only regret is that they do not sell the Host:

(p.72) Far gif the Jews gave thratty pence to hang Chraist on a tree,
Gude Christian folk thrayse thratty pence wawd count a price but small;
Sea that to eat him with their teeth delaivered he maught be,
New of this thing delaiverance ne man can make but we,
Se that the market in this punt we priests sawd han at will,
And with the money we sowd yet awr pooches we sowd fill.

Caconos denounces Philologus to Tyranny as an heretic, who does not believe in transubstantiation, and calls the Pope the Antichrist.

In an earlier scene, Philologus has already shown us that he is very much aware of the implications for him in the new decrees that have been sent from Rome. Speaking in a dignified, seven-beat line, which is in contrast to the shorter and more colloquial lines used by the Vices, he tells us that, although he knows that he will lose all his worldly possessions and even his life, if he persists in his heretical views, he fears that, if he recants, he will never achieve salvation:

(p.65) For he alone shall have the palm which to the end doth run,
And he which plucks his hand from plough, in heaven shall never come.

In this act, Hypocrisy is not a servant of the church, but an instrument of hell come to earth to see that God's creatures are completely corrupted. He thrives on each new turn of events.

> (p.76) This gear goes round, if that we had a fiddle:
> Nay, I must sing too, ...
> I can do but laugh, my heart is so merry:

When we hear that a new Vice, Sensual Suggestion, is to be brought in to help these three villains, we see that the traditional archetypal division of Evil has been presented to us: the World (Avarice and Tyranny), the Flesh (Sensual Suggestion) and the Devil (Hypocrisy) are now ready to work together for the destruction of Mankind (Philologus).

Act IV

In the last two acts (one cannot take Act VI to be anything more that an epilogue), Philologus becomes the centre of all action. He is like a ship tossed upon stormy seas, pulled between his Conscience and the forces of the World, the Flesh and the Devil. As in the very earliest Morality Plays, these Vices now become facets of his own personality as he succumbs to sin, although they nevertheless remain linked to the church and the Devil, as they were in Acts I - III.

When Philologus is tried before the Cardinals' court on charges of heresy, he replies meekly, but with dignity. He denies that the Pope is the head of the Church and defends the Protestant view on transubstantiation.

The Cardinal hopes to force Philologus to recant because he feels that if Philologus is put to death they will be accused of Tyranny, but Philologus, even when Careful Provision (i.e. Avarice) is sent to confiscate his goods, fears eternal damnation if he were to acknowledge the laws of the Pope. He begs the Cardinal to convince him that the Roman Catholic doctrine is true, but this is impossible and the Cardinal threatens him with death.

Tyranny threatens Philologus with tortures and imprisonment, while Sensual Suggestion relates the terrible scene he witnessed on his way to the court; a certain gentlewoman was tearing her hair and preparing for suicide; she and her children cried:

(p.93) Saying they are brought to utter desolation
By the means of their father's wilful protestation;
Whose goods, they say, are already conficate,
Because he doth the Pope's laws violate.
And indeed I saw Avarice standing at the door,
And a company of ruffians assisting him there.

Poor Philologus weeps to hear this and, when Sensual Suggestion asks him the cause of his sorrow, he replies that death, either spiritual or physical, awaits him whichever side he chooses in his dilemma:

(p.94) My spirit covets the one; but alas! since your presence,
My flesh leads my spirit therefro by violence.
[underlining mine]

His spirit is ready to give up all worldly goods for the sake of God: "But my flesh doth subdue my spirit doubtless." (p.95). Sensual Suggestion, a temptation of the flesh, strengthens his own sinful nature to such an extent that he fears he will not be able to choose the Good.

Sensual Suggestion calmly prepares to weigh up the two sides of Philologus's dilemma. On the one side lies God's judgement and the torments of hell, on the other is the loss of his life, his goods confiscated, his children orphaned and his wife widowed. Philologus quotes St Paul who says that the "afflictions of this world are transitory ...." Christ's blessing, he feels, should surely mean more to man than earthly happiness. Sensual Suggestion asks if he is sure that by his death he will attain salvation. The question is based on the assumption that, "One bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." (p.96). Philologus says he is not sure, but his faith is in the mercy of God through the mediation of Christ. Sensual Suggestion replies that for this reason he is safe, but Philologus considers this no argument:

(p.97) So I, though persuaded of my sins' free remission,
May not commit sin upon this presumption.

The Cardinal, impatient to go to dinner, promises Philologus not only a full pardon if he recants, but also extra money and a high position in the government. Sensual Suggestion says that, since there is no time for a "formal" debate, he will show him the "worldly joys" by means of a mirror. As soon as Philologus looks into the mirror, he breaks into patterned speech which denoted

great emotional stress:[1]

(p.98) O peerless pleasures, O joys unspeakable,
O worldly wealth, O palaces gorgeous,
O fair children, O wife most amiable....

It can be seen that the temptations of Philologus fall into three distinct kinds. Firstly he would like to be convinced by doctrinal arguments, but this is impossible. Next Sensual Suggestion tries by a "formal" philosophical dispute to give a rational excuse for Philologus to cling to life rather than be matyred. This also fails. Finally it is blind Sensuality that wins. What Philologus sees in the glass or mirror appeals immediately to his senses, "O delicate diet, O life lascivious ..." and he gives up all hope of salvation for this alone. His degradation is shown by his immediate concern at what the neighbours will think of his sudden conversion, but Hypocrisy tells him that he must say that having read the works of St Self-love and Dr Ambition, he has been saved. Hypocrisy adds in an aside, "We have caught him as bird is in lime"[2] and comments to Tyranny that Philologus has had so much of the medicine, Hypocrisy, that he will not die (i.e.be matyred) for the moment.

Philologus has renounced his former "heresies" and must make a public recantation on the following Sunday. He may see his wife first, but he is a prisoner of Sensual Suggestion. This is, of course, a dramatic statement of his new position.

On their way home, a spirit speaks to Philologus: "In time take heed, go not too far, look well thy steps unto," (p.101). Philologus

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[1] Cf. Thomas Kyd, "The Spanish Tragedy", Elizabethan Plays, ed. Hazleton Spencer (Boston: D.C.Heath & Co., 1933):
(III, ii, I) O eyes! no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears;
O life! no life, but lively form of death;
O world! no world, but mass of public wrongs....

[2] Cf. Lechery in The Castle of Perseverance:
(1.1203) I may sothe synge:
Mankynd is kawt in my slinge.

would like to listen to the voice, but Suggestion makes him look in the mirror again and takes his hand to lead him: "What, dost thou shrink Philologus, where I dare go before?" (p.102). The Spirit urges him to turn back, to renounce his crime while there is still time, to bear the yoke of Christ. It is his flesh which has brought him to this point: "The outward man hath caused thee this enterprise to take;" (p.103). Philologus, afraid of the wrath of God, is about to turn back, but Sensual Suggestion shows him the glass for the third time, whereupon Philologus again breaks out in formalised rapture:

(p.104) O gladsome glass, O mirror bright, O crystal clear as sun,
. . . .
Wherefore I will not thee forsake, what evil soever come.

The Spirit (his Good Angel?) emphasises the allegorical meaning of what we have seen: "That Sensual Suggestion doth lead him, understand," (p.104).

Philologus next meets his Conscience who tells him to resist "Suggestion of the flesh" who will deprive him of everlasting life. He says: "See where confusion doth attend to catch thee in his snare," (p.105).

Conscience knows the mental torment that Philologus will suffer for his crime and speaks about it allegorically (Confusion of the Mind). Nevertheless this is a form of allegory which approaches to metaphor as, unlike other allegorical figures, this awful figure is not present.[1]

When Conscience begins to preach on the terrible danger of

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[1]Cf Macbeth:

(I,vii,16) Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubim, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye....

or Richard II

(II, i,16) But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester
. . . .
Is hacked down, and his summer leaves all faded
By Envy's hand and Murder's bloody ax.

choosing worldly riches above God, Sensual Suggestion argues that surely there are some rich men in heaven. The debate which follows leaves Philologus physically wounded and he is unable to walk any further. This is another dramatic metaphor which emphasises to the audience that the debate is within the soul of Philologus and that he is once again the battle-ground of the Vices and the Virtues.

Finally Suggestion advises Philologus not to listen to Conscience. Even David, the psalmist, said that God's mercy is easier to receive than Man's mercy; but Conscience points out the anomaly of his position "How can you say you trust in God whenas you him forsake," (p.112). How is it possible to believe in God's mercy when he has given himself entirely to "Mammon"? This is, of course, to be Philologus's own fate, but at this moment all he can reply is that although he believes Conscience to be correct, yet he would be grieved if he were to give up all his worldly joys.

Conscience puts his case even more harshly; God says, those who do not know His name, will be unknown to Him, and those who seek to save their lives shall lose them, and those who lose their lives will live forever.. Suggestion, always looking for the exception, says that Peter obtained mercy even although he denied Christ, and Philologus asserts that he too shall weep bitterly "in tract of time."

Philologus sums up the debate for us in the same way that Mankind described his inner struggle in Nature:

> (p.113) Ah, wretched man! what shall I do? which do so plainly see
> My flesh and spirit to contend, and that in no small thing....

Although he knows that Conscience speaks the truth,yet his fear of death makes him unable to listen to his arguments. Here the two levels of the allegory are extremely close. Philologus seeks to resolve the torment in his mind by stilling his Conscience:

> (p.114) And therefore pacify thyself, and do not so torment
> Thyself in vain: I must seek some means for to eschew
> These griping griefs, which unto me I see now imminent;[1]
> [underlining mine]

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[1] Cf. Macbeth:
(I,vii,2) ... if th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence ....

Determined to enjoy the pleasure of the world, he leaves Conscience to meditate on Man's mortality and vanity and to hint at the dreadful consequences of the act.

> (p.114) O cursed creature, O frail flesh, O meat for worms, O dust,
> . . . .
> The blindness of the outward man Philologus show shall,
> At his return unless I can at last make him relent;
> For why the Lord him to correct in furious wrath is bent.

This Act shows a symmetry which gives it an archetypal significance in that the number three occurs as a symbol of complete commitment, and complete degradation. Philologus is tempted in three different ways and gives in to the coarsest of these three; he is shown the Glass of Vanities three times and is finally committed to a life without God. The Spirit and Conscience plead with him to change his mind and Conscience speaks of a third and more awful figure, "Confusion of the Mind", who will plague him after he has made his choice. Philologus can try to still his Conscience, but like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, he will be unable to control this dreadful figure.

Act V

Hypocrisy, having completed his task, says good-bye to the audience, but before leaving he reveals himself again as the instrument of Satan:

> (p.115) So that Hypocrisy hath done that which Satan did intend,
> That men for worldly wealth should cease the gospel to defend.

and gives us a preview of what we are about to see in the coming act. He is now assuming a different rôle, that of chorus or commentator:

> (p.115) What shall become of foolish goose, I mean Philologus,
> In actual manner to your eyes shall represented be.

He leaves us with the reminder that Hypocrisy is a common sin: "And though Hypocrisy go away, of hypocrites here is good store." (p.115).

Philologus is at the height of his wealth and power. Fortune has elevated him "unto the top of the wheel" and he is foolish enough to think he can remain there. His two sons congratulate him on his excellent choice, which saved them from penury. Philologus agrees that it was good that he listened to Sensual Suggestion and the Glass of Vanities. He has truly sold his soul to the devil. He says:

> (p.117) And to say truth, I do not care what to my soul betide,
> So long as this prosperity and wealth be me abide.

Philologus's choice is a conscious one; in the previous act he said: "And to enjoy these worldly joys I jeopard will a joint." (p.114). A comparison with Dr Faustus is illuminating. He says: "This night I'll conjure, though I die therefor." (op.cit Sc.1, 1.165)

Suddenly, Horror appears to Philologus. Like Adversity in Magnyfycence, Confusion of the Mind is sent by God to punish those who despise His mercy and His grace. Peace of Conscience, which is grounded in God's grace will be replaced by "blasphemy, confusion and cursing," and the Glass of Vanities, for which Philologus has gambled his soul, will become the Glass of Deadly Desperation.

(p.118) Thus have I caught thee in thy pride, and brought thee to damnation;
So that thou art a pattern true of God's just indignation:
Whereby each man may warned be the like sins to eschew,
Lest the same torments they incur, which in thee they shall view.

On seeing Horror, Philologus again bursts into ponderous patterned speech, which shows he understands and is conscious of all the Horror and Confusion of the mind of which Horror speaks. He realizes that he can never ask for Christ's mercy and that the flames of hell are his just punishment:

(p.119) O angry God and merciless, most fearful to behold!
O Christ, thou are no Lamb to me, but Lion fierce and bold!

It is significant that his sons do not see this apparition. Later, when he says he is surrounded by devils, neither his sons nor his friends are able to see them, just as Faustus's friends do not see the devils who torment him.[1]

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[1]Other examples come readily to mind; Macbeth is the only person who sees Banquo at the banquet, Hamlet's mother does not see his father in her bed-chamber. Apparitions of this kind are meant specifically to awake the conscience of one character only and therefore appear only to him.

In The Duchess of Malfi both Ferdinand and the Cardinal are pursued by Confusion of the Mind. Ferdinand, driven mad by his guilt, tries to strangle his own shadow: "Stay it, let it not haunt me." (V, ii, 36), while the Cardinal says.

(V,v,4) ...How tedious is a guilty conscience!
When I look into the fish-ponds in my garden,
Methinks I see a thing armed with a rake
That seems to strike at me.

John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi, ed. John Russell Brown (London: Methuen & Co., The Revels Plays, 1946).

Philologus explains why he is so overcome by grief. He shows them "this glass" which portrays his "innumerable" sins:

(p.119) My sin is unto death; I feel Christ's death doth me no good,
Neither for my behoof did Christ shed his most precious blood.[1]

He wishes for death with all the pains of hell rather than his present torment of the mind:

(p.120) O that my body buried were, that it at rest might be,
Though soul were put in Judas' place, or Cain's extremity.

The man who feared death more than damnation, now finds life so unbearable that he wishes only for death in spite of the damnation he knows will accompany it.

His son runs off to fetch Theologus and tells Philologus to: "Rest yourself in God, and all thing shall be well." (p.120), but to Philologus the name of God is a dreadful name. God is against him and he is beyond God's mercy. He will be an example to all God's elect of the price they will pay if they deny Him:

(p.121) Christ prayed not, Christ suffered not, my sins to recompense,
But only for the Lord's elect, of which sort I am none.

From being sure of the love of God and His salvation through grace, Philologus is now convinced that he has cut himself off from all hope of being one of those elected to be saved. This is his final and greatest sin, the sin of Despair.

His friends Eusebius and Theologus try to help him, but Philologus wishes only for death:

(p.122) O, would my soul were sunk in hell, so body were in ground:
That angry God now hath his will, who sought me to confound.

Theolegus begs Philologus to consider that God's grace could save the

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[1] Cf. Faustus: "See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!" (op.cit., xix, 146).

[2] This is Faustus's sin too, "But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned...", but in the later play the issue is much more complicated. Faustus will not be saved not only because he despairs of being saved, but also because he is the Renaissance man who cannot simply abjure all the wonderful new world of learning and eroticism which he wishes to discover. He cannot pray because when he does the prayer which comes to his lips is a line from a love-poem by Ovid: "O lente, lente currite noctis equi ! (xix, 142). In spite of this, the earlier play has much relevance to our study of Dr Faustus.

most wicked sinner. Did not Christ save Peter and the thief upon the cross? Philologus's reply is a flat denial of grace:

> (p.124) I have no faith: the words you speak my heart doth not believe.
> I must confess that I for sin am justly thrown to hell.

Eusebius is shocked at this, he has known men, who were more evil, who have nevertheless been brought to salvation. God loves to forgive mankind. Surely if Philologus prays he will be relieved of his sin. Philologus replies that, although he believes in salvation, the devils do too and yet they are not saved. He would love to obtain the mercy of God, but God disdains him; God never turned away from Peter, but loved him always, but he is a reprobate and God reproves him. He will pray, but it will be no use:

> (p.125) Moreover, I will say with tongue, whatso you will require:[1]
> My heart, I feel, with blasphemy and cursing is replete.

Theologus entreats him to pray with them, but Philologus replies that to him it will mean nothing:

> (1.125) To pray with lips unto your God you shall me soon entreat:
> My Spirit to Satan is in thrall;I can it not thence get.

Finally, he is persuaded to say the Lord's Prayer, but comments on his action:

> (p.127) My lips have spoke the words indeed; but yet I feel my heart
> With cursing is replenished, with rancour, spite and gall:
> Neither do I your Lord and God in heart my Father call,
> But rather seek his holy name for to blaspheme and curse.
> . . . .
> I am secluded clean from grace, my heart is hardened quite.

In spite of this, Eusebius assures Philologus that God has promised that if a sinner repents he will be forgiven. Philologus replies that he knows this, but he has no faith to believe it. Faith is a gift from God. If only God would plant a spark of faith in his breast, then Philologus would be saved:

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[1]Cf. this, and what follows, with Claudius:

> (<u>Hamlet</u>, III, iii, 97) My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
> Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

(p.128) But it as easily may be done, as you may with one spoon
At once take up the water clean, which in the seas abide;
And at one draught then drink it up: this shall ye do as soon,
As to my breast of true belief one sparkle shall betide.
Tush! You which are in prosperous state, and my pains have not tried,
Do think it but an easy thing a sinner to repent
Him of his sins, and by true faith damnation to prevent.[1]

Philologus despairs of faith because he cannot believe in it. He understands salvation intellectually, but is unable to accept it emotionally and his worldliness and confusion, which are a result of his separation from God, are reflected in his speech. The "Tush", to his friends, like an impatient child, shows his lack of Christian love and charity, and his regular end-stopped lines have been replaced by an awkward run-on line, "repent/Him", which is indicative of his inner turmoil. Confusion of the Mind is always before him, and he plainly sees the devils around him, who seem as real as his friends. Even everlasting hell fires would be preferable to what he is suffering at this moment. His cursing and blaspheming too are a direct result of Confusion of the Mind and were prophesied by him.

Theologus asks Philologus to recite the creed, but Philologus

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[1]The image of the sea and the impossibility of taking it up in a spoon and drinking it in one swallow is an excellent metaphor inflating the impossibility of his ever achieving faith to infinity and compares with Macbeth's:

(Macbeth, II, ii, 60) Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green - one red.

does this, tragically, in the past tense: "I did believe...." He now realizes that he aquiesced too readily to Sensual Suggestion's arguments in Act IV, but his self-realisation goes back even beyond the time of his great sin to that part of his life which we still believe to have been good. He is stripped of all illusions about himself:

(p.132) But I, alas! most wretched wight, whereas I did presume
That I had got a perfect faith, did holy life disdain:
And though I did to other preach good life, I did consume,
My life in wickedness and sin, in sport and pleasures vain.
No, neither did I once contend from them flesh to refrain.
Behold, therefore, the judgments just of God doth me annoy,
Not for amendment of my life, but me for to destroy.

The theological question of faith vs. works had a special significance in the Protestant-Catholic controversy, so it is no wonder that this point raises an objection from Eusebius, who does not believe that good works are more important than faith. Theologus replies that Eusebius has misinterpreted Philologus. He quotes St James, who said: "Show me thy faith, and by my works my faith shall thee be shown", (p.134); Philologus killed his faith by not letting it mould his life:

(p.134) Whereas he did vaingloriously upon a dead faith stay;
Which for the inward righteousness he alway did suspect,
And hereupon all godliness of life he did neglect.

Although his friends still try to comfort him and nurture in him a belief in God's grace, Philologus always replies that he is beyond salvation. God has condemned him to be tormented by his conscience and although he hopes desperately for salvation he knows it is impossible:

(p.136) I would most gladly choose to live a thousand thousand year,
In all the torments and the grief that damned souls sustain;
So that at length I might have ease, it would me greatly cheer:
But I, alas! shall in this life in torments still remain,
While God's just anger upon me shall be revealed plain,
And I example made to all of God's just indignation.
O, that my body were at rest, and soul in condemnation![1]

When Theologus asks again that they should pray,

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[1]Cf. Spira, quoted in this introduction to <u>The Conflict of Conscience</u>, taken from Lily Bess Campbell, op. cit., p.226. Also <u>Dr Faustus</u>:

(xix, 169) Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
A hundred thousand, and at last be sav'd!

Philologus repeats his flat denial: "I cannot pray; my spirit is dead, no faith in me remain", (p.138), and later he kneels ungraciously, saying in an aside that he will pray: "With as good will as did the devil out of the deaf man go." (p.138). He begins to pray, but breaks off abruptly:

(p.138) Tush! sirs, you do labour lose: see, where Belzabub doth come,
And doth invite me to a feast .... [1]

He is surrounded by devils. True faith is an impossibility for him and he is led out by his sons, crying for a sword in order to kill himself.

Theologus prays to God who beholds the "secret heart" that we may learn the lesson from this example. Eusebius tells us that this story is a "Glass" to teach mankind to escape the judgment of God. Philologus has shown us, says Theologus, that when he consented to the Pope, he abjured God. This story teaches those with "wavering faith in which side to persist" in the struggle against the tyrants, "which delight in blood," (p.141).

Philologus's faith has been shown to be purely academic. It was not strong enough to make him choose God rather than the world. Now that he has achieved self-realization, he looks into the glass which mirrored all he held most dear and finds a mirror of his sins. He is tormented by his own conscience to such an extent that he who longed for life would now prefer death and damnation to life. The struggle which Philologus endures is an internal one and the play shows us a man who is stripped of all illusions about himself and must face the fact that he is unworthy to be saved (although even this self-realization is his final sin). The internal quality of his torment is emphasised by the dramatic technique by which no other character on the stage sees Horror (Confusion of the Mind) or the devils who torment him.

In spite of the tragic quality of Philologus's self-knowledge and suffering, the play remains part of the reformation propoganda literature. In Act V the Vices and the Catholic Church take second place to

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[1] Cf. again, Dr Faustus:

(xix,56) Ah, my God, I would weep, but the devil draws in my tears.... I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them.

Philologus's inner struggle for salvation against despair, but the Protestant fires are kept alight by the faith vs. works dispute and by continual reminders to the audience that Philologus is an example to us to make the right decisions in the struggle against Catholicism.

To this act the verse itself becomes interesting for the first time. When Philologus speaks, the lines lose their verbose polysyllabic rhythm and become jerky and disjointed. He uses short toneless sentences which reflect his agitated state of mind: "I cannot pray; my spirit is dead, no faith in me remain," and his, "Tush, sirs!" after the opening lines of the prayer, gives us an indication of the chasm which divides him from his friends in the matter of faith.

Act VI

Act VI is really the epilogue. A messenger tells us that Philologus has refrained from taking his life and has become converted to God. The conversion took thirty weeks, during which time he ate nothing and slept not at all. "And now the Lord in mercy great hath eas'd him of his pain." This is a different ending from the true story of Spira and is also different from another edition of the same date,[1] but as the play was written as an 'Example", a death-bed conversion is a more appropriate ending than either a suicide or an unrepentant death.

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On first reading The Conflict of Conscience, one is struck by its resemblance to Dr Faustus which does not seem to be coincidental. In

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[1]See Bernard Spivack, op. cit., p.485: "/The early edition exists in two issues, the difference between them mainly in the title page, the prologue, and the speech of the nuntius which supplies the whole sixth act./

(a) An excellent new Commedie, Intituled: The Conflict of Conscience. Contayninge, The most lamentable Hystorie, of the desperation of Fraunces Spera, ... /Spira's name is mentioned again in the prologue. At the end the nuntius brings in the "doleful newes" of the hero's tragic death by suicide./"

(b) Of the edition reprinted in A Select Collection of Old English Plays, and used here, op.cit., Spivack says:"/Also omits Spira's name from the prologue. At the end the nuntius proclaims the "ioyfull newes" of the hero's last minute conversion and peaceful death./".

The Conflict of Conscience the reason for Philologus's inability to pray for forgiveness and mercy is made explicit and throws much light on Faustus's predicament. Many phrases in Dr Faustus carry with them the echo of the earlier play and the still earlier biography. Nevertheless, The Conflict of Conscience remains a Morality of the Protestant anti-Catholic type. A delicate balance is kept between the moral of the story, with all that this entails, and the story itself. It is this Morality frame which prevents the work from being a tragedy. The discussions on church dogma and the validity of the Pope, or on faith vs. good works are central to the play and we are told many times that Philologus could be any one of us, that he is still Everyman. Philologus is held up to us as an example of a man who chooses the soft option in a situation where the Vices of the world, who conspire against him, are also recognisable as the Vices (sic) of the Roman Catholic Church.

Throughout the play, themes recur and shift into different patterns, which show a remarkable dovetailing of ideas. Examples of this use of dramatic irony come readily to mind and have already been commented on. For example, Satan introduces us to the play with a long dissertation on the reasons why the Pope is his spiritual son. Later, when Philologus chooses riches and power, he puts himself beyond God's mercy and becomes spiritually akin to the Pope and to Satan. Another example which is central to the play is in Act IV when Conscience points out that if Philologus really had faith in God's mercy and love, he would not forsake Him for material welfare:

> (p.112) How can you say you trust in God whenas you him forsake,
> And of the wicked Mammon here do make your feigned friend?

When Philologus realises the dreadfulness of his sin, it is this same lack of faith which prevents him from repentance. He talks to his friends of "your" God and is unable to pray because he does not believe what he is saying. He says:

> (p.125) How would you have a man to live, which hath no mouth to eat?
> No more can I live in my soul, which have no faith at all.

His heart is filled with curses instead of prayers, and the devils surround him because he can believe in his damnation, although he cannot

believe in his salvation through Christ.

Another important example of the use of dramatic irony and a dramatic theme is the mirror or Glass of Vanities which Sensual Suggestion shows Philologus and which appears again and again at significant moments in the play. It is possible to see the glass as a dramatic technique for presenting the Seven Deadly Sins to Philologus. With the aid of the glass, Sensual Suggestion turns Philologus away from the Good Life and from salvation. Philologus's first glimpse of these "worldly joys" is enough to make him abjure the true faith. When the Spirit almost persuades Philologus to repent, he is shown the glass again and is immediately corrupted. He takes Sensual Suggestion's hand, determined not to go back on his decision. In Act V, this same glass re-appears as the Glass of Deadly Desperation, which is shown to Philologus by Horror. Philologus laments on the Deadly Sins which he sees there. He says:

(p.119) My sins, alas! which in this glass appear innumerable,
For which I shall no pardon get ....

Finally, the mirror image is used on us, the audience. Eusebius says:

(p.140) Here may the worldlings have a glass, their states for to behold
And learn in time for to escape the judgments of the Lord,
Whilst they by flattering of themselves, of faith both dead and cold,
Do sell their souls to wickedness, of all good men abhorr'd.

The play is a mirror into which we may look and from which we may learn. We must not let our Glass of Vanities mislead us, the joys it reflects are in fact Deadly Sins and the same glass will become the Glass of Desperation wherein we shall see our worldly pleasures in their true colours.[1]

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[1]The image of the mirror or glass was an Elizabethan commonplace. Titles of books like _Mirror for Magistrates_ or _A Mirror of Madness_, _Mirror of Modesty_, _Mirror of Magnaminity_, _Mirror of Mutability_, etc., were common. This is the use of the glass in the third sense discussed, i.e. meaning examples _for_ or examples _of_.

(Continued overleaf)

Although ideas occur and recur in changing patterns throughout the play, the language itself is not rich in thematic imagery. When Philologus reiterates that he has no faith and that his tongue can frame, not prayers, but curses, the words do not form patterns of meaning in the way that the ideas have been shown to do, but are merely relevant to the situation in which he finds himself. This is a play of ideas and the use of language is primitive compared to the elegant court plays we discussed earlier, but the moral earnestness of The Conflict of Conscience, which gives us a picture of a soul tormented by his wrong

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See for these examples, W.F.Trench, A Mirror for Magistrates, its origin and Influence (Privately Printed, 1898). See also Hamlet:

(III i, 155) Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
Th' glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
Th' observed of all observers ....

(III, ii, 21) to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure ...

Examples of the other sense are more interesting: one looks into the mirror and sees one's true self or the mirror will give us a reflection of the future which is vague, imperfect, but prophetic. We may not understand this reflection.

Cf. The Bible:

(1 Cor., 13,12) For now we see through a glass, darkly;

(II Cor., 3, 18) But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

Cf. Shakespeare:

Measure for Measure: (II, ii, 95) .... and like a prophet,
Looks in a glass ....

Richard II: (I, iii, 208) ....Even in the glasses of thine eyes
I see thy grievèd heart ....

(IV, i, 275) Give me that glass, and therein will I read,
No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine
And made no deeper wounds? O, flatt'ring glass!
. . . .
Thou dost beguile me...

Macbeth: (IV, i, 119) And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more .... [i.e. Banquo's children]

Hamlet: (III, iv, 19) You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

King Lear: (IV, vi, 174) Get thee glass eyes; And like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.

choice, beset by evil forces which plot against him and rejoice at the downfall, is psychologically more profound and more moving than the earlier plays and makes them (in spite of all their local colour, and topical allusions) seem unreal and factitious. Philologus is a specific character in a specific situation, but the intensity of his feelings and his protracted spiritual crisis makes him far more universal than the unlocalised Everyman, who was, in his common humanity, less of a human being. The writer's purpose was to show us an example of what should happen to us in such a situation, to give us an Everyman, but he has almost succeeded, in spite of himself, in giving us a tragic hero.

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Conclusion

The use of the Morality Play in the reformation controversy gave a new impetus to the form, and to English drama as a whole. The plays breathe life and fire of conviction and earnest moral involvment. The Morality Play had become a vehicle in which all the burning questions of the time, political, religious or moral, could be expressed and thrashed out. Its topicality did not merely exist in portraying types of people common in those times (like the Vices in Nature or the priest, Caconos, in The Conflict of Conscience), but in portraying actual moral problems which the audience were facing daily, and it gave an outlet for those who longed for a reform of the religious and social structure in England and Scotland.

Now that the Morality tradition (the World, the Flesh and the Devil, the Seven Deadly Sins, Death or God's Vengeance, the Vice) had been established, these writers began to turn it inside out. They identified the Devil or the Vice with the cause they wished to discredit and portrayed the Deadly Sins as people connected with that cause. God's judgment became a judgment of the institution they were fighting and a new heaven and a new earth were brought about by the establishment of the new social or religious order they were propagating.

previous paragraph, but we have noticed that dramatists began to rely on the language itself, and especially on metaphor to explain this inner conflict. When Conscience asks Philologus to see where Confusion of the Mind waits to attack him, he is not pointing to someone whom we or Philologus can see, but is referring to a spiritual state in allegorical terms, through the language alone. That Horror does eventually enter the stage does not invalidate this point as Philologus did not, at the time, question Conscience's assumption, but accepted it as a way of talking about a spiritual state. More striking is the thematic play on blindness in The Three Laws to which we have already referred. Here the language is used to reinforce and interpret the allegory.

The Controversial Moralities, therefore, far from being mere propaganda, brought the drama into the sphere of everyday life, where the conflict between Good and Evil was not merely something abstract, or a cleverly devised allegory, but was part of the problematical changing world of the Sixteenth Century. Not only do these plays revive the urgent moral earnestness of the very earliest Moralities, they also make significant changes to the Morality framework and show how this framework could be adapted to suit their own purposes. This chapter has attempted to show that in this they were successful innovators and that the plays have such impact and intensity that even the modern reader can be caught up in their problems and swayed by their arguments, without becoming either bored or angry.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Heroic Tragic Morality; a Discussion of: "Cambyses" by Thomas Preston, "Horestes" by John Pikeryng, "Appius and Virginia" by R.B.

C.F. Tucker Brooke calls the introduction of classical and religious stories into the popular drama, "stiffening for the wilted allegory".[1] Most critics agree that in these later plays the allegory has become mere machinery and that they would be better without such dull and abstract personifications. Bernard Spivack writes about Cambyses:

> Abstract rôles are numerous, the playwright having sprinkled personification with a free hand upon the historical ground of his plot. But they are also, apart from the Vice, both perfunctory and empty of real ethical significance. Literary habit and enervated traditionalism rather than genuine purpose are responsible for such scattered and nondescript figures as Commons Complaint, Commons Cry, Proof, Diligence, Preparation, Attendance, Murder, Cruelty, Execution, Shame, Trial, and Small Ability. They have neither the collective force nor the ethical meaning that marks the personifications in the moral plays, and all of them enter just once for some trivial action that earns them their abstract names. Thus Murder and Cruelty are simply first and second murderers, Execution an executioner, Preparation a servant, and so on. As a result the Psychomachia exists only to the extent that it is upheld by the Vice, and even he, in as large a role as ever, displays noteworthy aberrations.[2]

Although it is undeniable that the introduction of classical tragic plots could not but change the nature of the allegory and of the psychomachia type of moral play, this chapter will attempt to show that the kind of dramatic technique developed by the Morality Plays over the preceding hundred years had a lasting influence on Elizabethan drama, and expecially on what we have come to regard as the Elizabethan tragic hero.

A Mirror for Magistrates, published at about the same time that the three plays under discussion were being performed, stems from a different allegorical tradition. Sackville's Induction[3] to the story of Henry, Duke of Buckingham, describes allegorical figures like Sorrow, Old

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[1] See Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1955), p.382.

[2] Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, op.cit., p.286.

[3] Thomas Sackville, "Sackville's Induction", The Mirror for Magistrates, ed. Lily B. Campbell (New York : Barnes and Noble Inc., 1960), p.298.

Age or Misery as if they are painted figures on a wall, reminiscent of Chaucer or The Romaunt of the Rose (especially when the landscape wherein they are 'placed' is described). They are not really comparable to the more full-blooded Virtues and Vices of the traditional Morality Plays. Nevertheless these two traditions must have borrowed from each other (perhaps the dramatic tradition of emblematic costume is much indebted to courtly literature and art) and in such creations as Sackville's "Remorse" or "Dread", we have the paradigm for later tragic characters (like Macbeth), who are nevertheless not unknown in the Morality dramas we have already discussed:

/Remorse/ Her iyes vnstedfast rolling here and there,
Whurld on eche place, as place that vengeaunce brought,
So was her minde continually in feare,
Tossed and tormented with the tedious thought
Of those detested crymes which she had wrought :
With dreadful cheare and lookes throwen to the skye,
Wyshying for death, and yet she could not dye.

Next sawe we Dread al tremblyng how he shooke,
With foote vncertayne profered here and there :
Benumde of speache, and with a ghastly looke
Searcht euery place al pale and dead for feare,
His cap borne up with staring of his heare,
Stoynde and amazde at his owne shade for dreed,
And fearing greater daungers than was nede.[1]

Even when the playwright is being most revolutionary in technique and subject-matter, we can see the influence of the earlier drama. Anyone who reads Kyd's Spanish Tragedy after studying Morality drama, cannot fail to be impressed by the very theatricality and vigour of this new "English Seneca read by Candle-light",[2] and yet this revolutionary play cannot quite sever itself from mediaeval allegory. Poor, mad Hieronomo directs two Portuguese to Lord Lorenzo (his son's murderer):

(IV,iv, 60) There is a path upon your left-hand side
That leadeth from a guilty conscience
Unto a forest of distrust and fear,
A darksome place, and dangerous to pass.
There shall you meet with melancholy thoughts,
Whose baleful humours if you but uphold,
It will conduct you to despair and death;

. . .

[1] Ibid, 1.225.

[2] Thomas Nashe, "Preface to R. Greene's 'Menaphon'", The Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), Vol. III, p.315.

> Whose rocky cliffs when you have once beheld,
> Within a hugy dale of lasting night,
> That, kindled with the world's iniquities,
> Doth cast up filthy and detested fumes, -
> Not far from thence, where murderers have built
> A habitation for their cursed souls,
> There, in a brazen cauldron, fix'd by Jove,
> In his fell wrath, upon a sulphur flame,
> Yourselves shall find Lorenzo bathing him
> In boiling lead and blood of innocents.

The landscape is described almost entirely in spiritual terms and although the journey is suggested (the path, the forest, the cliffs, the deep valley), the allegorical meaning is always dominant and the allegory is that of the psychomachia, the tormented mind of the guilty man. In the last line, the two levels of meaning are placed alongside each other as having equal physical reality: "In boiling lead and blood of innocents." In spite of the classical "Jove", this passage conjures up for us all the mediaeval machinery of hell and damnation, and dwells on the terrible consequences of sin. In the shadow of the Last Judgement, man lives on this earth and he will answer for his acts at the last trump. It is this inescapable doom which makes Mankind's choice between Good and Evil such an urgent one and which gives Elizabethan drama a sense of tension, of conflict and of moral responsibility.

The Plays.

The dates of the plays we shall discuss in this chapter are all approximate and they do not show any progressive advance in technique. It would seem that, although each play has its own interesting dramatic moments, which point to the later drama and do not correspond to similar situations in any other play, they are all experimenting with the allegory in an attempt to present an individual in a dramatic situation with tragic possibilities. Each play presents, in addition to the classical story, which it has adopted, a moral situation, in which Good and Evil are brought into conflict with one another and the hero must make a moral choice. The spiritual quality of the story is presented through the allegory because it had become the accepted technique for analysing states of mind. These plays lack any great poetry, which is essential for the portrayal of a tragic hero, but they show us the way in which the Elizabethan tragic hero was to be developed.

In the comic scenes in these plays we find a definite advance on the earlier drama. The knockabout which was characteristic of the earlier Moralities and which is said to represent, in a debased form, the original "battle" of the Virtues and Vices, has been intelligently used by all these writers. The Vice links the "heroic" characters to ordinary people of the lower classes, Huff and Snuff, Hob and Lob (Cambyses), Haultersycke and Hempstringe (Horestes), Mansipulus and Mansipula (Appius and Virginia), and in the same way that he corrupts the noble characters in the play and brings about tragic consequences, he is shown corrupting the lower classes and causing them pain and sorrow. The low-life scenes also show us the effect that the evil choices and actions of the main characters have on the people whom they rule, so that the action of the king affects everyone in his country and justice must be seen to be done to him in order that this evil influence is curbed. In the Greek tragedies, the life of the king and his family affected the city over which he ruled, and this gave him a sense of responsibility for the lives of the people in the city states. Plagues and suffering of the people were a consequence of his evil action and it was his duty to put his house in order. In these Morality plays it is a question, firstly of moral example; those who are placed in a higher position must lead the other classes of society and must set an example to their subjects, and secondly of the power of evil which can penetrate all classes of society and must be fought at all levels in society.

These new developments, especially in the use of the (comic) sub-plot, are a step forward in the history of English drama. When we look at Elizabethan drama we find that low-life scenes form a kind of sounding board which magnify and echo the deeds of the upper classes, while grotesque scenes, such as the porter in Macbeth or the gravediggers in Hamlet evoke in us fear and macabre laughter, similar to the fear and laughter, which greeted the Devil Titivillus or Death and his dancing companions. They present a reality which is too horrible to face, without uneasy laughter, and they point back to the first Morality lesson :

Man! þynke on þyn endynge day
Whanne þou schalt be closyd under clay![1]

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Cambyses.[2]

This play is described as;

> A lamentable tragedy mixed ful of pleasant mirth, conteyning the life of Cambises King of Percia, from the beginning of his kingdom unto his death, his one good deed of execution, after that many wicked deeds and tirannous murders, committed by and through him, and last of all his odious death by God's Iustice appointed, in such order as followeth.

The editor calls this play a lapse into "comparative barbarism", which is undoubtedly a reference to the staging of all Cambyses's murders, in which the audience is spared no gory details. Both Hazlitt and Tucker Brooke enjoy the comic scenes in this play (most critics prefer the comic scenes in the Moralities), but disapprove of the bloodthirstiness of the main plot. This squeamish attitude to Cambyses is a mistake. An audience who was used to public floggings and executions and who had seen representations of the Devil and Hell, The Murder of the Innocents, The Crucifixion, The Scourging, The Antichrist and The Day of Judgement, was not likely to have been satisfied with a mere nuntius (as in Gorboduc). Cambyses was a tyrant of great and bloody proportion and the audience would like to see evidence of this with their own eyes. Even his "one good deed" was not a gentle one, in fact it was perhaps the most gory of all his acts.

The Story.

Cambyses tells his advisers that he must take the Persian army to subdue the Egyptians, who are about to attack Persia. On the advice of Council, he leaves Sisamnes to rule Persia in his place. Throughout the play Preston uses characters like Council as a form of dramatic shorthand. The character is emblematic, probably dressed like a wise man, and manages to pack into his name and dress all the solemnity and deliberation which cannot be shown on the stage.

As soon as Cambyses has left, Sisamnes shows us that in spite of

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[1] The Castle of Perseverance, op.cit., ll. 408-9.

[2] Thomas Preston, "Cambyses", A Select Collection of Old English Plays, ed. W.C. Hazlitt (London: Reeves and Turner, 1874), Vol IV, p.158.

his earlier protestations to Cambyses of his unworthiness and dedication to his task, he is considering a misuse of his powers. He says:

(p. 175) Now may I build a princely place,
My mind for to fulfil;
Now may I abrogate the law,
As I shall think it good;
If any one me now offend,
I may demand his blood.
According to the proverb old,
My mouth I will up make;
. . . .
Do well or ill I dare avouch,
Some evil on me will speak:
No, truly yet I do not mean
The king's precepts to break;
To place I mean for to return
My duty to fulfil. [Exit][1]

Sisamnes shows us that he has disposition to sin, but that he still means to fulfil his duties honourably. He is admirable material for the Vice, Ambidexter, who now enters like a comic soldier, dressed perhaps in an imitation of the well-known comedy, Thersites. He tells us a little about himself :

(p. 177) I signify one
That with both hands finely can play.[2]

His monologue is interrupted by the appearance of three rowdy soldiers, Huff, Ruff and Snuff. They laugh at his appearance and threaten him until the usual knockabout ensues. Both sides apologise after two skirmishes and Ambidexter introduces himself as someone who is well known among soldiers and most necessary to them. Huff is delighted with their new friend :

(p. 180) Gog's heart, to have thy company needs we must prove.
We must play with both hands with our hostess and host,
Play with both hands, and score on the post,
Now and then with our captain for many a delay,
We will not stick with both hands to play.

At this moment Mistress Meretrix, a whore, enters. All make advances to her, but she will go to the highest bidder. Huff has no money, Ruff has only a sixpence, Snuff has eighteenpence, but Ruff is not at all satisfied and they fight with swords, which makes the Vice

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[1]In Hazlitt's collected plays there is no marking of lines. It is therefore only possible to give page references for Cambyses and Appius and Virginia.

[2]Ambidexter's full meaning appears during the course of the play. He is one who is totally without conscience, who is used to double dealing and double thinking and who inevitably corrupts the world around him.

run away for fear. Snuff also leaves, and Mistress Meretrix beats Ruff and makes him her servant by taking away his sword. The scene is full of bawdy talk and action which would have delighted the audience.

Ambidexter meets Sisamnes, who is still toying with the idea of misusing his power, but is afraid that he will be found out. He greets Ambidexter by name, like an old friend, and Ambidexter immediately refers to Sisamnes's dilemma:

> (p. 187) Jesu, Master Sisamnes, with me you are well acquainted:
> By me rulers may be trimly painted.
> Ye are unwise, if ye take not time while ye may :
> If ye will not now, when ye would, ye shall have nay.

Sisamnes's reply puts Ambidexter firmly into the allegorical context:

"Believe me, your words draw deep in my mind." (p. 188).

Immediately Small Hability enters. He represents the poor commonality who are unable to bribe Sisamnes and therefore get no justice from him. Sisamnes spurns him and Ambidexter comments on the action, just as much to the audience as to Small Hability :

> (p. 189) Farewell, Small Hability, for help now get ye none.
> Bribes hath corrupt him, good laws to pollute.

In the space of a few minutes, the author has shown us the history of Sisamnes's corruption and fall by again making use of allegorical characters. We shall see this economic use of the allegorical method throughout the play.

At this moment Shame enters with a <u>black</u> trumpet. The author has made an attempt at an alliterative line to give the figure some rhetorical stature, but here, as everywhere in the play, the poetry is undistinguished :

> (p. 189) From among the grisly ghosts I come,
> From tyrant's testy train;
> Unseemly Shame of sooth I am,
> Procured to make plain
> The odious facts and shameless deeds
> That Cambyses king doth use;

Cambyses has become lecherous and a drunkard. He takes delight in sin and will not listen to criticism. We learn this just before Cambyses returns from Egypt, at a moment when he must set right what Sisamnes has done wrong.

When Cambyses enters, he asks whether Sisamnes has been "a faithful steward" during his absence. Although Sisamnes protests that he has been a just judge, Commons Cry, who runs in and out quickly and cries continually, accuses him of oppressing the common people. The king is puzzled at this and says :

(p. 191) To me it seemeth my Commons all
They do lament and cry
Out at Sisamnes judge most chief,
Even now standing us by.

Sisamnes denies these accusations, but Commons Complaint, Proof and Trial enter to accuse him again and to substantiate the accusation.

With such allegorical characters testifying against him, Sisamnes can only plead for mercy. Otian, Sisamnes's son, is called to witness his execution and father and son bid each other goodbye. Otian exclaims on Fortune :

(p. 197) O false and fickle frowning dame,
That turneth as the wind,
Is this the joy in father's age,
Thou me assign'st to find?
O doleful day, unhappy hour,
That loving child should see :
His father dear before his face,
Thus put to death should be.

At the command of Cambyses, Excution first will, "Smite him in the neck with a sword to signify his death", (p. 198) and then, "Flays him with false skin," (p. 199). Otian, grief-stricken, says that this will be an example to him to remain true to Cambyses. He and the executioner take away the body.

This first episode in the story of Cambyses takes up almost half the play. From now on we are shown, in quick succession, the bloody and tyrannical deeds of this infamous king. The story of Cambyses was well known; we read it in Lydgate's Fall of Princes and in 1539, Richard Taverner published the story in The Garden of Wysdom, a collection of anecdotes about the great men of classical antiquity, told for a moral purpose. As Farnham[1] shows, many of the lines in the play have been "lifted" straight out of the earlier work, but the play adds the

[1] Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1956), pp.263-70.

allegorical framework and the Vice to the story, as well as the comic scenes and the various tender passages spoken by Cambyses's victims. It is Preston's dramatisation of the story, the way in which he introduces the Vice and the various allegorical characters into a moral "History", which makes him significant as a fore-runner of the Elizabethan drama.

We have already been told by Shame that Cambyses has become profligate, sadistic and unable to accept criticism. We are soon shown evidence of this. Praxaspes, a lord, ventures to criticise the king:

(p. 201) The Persians much praise your grace,
But one thing discommend,
In that to wine subject you be,
Wherein you do offend.
Sith that the might of wine effect,
Doth oft subdue your brain,
My counsel is, to please their hearts,
From it you will refrain.

The king is surrounded by flatterers who deny this charge, but he is determined to prove to Praxaspes that he can hold his liquor. He says:

(p. 202) Me to revenge of these thy words,
I will go wreak this spite.

and commands Praxaspes to fetch his only child. When Cambyses has drunk his fill he will shoot an arrow into the boy's heart. If he does not kill the child, he will accept Praxaspes's criticism.

Praxaspes begs for mercy, but the king is adamant and begins to drink in preparation for the archery ahead. Praxaspes appears with his young son, whom he has brought "fro mother's knee", tearfully bids him farewell and kisses him. The child is at first unaware of what is to happen and conjures up the normal, loving world to which he is accustomed

(p. 205) O father, father, wipe your face,
I see the tears run from your eye:
My mother is at home sewing of a band;
Alas, dear father, why do you cry?

The king crudely breaks in on this tender scene with the command:

(p. 205) Before me as a mark now let him stand;
I will shoot at him my mind to fulfil.

and the child, for one small moment, sees the approach of a horrible death:

(p. 206) Alas, alas! father, will you me kill?
Good Master King, do not shoot at me,
My mother loves me best of all.

In his final speech, the child shows his rising panic by the disjointed thoughts which run through his head. Why will his father let this happen to him? Will the king show mercy? The words, "Good, Master King", give us an ironic picture of what a king ought to be; the king is "master" over his subjects, but is only to deserve this right if he does not misuse this power, if he is "good". How will his mother bear this sorrow? Because the child is so clearly portrayed and so innocent of the kind of evil which is apparent in the rest of the world, the scene gains dramatic intensity.

The dramatisation of the destruction of the innocent child, who slowly comes to the realisation of what is in store for him, has its roots, of course, in the Abraham and Isaac scenes in the different Mystery cycles, the most famous of which is the Brome play of Abraham and Isaac. Here, too, Isaac remembers his loving mother :

But, father, I pray you once more,
None of this to my mother tell.
For if she knew, she would weep full sore;
For I wis, father, she loved me full well.[1]

If we look forward to Macbeth's murder of the young Macduff, which is especially relevant here as Macbeth, like Cambyses, is the story of the bloody tyrant, who moves from one dreadful deed to the next and to his final retribution, we find the same tender mother and child relationship contrasted with the cruelty of his murderers. The young Macduff is as innocent of the world as this young child and as innocent of any selfishness. His last words show his concern only for his mother;

(IV, ii, 84) He has killed me, mother:
Run away, I pray you.

and his innocent heroism is a further accusation against his bloody

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[1]"The Sacrifice of Isaac" (Brome Manuscript), Religious Drama II, ed. E. Martin Browne (New York : Meridan Books Inc., Living Age Books, 1960), p.64.

murderers.[1]

Cambyses is without compassion. He is concerned only with proving that he does not get drunk. A knight is ordered to cut out the child's heart to prove to Praxaspes that the King's aim was true. The king is unaware of any immorality in his deed. He says:

(p. 207) Esteem thou may'st right well thereby,
No drunkard is the king,
That in the midst of all his cups
Could do this valiant thing. /underlining mine/

Praxaspes is left alone to mourn his son's death. His wife enters too, to add even more tears to this pathetic scene. Their ornate human suffering is a further contrast to the unfeeling and wilful murder which has just been committed :[2]

(p. 208) With velvet paps I gave thee suck,
With issue from my breast,
And danced thee upon my knee
To bring thee unto rest.
Is this the joy of thee I reap?
O king of tiger's brood!
O tiger's whelp, hadst thou the heart,
To see this child's heart-blood?

When they leave, carrying the child, Ambidexter enters. He is on familiar terms with the audience, where he believes his Cousin

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[1]Cf. also the scene between Hubert and Arthur, King John, IV, i, and the scenes with the young princes (although their murder is reported) in Richard III, III, i, 1-150, and IV, iii, 9-19. In all these scenes the innocent victims are given much stronger parts, the Prince is much more precocious than this young boy; Arthur is able to persuade Hubert not to burn out his eyes. Perhaps all innocent victims of cruel acts (cf. King Lear), take their cue from these earlier plays.

[2]Cf. Macduff when he hears the news of the murder of his wife and children :

(IV,iii, 216) ....All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? Oh hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?

and, especially, The Spanish Tragedy:

(II,iv, 90) O poor Horatio, what hadst thou misdone,
To leese thy life, ere life was new begun?
O wicked butcher, whatsoe'er thou wert,
How could thou strangle virtue and desert?

and,
(II,iv, 104) Then is he gone? and is my son gone too?
O, gush out, tears, fountains and floods of tears;
Blow, sighs, and raise an everlasting storm;
For outrage fits our cursed wretchedness.

Cutpurse is also sitting. He comments on what we have seen:

(p. 209) How like you Sisamnes for using of me?
He play'd with both hands, but he sped ill favouredly.
The king himself was godly uptrained;
He professed virtue, but I think it was feigned:
He plays with both hands good deeds and ill;
But it was no good deed Praxaspes' son for to kill:
As he for the good deed on the judge was commended,
For all his deeds else he is reprehended,

and prophesies that Cambyses will continue in his infamous career "against his own grace." The introduction of the Vice into the story is an attempt to give a structural unity to the play and in his new rôle he plays chorus, prophet, compère and villain. In the next scene he steps out of his allegorical rôle and, like Iago, takes an active part in deceiving Cambyses in order to influence the subsequent tragic murder.

Lord Smirdis is Cambyses's brother. He enters and tells his two companions, Attendance and Diligence, that he is uneasy about his brother's misdeeds. Ambidexter advises Lord Smirdis to keep very much in the background. One day he may himself be king, and then he can reform what has gone wrong. Smirdis agrees that this is good advice and his two friends swear to help him to remain in the king's favour.

In this economical use of the allegorical characters, similar to the scene with Proof and Trial, the author implies several stages of action and gives the play a depth which it is impossible to convey in actual time of performance. It also gives us a clue to the character of Smirdis, which is one of conscientious allegiance to the king, while the fact that he is surrounded by such solemn counsellors makes him an obvious foil to his profligate brother, whose career we are watching. In staging later Elizabethan plays, attention should be given to this kind of short-hand allegory which may not always be explicitly stated, but could be implied in speech or dress.

At this moment, the king enters and asks why Smirdis has been avoiding him. Smirdis protests his loyalty to the King, but Cambyses, on a whisper from Ambidexter, asks Smirdis to wait for him at court.

As Smirdis leaves the king comments :

(p. 213) My lord, my brother Smirdis is
Of youth and manly might;
And in his sweet and pleasant face
My heart doth take delight,

but he is reminded that Smirdis is next in succession to the kingdom. Ambidexter is quick to press home the idea, not yet voiced, that Smirdis would like to be king. He cleverly turns his own advice to Smirdis into a diabolical plot against the king:

(p. 214) And if it please your grace (O king),
I heard him say,
For your death unto the god[s]
Day and night he did pray:
He would live so virtuously,
And get him such a praise,
That Fame by trump his due deserts
His honour should up-raise.

When challenged on the truth of this statement, Ambidexter will not swear to it: "I think so, if it please your grace, but I cannot tell" (p. 215). The king realizes that Ambidexter may be lying, but he is incensed at the idea that Smirdis could become king. Like Macbeth, he says:

(p. 215) Shall he succeed when I am gone,
To have more praise than I?
Were he father, as brother mine,
I swear that he shall die.

When Cambyses has swept out to pursue his murderous plans, Ambidexter is again left alone with the audience. He is delighted with his new success:

(p. 215) How like ye now, my masters? doth not this gear cotton?
The proverb old is verified, soon ripe and soon rotten.
He will not be quiet, till his brother he kill'd;

He calls once more to his Cousin Cutpurse in the audience and reminds him : "If ye be taken, cousin, ye must look through a rope." (p. 216). The Vice connects the audience and the characters in the play. He is both villain, (like his offspring Iago), and chorus, but he is more than that. He represents the evil side of characters like Sisamnes and Cambyses and can only succeed where evil is already present (a comparison with the witches in Macbeth is perhaps fruitful in this context), and he represents also the ugly, evil side of life; the hangman's rope, the rotten fruit, which are the wages of sin and correspond to the dreadful punishment which awaits all sinners at the Day of Judgement. Like Edmund in King Lear, he is both endearing and appalling, he amuses us, but he fills us with loathing. Sin has always been like this and

the Morality Plays have always recognised the attractiveness of sin, so that it is not surprising that the Vice should emerge in this form. The World laughs at our garment of innocence and suavely makes us in his own image, but later the easy and happy life becomes deadly serious and we find ourselves totally lost.

> I am in blood
> Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er.[1]

In the next scene Smirdis is seen walking alone. The stage direction reads: "Enter Murder and Cruelty with bloody hands," (p. 216). These characters are not First and Second Murderers, but are emblematic of the character of a king who can murder his own brother.[2] Murder says:

> (p. 217) King Cambyses hath sent us unto thee,
> Commanding us straitly without mercy or favour,
> Upon thee to bestow our behaviour;
> With Cruelty to murder you, and make you away.

They are dressed to show their character and their bloody hands are emblems of their calling. One cannot help but be reminded once more of Macbeth, both of his first entrance on the stage after Duncan's murder, when he appears with his bloody hands, and of the many references to blood on his hands, (and on his wife's), and the impossibility of cleansing them. Angus says :

> (V,ii, 16) Now does he feel
> His secret murders sticking to his hands;

In Cambyses the murder is bloody. They stab Smirdis in several places and another stage direction reads: "A little bladder of vinegar pricked" (p. 217). They take him away to the king.

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[1] Macbeth, III, iv, 136-138.

[2] Cf. Macbeth:

> (I,iii, 137) Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings:
> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man that function
> Is smothered in surmise ....

Richard II:

> (I,ii, 18) One flourishing branch of his most royal root,
> Is cracked, and all the precious liquor spilt,
> Is hacked down, and his summer leaves all faded,
> By envy's hand, and murder's bloody axe ....

Two country bumpkins, Hob and Lob, come in. They are on their way to market with eggs, butter, geese and pigs. They talk about the king and his dreadful deeds :

(p.219) Lob : Zome zay he deal cruelly, his brother he did kill;
And also a goodly young lad's heart-blood he did spill.

Ambidexter stops them:

(p. 220) Of the king's cruelty I did hear you talk,
I insure you he is a king most vile and pernicious;
His doings and life are odious and vicious.

When Hob and Lob agree heartily, Ambidexter first arrests them as traitors and then sets them fighting with each other. Ambidexter, like the Vices in The Conflict of Conscience, is totally cynical. His activities are purposeless and end always in disaster of some kind or another and his evil influence is felt throughout society. The fight is stopped by Hob's wife, Marian - may-be-good who beats them all with a broom, makes Hob and Lob shake hands, and chases Ambidexter off the stage.

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At this moment Venus and blind Cupid enter. Cupid will shoot an arrow at Cambyses to make him fall in love with his kinswoman. Although Cyrus, Cambyses's father, was compared earlier in the play to Mars, these Greek deities appear incongruously in the Morality framework. They are, however, no strangers to English literature, as any reading of Chaucer and Lydgate will testify and even in the homiletic literature there is an interesting story in Handlying Synne where an old monk was too harsh on a hermit who had temptations of the flesh. The Abbot prayed that the old monk should also feel temptation. After he had prayed he saw a black man shoot arrows at the monk and wound him :

þe arwes were temptacyons
And sharpë sterynges, and felons;
So many and smart he hem hadde
þat he wate as he had be madde.[1]

x x x

A lord, lady and waiting-maid enter. They bring with them all the freshness and gentleness which this sombre play lacks. The lord

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[1] Robert of Brunne, Handlying Synne, op.cit., l. 8517.

speaks of the beauty of the countryside:

> (p. 226) The blowing buds whose savoury scents
> Our sense will much delight.
> The sweet smell of musk-white rose,
> To please the appetite.

The king sees her, and Venus commands Cupid to shoot his arrow at him. Cambyses is inflamed with passion. In spite of the fact that she is his cousin, he is determined to marry her. Afraid that it is against nature, and against God's will, she refuses him, but the king is determined that anyone who speaks against the marriage shall lose his head. The lady gives in :

> (p. 231) O God, forgive me, if I do amiss;
> The king by compulsion enforceth me this.

x x x

When they have left, Ambidexter returns. He tells us about the wedding, and the feasting and celebrations which accompanied it. He philosophises shortly and comically on the trials of marriage, especially marriage with a shrew. In this rôle he is the wordly compère of the show, filling in the gaps, jollying the audience and making the short passage of time correspond to a break in the stage action.[1]

At this moment Preparation enters to lay a cloth for a banquet. Here one can agree with Spivack that the allegory is unnecessary. Preparation is merely a servant. The king and queen and lords enter to the banquet. Music plays. The king tells the queen a story about two puppies from one litter. The one was set to fight against a young lion.

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[1] Cf. again Ambidexter's descendants; Iago is always cynical about life and rails amusingly against women, <u>Othello</u>:

> (II,i, 110) Come on, come on; you are pictures out of doors,
> bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens;
> saints in your injuries, devils being offended; players in
> your housewifery, and hussies in your beds.

See also Edmund, <u>King Lear</u>, on bastards:

> (I,ii, 9) Why brand they us
> With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
> Who, in the lusty stealth of Nature, take
> More composition and fierce quality
> Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
> Go to th 'creating a whole tribe of fops
> Got 'tween sleep and wake? ...
> . . . .
> Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

When his brother saw that he was in trouble, he came immediately to his aid and the two puppies defeated the lion together. The queen weeps when she hears this and when she is asked why she weeps,she tells him that he did not have such brotherly affection :

> (p. 237) But faithful love was more in dog,
> Than it was in your grace.

The king ends the banquet in a fit of temper:

> (p. 238) It did me good his death to have,
> So will it to have thine;
> What friendship he had at my hands,
> The same even thou shalt find.
> . . . .
> By Cruel's sword, and Murder fell,
> Even thou shalt lose the breath.
> Ambidexter, see with speed
> To Cruelty ye go;
> Cause him hither to approach,
> Murder with him also.

In spite of the queen's protestations,she recalls her loving acts towards him, she spoke only in tender love for him, and the pleas of the lords for mercy and love, the king tells Murder and Cruelty, who have now arrived, to take her away and kill her.

When the king and the lords leave, the queen shows dignity and patience. She sings a sad farewell to all the joys of the court and leaves with Murder and Cruelty.

Ambidexter enters. At last he is touched and finds no cause for laughter. All the court is in mourning. Surely now the king must die :

> (p. 244) He hath shed so much blood, that his will be shed :
> If it come to pass, in faith, then he is sped.

x x x

At last the king's life is at an end. The stage direction reads: "Enter the King, without a gown, a sword thrust up into his side bleeding." (p. 244). As he leaped up onto his horse, his sword slipped from its scabbard and penetrated his side. This is no accidental death, but divine retribution for his misdeeds.[1]

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[1]It was generally accepted that divine retribution would be directly meted out to criminals in this world. See H.H. Adams, English Domestic and Homiletic Tragedy, 1575-1642 (Columbia University Press: 1942).

(p. 245) And death hath caught me with his dart, for want of blood I spy.
Thus gaping here on ground I lie, for nothing I do care;
A just reward for my misdeeds my death doth plain declare.
/Here let him quake and stir/

Ambidexter, seeing he is dead, makes a hasty farewell to the audience in case he should be accused of the king's death.

Three lords enter to moralise on his death. The first lord says:

(p. 246) A just reward for his misdeeds
The God above hath wrought;
For certainly the life he led
Was to be counted nought.

The Epilogue craves pardon for the author if anything offended the audience, and prays for Queen Elizabeth and her council that they shall be just rulers and reign for many years: "To be guided by truth, and defended from wrong."

x x x

Although the play follows the events as they are set out in all the stories about King Cambyses and shows no coherent dramatic form, and although it portrays with too much bloody detail, his violent and vicious acts, it does provide a dramatic picture of a tyrant whose progressive acts of cruelty end in his own violent death. Retribution is sure for all those who turn against the accepted moral code and Cambyses's death was foretold by Ambidexter as the only possible end for such a cruel king. This discussion of the story has tried to show that by putting this story into a Morality framework, Preston is able to give a homiletic unity to the play, while his development of the Vice, the allegorical characters and the comic scenes is far closer to the Elizabethan drama than to the Morality Plays from which they came.

x x x

Horestes[1]

The play tells the classical story of Orestes's revenge on his mother and Aegisthus for their murder of his father, but it opens

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[1]"A Newe Enterlude of Vice, Conteyninge the History of Horestes, with the cruell revengment of his Fathers death, vpon his one naturtll Mother. by John Pikeryng," Quellen des Weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare, ed. Alois Brandl (Strassburg; Karl J. Trübner, 1898), p. 491.

with comedy and the Vice.[1]

The Vice enters with his customary familiar greeting to the audience :

(l. 1) A Syrra! nay soft, what? let me see,
God morrowe to you, syr, how do you fare?

Horestes will soon be "in this lande, /i.e. Mycenae/ revenged to bee:" (l. 14). Two country bumpkins, Rusticus and Hodge, enter, deep in conversation. They are also waiting for Horestes to punish Egistus. He fled to Crete, to King Idumeus, when his father was slain by the evil pair and Rusticus hopes to see him back soon. Hodge is enthralled and excited. He is afraid of war and yet thinks that he has little to lose :

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[1]An example of the prejudiced way in which earlier critics look at these hybrid plays is shown in Cunliffe's summary of the plot of Horestes. The reader will be able to judge whether, by concentrating mainly on the comic elements, he has done justice to the play and whether his conclusion that, "such a crude production could never have been performed before any audience but one of the lowest description", has any true validity. Here is his summary :

"The Vice, who lends the play some semblance of unity, opens the action with a conversation, apparently with a soldier who is on the battlements of the city of Mycenae. "Hear entryth Rusticus and hodge." An interchange of incivilities ends with the traditional stage quarrel. "Up with thy staf, and be readye to smyte; but hodge smit first; and let ye vise thwacke them both and run out." Horestes, Idumeus, and Councell forward the action a little, soon to give way to Haultersycke and Hempstringe, who sing and "fyght at bofites with fystes." "Let ye drum play and enter Horestis with his band; marche about the stage." Horestes takes leave of Idumeus. Egistus and Clytemnestra enter singing, and hear the news of the advance of "the mighty knight Horestes and a mighty powsaunt band." After a comic scene in which "Sodyer" is beaten by a woman whom he has taken prisoner, "Horestes entrith with his bande and marcheth about the stage... Let ye trumpet go towarde the Citie and blowe... Let ye trumpet leaue soundyng and let Harrauld go out here... Go and make your liuely battel and let it be longe ere you can win ye Citie, and when you haue won it, let Horestes bringe out his mother by the arme, and let ye droum sease playing and the trumpet also, when she is taken; let her knele down and speake... Let Egistus enter and set hys men in a raye, and let the drom playe tyll Horestes speaketh... stryke vp your drum and fyght a good whil, and then let sum of Egistus men flye, and then take hym and let Horestes drau hym vyolentlye, and let ye drums sease."

Then follows the hanging of Egistus from the battlements in full view of the audience : "fling him of ye lader and then let on bringe in his mother Clytemnestra; but let her loke wher Egistus hangeth." Clytemnestra goes out weeping to her death, and the army of Horestes enters the city gate. After another song by the Vice, Menalaus gives his daughter, Hermione, in marriage to Horestes, who, with the consent of Nobilitye and Cominyalte, is crowned king by Truth and Dewty."

John W. Cunliffe (ed), Introduction, Early English Classical Tragedies (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1912), pp. lxix and lxx.

(l. 30) Jesu, nabor, with vyar and zworde? Zaye you zo?
By gys, nabor, chyll zave one, I tro;

The Vice pretends to be a poor traveller and the two bumpkins decide to attack him. They fight, but the Vice, proves too strong for them and Hodge and Rusticus beg him to stop. The Vice introduces himself as <u>Patience</u>, but Hodge misunderstands and thinks he is calles <u>Past Shame</u>. The Vice demonstrates to us how he can sow discord and suspicion. He tells Rusticus that Hodge has harmed his "Hogge" and goads them into a fight. The Vice hits them both indiscriminately and then leaves them nursing their wounds. They make friends immediately after he has left.

The Vice has not been given a specific "exit" direction and may be hiding on the stage when Horestes enters. We are now in Crete. Like Hamlet, Horestes finds himself in a terrible dilemma. His mother has murdered his father and married her adulterous lover. Thinking he is alone he pours out all his grief and anger :

(l. 171) To caull to minde the crabyd rage of mothers yll attempt
Prouokes me now all pyttie quight from me to be exempt.
Yet lo, dame nature teles me, that I must with willing mind
Forgiue the faute and to pytie some what to be inclynd.
But lo, behould, thad vlltres dame on hourdome murder vill
Hath heaped vp, not contented, her sponsaule bed to fyll
With forrayne loue; but sought also, my fatal thred to share,
As erst, before my fathers fyll, in sonder she did pare.
. . . .
Oh godes, therefore, sith you be iust, vnto whose poure and wyll
All thing in heauen, and earth also, obaye and sarue vntyll,
Declare to me your gracious mind : shall I reuenged be
Of good Kinge Agamemnones death, ye godes declare to me!
Or shall I let the adulltres dame styll wallow in her sin?
Oh godes of war, gide me a right, when I shall war begyn.

Horestes really wants only one reply. He calls to the gods, but especially to the gods of war, and the question is not so much whether he should take revenge on his mother, but whether he would have their sanction and their help. "Dame Nature" speaks against such a course, but he sets against her pleas the dreadful crimes his mother has committed both against his father and against himself. The Vice is quick to take advantage of this situation. He steps forward :

(l. 189) Warre, quoth he? I, war in dede, and trye it by the sworde;
God saue you, syr; the godes to ye haue sent this kind of word,
That in the hast you armour take, your fathers fooe to slaye,
And I as gyde with you shall go, to gyde you on the way.
By me, thy mind, ther wrathful dome shalbe performd in dede.

. . . .

For to reuenge thy fathers death; for this they all haue ment,
Which thing for to demonstrat, lo, to the they haue sent me.

Horestes accepts that the Vice is the messenger of the gods, but wants to know if he must immediatly take revenge. The Vice quickly notices the hesitation in Horestes's speech. He assures Horestes that all the gods are agreed that Agamemnon's death should be revenged :

(l. 201) Tout, tout, put of that childish loue; couldst thou with a good wil
Contentyd be, that one should so they father seme to kyll?
Why walyst you, man? leaue of, I say; pluck corrage vnto the;
This lamentation sone shall fade, if thou imbrasydest me.

Horestes, who is obviously showing great emotional stress, is reassured when the Vice says that among the gods he is known as Courage. As the Vice speaks, Horestes becomes more steadfast in his purpose :

(l. 213) My thinkes, I fele all feare to fley, all sorrow, griefe and payne;
My thinkes, I fele corrage prouokes my wil forward againe
For to reuenge my fathers death and infamey so great.
Oh, how my hart doth boyle in dede, with firey perching heate!
Corrage, now welcom, by the godes ....

Pikeryng has demonstrated a remarkable use of stage-craft. In two short scenes he has told us all we need to know about the murder of Agamemnon by his wife and her lover and of Horestes's need to take revenge on his own mother. In addition he has created a Vice who has shown that he delights in discord and who is the mainspring of the action. The Vice, who introduces himself as Courage, but could really be called War or Revenge (he is certainly Past Shame), has falsely assured Horestes that the gods have sent him a message to kill his mother. It is on this assumption that Horestes acts, although it is against Dame Nature, his natural love for his mother. This moral play, in which the Vice has started a chain of events which we know to be wrong, promises a tremendous conflict within the mind of Horestes and

could bring about the birth of a tragic hero. We shall see that this promise is not fulfilled, but it is hinted at and the audience, at least, is left in no doubt about the vicious and cruel aspects of the revenge play. Later revenge plays do not hope for any kind of happy ending. Revenge heroes accept their own death as part of a chain of events, which they themselves set in motion, and choose death willingly, if this also means the death of those whom they hate.[1]

Whether Pikeryng uses Caxton's <u>Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye</u> (tr. c. 1475), as Farnham suggests[2] or whether he did in fact read Euripides's <u>Electra</u>, as Brandl suggests,[3] the shape of the play is dictated by the Morality framework and Horestes's dilemma is created by the old Morality "sin" of mistaking Evil for Good. Horestes may not, according to Christian ethic, take his mother's life. It was believed that God, Himself, would punish Clytemnestra and Egistus in His own way. The Vice, like all evil characters in the Moralities, deceives Horestes and steers him on a course of action which should lead to eternal damnation.

The Vice urges Horestes to seek help from Indumeus, king of

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[1]See also Belimperia in <u>The Spanish Tragedy</u>:

(V,iii, 88) But, were she able, thus she would revenge
Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble Prince:
[stab him]
And on herself she would be thus reveng'd
[stab herself]

And Hieronimo kills himself after he has accomplished his revenge. See also Vendice in <u>The Revenger's Tragedy</u>:

(V,iii,151) And now, my lord, since we are in for ever,
This work was ours, which else might have been slipped!
And if we list, we could have nobles clipped,
And go for less than beggars; but we hate
To bleed so cowardly : we have enough,
I'faith, we're well, our mother turned, our sister true,
We die after a nest of dukes. Adieu!

<u>Webster and Tourneur</u>, ed. Havelock Ellis (London: The Mermaid Series, 1888).

[2]Willard Farnham, op.cit., p.259.

[3]Alois Brandl (ed.), op.cit., Introduction, p. xciii.

Crete. Like Lucio in Measure for Measure,[1] he stage-manages this scene and prompts Horestes to greater passion, when he seems to be slow in asking for help. He urges Horestes to delay no longer:

(1. 223) Faull to it, then, and slacke no time; for tyme, once past away,
Doth cause repentence, but to late to com, old foulks do say.

Once Horestes has kneeled down and stated his position, the Vice knows that he has succeeded in his objective and Horestes is set on a course which will lead to war and death:

(1. 255) It is not Idumeus that hath poure to let
Horestes fro sekinge his mother to kyll.
Tout, let hym alone, hele haue his owne wyll.

Idumeus takes time to consult with Councell, but finally grants Horestes an army of a thousand men to revenge the wrong done to his father and to claim his heritage. The Vice is overjoyed at this prospect of destruction: "Tout, tout, man, seke to dystroye, as doth the flaming fier," (1. 287).

In spite of this undertone of sin, Horestes is praised by Councell and Idumeus for his manliness and courage. They accept, without question, his right to revenge his father's death and Councell suggests that his action will be an example to others to refrain from such wickedness.

War is now inevitable. As a sardonic comment on the non-heroic side of war, two old comrades in arms enter. Their names, Haultersycke and Hempstringe, give us an idea of the kind of people they are and the kind of lives they lead. Hempstringe is arranging that a whore should accompany them for his master's pleasure. They fight because

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[1]Cf. Measure for Measure, II, ii. Lucio encourages Isabella to plead with Angelo for mercy for her brother. At first she is cold, but later, with Lucio's encouragement and approval she becomes more eloquent and passionate. The dialogue between Isabella and Angelo is punctured by short comments of approval or disapproval by Lucio such as:

(II,ii, 43) Give't not o'er so : to him again, entreat him,
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown.
You are too cold : if you should need a pin,
You could not with more tame a tongue desire it :
To him, I say.

Haultersycke accuses Hempstringe of being no fit soldier and they exit fighting.

x x x

Immediately after this cynical exposure of war and heroism, Horestes enters with his men. They march round and the drums play. Horestes kneels and asks a blessing from the gods. He prays for courage (we are reminded again of false courage, which the Vice represents; a love of war and strife). Nature appears. The stage director reads, "Nature stand up", which probably means that she was concealed until the moment she was needed. She begs Horestes to desist from this action: "Nay, stey, my child, from mothers bloud with draw they bloody hand". (l. 408). The linking of blood - murder - guilt is to become part of the language of the play and merits separate discussion later in this chapter. A comparison with Macbeth is inevitable, but only shows us the kind of material with which Shakespeare was working, which is, after all, the object of this study.

Horestes argues that he cannot forgive his father's death and in spite of her pain at his birth and her care of him, he cannot leave his father's death unrevenged.

Nature appeals to his gentle side, his love for his mother:

(l. 416) Canst thou, alacke, vnhappey wight, consent reuenged to be
On her whose pappes before this time hath giuen foud to the?
In whom I, nature, formyd the, as best I thought it good?
Oh, now requight her for her pain, withdraw thy hands from bloud.

Horestes says sternly that he is but an instrument of the laws of gods and men. His murder of her is not a crime, but fulfilment of the law.

Nature pleads that even the cruellest of beasts does not kill its mother:

(l. 429) Leue now, I say, Horestes myne, and to my wordes giue place,
Lest that of men this facte of thine may iudged for to be:
Ne lawe, in south, ne iustys eke, but cruell tyrancy.

Horestes quotes Pythagoras to prove that administration of the law is no tyranny, but Nature reminds him of the terrible fate which overcame

Oedipus after he had killed his father. Horestes repeats his one argument; blood cries for blood, revenge must be taken :

(l. 443) For this is true yt bloud for bloud my fathers deth doth crave,
And lawe of godes and lawe of man doth eke request ye same.
Therefore, oh nature, sease to praye, I force not of my name.

The internal nature of this debate is emphasised by the sudden contrast between the noise of drums and marching and the passionate dialogue between the kneeling Horestes and (his own) Nature. Pikeryng is to use this sudden contrast in all the most moving scenes in the play.

Horestes's mind, however, is intent only on shedding blood, it is focussed firmly on the actual, physical murder scene :

(l. 406) My hands do thryst her blod to haue, nought can my mind content
Tyll yt on her I haue performed, oh gods, your iust iudgment.

Therefore, although Horestes speaks of Justice, he really means Revenge, and Nature represents all the tender forces of love and pity which are of no avail against this consuming and righteous thirst for revenge (cf. ll. 173-4 already quoted).

Idumeus arrives to say goodbye to Horestes and his army. They embrace and Horestes, like a mediaeval knight, leads his forces off to battle. Idumeus laments the bloody revenge which is to follow, but Councell says that this revenge is necessary :

(l. 528) For, lo, the vnyuersaull scoll of all the world we know
Is once the pallace of a kinge, where vyces cheife do flow;
And as to waters from on head and fountayne oft do spring,
So vyce and vertue oft do flo from pallace of a kinge;
Whereby the people seing that the kinge adycte to be,
To prosecute the lyke they all do labor, as we se.
Therefore the gods haue wylled thus, Horestes for to take
His iorney and a recompence for fatheres death to make.[1]

x x x

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[1] It was generally accepted that the royal house, once corrupt, could set a bad example to the rest of the country and so a general corruption could be the result of a licentious or vicious court, cf. The Duchess of Malfi :

(I,i, 12) Considering duly, that a prince's court
Is like a common fountain, whence should flow
Pure silver drops in general; but if 't chance
Some curs'd example poison't near the head,
Death and diseases through the whole land spread.

Some kind of description of the stage is necessary before we proceed in our discussion of the play. Although both Horestes and Cambyses end with a prayer for Queen Elizabeth, they both show in their list of characters that they could be played by six men, or six men and a boy (for the female rôles, children etc.). This means that they could be produced by a company of players belonging to a nobleman's household who would play at court, but would also tour the provinces.[1] This company would need some kind of "stage" on which to perform and about this there has been much speculation. In Cambyses the action is unlocalised, the banquet is set out of doors and the various murders take place out of doors, but in Horestes we have two distinct countries, Crete and Mycenae, and Mycenae is represented as a walled city which is attacked by Horestes and his army. This is, in fact, a development from the castle scene which was well known, both in the ancient Moralities like The Castle of Perseverance, and in the city pageants, and could be equally well staged indoors in a nobleman's house, outdoors in an inyard, in the travelling round theatre that Richard Southern[2] describes so convincingly, or on two pageant wagons, with "houses" on them, set side by side to give the audience an impression of space and of two separate countries.[3] In Appius and Virginia there is a definite reference to a scaffold or raised stage. A stage direction reads, "Here let Virginia go about the scaffold"[4] Later various characters come to him and the action continues, still, presumably, on the "scaffold."

Although we can only speculate about the theatre at this time, we can see that in this play there are two separate acting areas, firstly the country of Crete, and secondly the walled city of Mycenae. Now

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[1] See Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), Vol. II, pp.98 et.seq.
E.K. Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1903), Vol. II, p.189 et.seq.

[2] Richard Southern, Medieval Theatre in the Round, op.cit., pp.123-145.

[3] See Leslie Hotson, Shakespeare's Wooden O (London : Rupert Hart-Davies, 1960), p.61 et.seq., illustration p.79.

[4] A Select Collection of Old English Plays, ed. W.C. Hazlitt, op.cit., Vol IV, p. 141.

the figures of Clytemnestra and Egistus appear on the walls of Mycenae. They sing a beautiful, haunting Elizabethan part song with a delicate refrain. The song tells the story of Paris's love for Helen and her love for him and vows that they love each other as intensely and passionately as these two famous lovers. This delicate and lovely lyric is sung by the two murderers who will soon be killed and is another instance of the way the play is built up of many discordant elements. Dramatically, however, the contrast between this touching scene between the two lovers, and the drums and trumpets of war, is completely successful. Egistus vows his love to Clytemnestra, but is interrupted by the blast of a trumpet. A messenger arrives to tell them that Horestes and his army have landed and are marching towards Mycenae, killing people and burning castles and towns on their way.

Clytemnestra immediately takes the lead. She will defend the city while Egistus raises an army. When they retire to make preparations for war, we are briefly shown a picture of what war means to the common citizen. The stage direction reads : "Enter a woman like a begger, rounning before they sodier; but let the sodier speke first; but let ye woman crye first pitifulley", (l. 626). The soldier threatens the woman with his sword; she begs for mercy :

> (l. 628) Oh, with a good wyll I yeld me to the,
> Good master sodier; haue mercye on me!
> My husband thou hast slayne in most cruell wyse;
> Yet this my prayer do now not dyspyse.

The soldier takes her prisoner, but she surprises him, takes away his sword and beats him until he, in turn, begs for mercy and becomes her prisoner. She then returns him his sword and they go out together. The comic interludes in this play are truly anti-heroic and cynically show us the way in which the common man suffers for the glorious deeds of his masters. They provide light relief (possibly unnecessarily), and give us an impression of a country (i.e. stage) teeming with life and events, making Horestes's actions greater and more important because of the amount of people involved in them.

x x x

The Vice now enters. He is in high spirits as all his plans have been successful. He teases and jokes with the audience and finally reveals his true name. He is Revenge :

(l. 664) But in this stower who beares the fame
But onley I?
Reuenge, Reuenge, wyll haue the name,
Or he wyll dye.
I spare no wight, I feare none yll,
But with this blade I will them kyll;
For when myne eayre is set on fyare,
I rap them, I snap them, that is my desyare.

x x x

Horestes, with his army, marches about the stage and sends a herald to Clytemnestra to ask her to surrender the city to him. She, of course, refuses, so Horestes exhorts his men to fight valiantly, to spare no-one except his mother, who must be taken prisoner alive. The Vice is at his side to encourage both Horestes and his men to fight valiantly. The trumpets sound and the battle begins. The stage directions are worth quoting in full :

Go and make your liuely battel and let it be longe, eare you can win ye Citie, and when you haue won it, let Horestes bringe out his mother by the armes, and let ye droum sease playing and the trumpet also, when she is taken; let her knele downe and speake.

The sudden silence after the noise of battle frames this moment of confrontation between mother and son.[1] This is the climax of the

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[1]Cf. Coriolanus:

(V,iii, 22) My wife comes foremost; then the honoured mould
Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand
The grandchild of her blood.

Throughout this scene, in all the arguments used by Volumnia, the main undercurrent is that of a mother pleading to a son. She kneels to him :

(l. 56) What's this?
Your knees to me? to your corrected son? [raises her]
Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars.

When she thinks they have pleaded in vain, Volumnia says :

(l. 177) Come let us go:
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
His wife in Corioli, and his child
like him by chance.

and Coriolanus cries :

(l. 182) O mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!

play, for which the Vice is waiting, and which was feared by Nature and therefore also by Horestes. Clytemnestra begs for mercy, but Horestes says :

(l. 736) For to repent this facte of thyne, now that it is to late,
Can not be thought a recompence for kylling of thy mate.

He commands the soldiers to take her out and guard her. The Vice is triumphant and gloats over the fallen Clytemnestra :

(l. 740) Nay, far you wel; in fayth you haue an aunswer, get you hence,
Oundes of me, I would not be in her cote for forty pence.
Nay, nay, a way, far well, a dew; now, now it is to late,
When stede is stollen, for you, in south, to shut the stable gate.

Horestes sighs and the Vice immediately fears he will not fulfil his purpose of killing his mother. He pretends to weep: "O oo oo, you care not for me.....", but Horestes rises and affirms his decision to avenge his father's death :

(l. 749) By all the godes, my hart dyd fayle, my mother for to se
From hye estate for to be brought to so great myserey,
That all most I had graunted lyfe to her, had not this be,
My fathers death, whose death, in south, chefe causer of was she.

x x x

When Egistus and his army enter, they challenge each other in true mediaeval fashion :

Horestes: (l. 763) Thou traytor to my father dere, what makest the here in feld?
Repent the of thy wyckednes, and to me strayght do yeld.

Egistus: Thou pryncoks boy and bastard slaue, thinks thou me to sub dew?
It lyeth not with in thy powre, thou boye, I tell the trew.
But yf I take thy corpes, it shalbe a fode the byrdes to fede.
Stryke vp your droums and forward now, to wars let vs prosede.

They fight and Egistus is defeated and taken prisoner. He is immediately hanged and Clytemnestra is brought in to look at the body. The Vice brings her in and is particularily cruel and callous towards her. He tells her that her death is sure and that just as she had no mercy in Agamemnon, so Agamemnon's son will have no mercy on her.

Nevertheless, Clytemnestra again begs Horestes for mercy :

(1. 801) Consider that in me thou hadest they **hewmayne shape** composid :
That thou shouldst slay thy mother, son, let it not be disclosyd.

Horestes speaks to her, not like a son, but like an impartial judge. He quotes Socrates and Juvenal; the wicked must be punished as an example to others. He speaks about the Vice and calls him Revenge, as if it were no more unusual a name than any other. He says :

(1. 818) For kyllinge of my father thou now kylled eke shault be.
This thinge to se accomplyshyd reuenge with the shall go;
Now haue her hence, sieth yt you all my iudgment here do kno.

In spite of a reprimand from the Vice, Clytemnestra kneels down in supplication. She asks for pity, but Horestes, who knows that she had no pity on Agamemnon, tells Revenge to take her away and fulfil his judgement. Throughout this scene Clytemnestra has appealed to Horestes only on the grounds that she is his mother and that this murder is therefore unnatural. Horestes has replied always that he is merely the judge passing sentence and that the fact that he is her son is irrelevant. His speeches are formal and full of learned argument. We know that he must feel some doubt about his action because of the debate with Nature and his sighs after Clytemnestra has been taken prisoner. That the author finds his action immoral is inherent in his making the Vice (Courage, Revenge) the mainspring of the action and the familiar of Horestes, but none of these conflicts are allowed to become part of the story. This is frustrating to the modern reader who sees a great play (like Hamlet) in embryo, but the author is intent on giving us a history of Horestes and the searching, psychological framework of the Morality with its emphasis on Good and Evil, is an embarrassment to him because it is continually opening up possibilities for tragedy which he is not prepared to pursue.

x x x

The Vice enters triumphant. He is looking for a new master now that Horestes has accomplished his purpose. He has, in fact, found one in Menalaus, who is coming to seek revenge on Horestes for the murder of his sister-in-law. His catchy song hints at an Horestes

racked by guilt at his unnatural deed, but when we see Horestes later he seems unmoved and repeats all the arguments he has used previously. Like the love lyric sung by Clytemnestra and Egistus, the Vice's song is both musical and haunting.

Fame enters. He is a solemn figure speaking partly in Latin, partly in English. He moralises on himself and on his effect on other people: "As Ouid sayeth, I am, in dede, the spure to each estate;" (l. 865). In contrast to this solemn emblematic figure, the Vice irreverently makes suggestive remarkes to "Mistress Nan", who is obviously one of the audience and meant to be both delighted and embarrassed by his attention.

Fame, in his rôle as messenger, (cf. Fame in Cambyses also), tells us that Menalaus has been "set on fyare" by Revenge, and all the kings of Greece have come together in Athens to give judgement on Horestes. The Vice immediately reacts to this news by rushing off to Athens to be present at the hearing.

x x x

The "trial" of Horestes begins with a procession of the Greek kings through the audience. Provision tells us :

(l. 926) Make roume and gyue place; stand backe there a fore;
For all my speakinge, you presse styll the more.
Gyue rome, I saye, quickeley.....

Menalaus is the prosecutor and asks that Horestes should be exiled from Mycenae. His sister had been killed by her own son and Horestes waged the war in a cruel and merciless manner :

(l. 962) The fatherles he pyttyed not, where as he euer went;
Ye agyd wight whose yeres before their youthly poure had spent,
The mayd whose parentes at the sege, defending of their right,
Was slaine, ye same this tyrant hath oppressyd throuh his might;

Horestes replies that he did not go to take revenge on his father's foes until commanded by the gods : "Whose heastes no man dare once refuse, but wyllingly obaye," (l. 976). Finally, in war, one must be cruel, as cruelty is part of war : "It is no iest, when sodyares ioyne, to fight within a felde." (l. 981).

Idumeus supports Horestes. Strangely, although Horestes speaks of the "godes" in the Greek sense, Idumeus refers to a Christian God :

(l. 986) And as god is most mercyfull, so is he iust lyke wyse,
And wyll correcte most suerley those, that his hestes dispyse.

It is not possible to draw any conclusions from this confusion of the two religions. It seems merely another example of the confusion in the play which makes it so frustrating to study. The Christian ethic, applied in this situation, should lead to conflict and repentance and/or tragedy; but we find that the implications of the Morality techniques are ignored in the unfolding of the story and that this leads to contradictions in character and attitude which remain unresolved.

Nestor takes Horestes's part. His argument is the same as that used by Horestes :

(l. 999) Should Horestes content him selfe, his father slayne to se?
No, no, a ryghtuous facte, I thinke, the same to be in dede,
Syeth that it was accomplysht so, as godes before decrede.

Menalaus says that he himself would have taken revenge on his father's murderer, but that he could never have killed his mother, it would have been against nature.

Idumeus begs Menalaus to forget his sorrow and to try to give the events a more joyful conclusion. Horestes is willing to do all that would please him and craves Menalaus's daughter's hand in marriage. Menalaus gives his friendship to Horestes, and is finally persuaded by Nestor to allow the marriage and to pronounce Horestes his son. They all leave to celebrate the marriage. Like the character Idumeus, this part of the plot is, of course, not in the old classical story, but it is in one of the likely sources for the Play : Caxton's Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye translated from the French of Raoul Lefevre and first printed 1475.[1] A marriage between two houses was often arranged to ensure peace between them. In Caxton's Recuyell, however, there is no contradiction in this ending, as it is never suggested that Horestes did not receive the command from the gods to kill his mother.

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[1] See Willard Farnham, op.cit., p.262.

We must stress again that it is the Morality framework which has given the play its contradictions and potential, although unfulfilled, conflict within the character of Horestes.

x x x

Revenge enters dressed like a beggar with staff, and "a bottell or dyshe and wallet." Now that Horestes is married and at peace, he has no employer. When he tried to come between Menalaus and Horestes he was driven away. He could not attend the wedding :

(l. 1076) for master Amyte
Sot by Menalaus, and bore him companye,
On the other syde Dewtey with Horestes boure swaye,
So that I could not enter, by no kynde of waye.

He hopes to find a new master among women like Xantippe, the shrewish wife of Socrates. He bids the audience farewell and calls :

(l. 1120) Farewell, cosen cutpursse, and be ruled by me,
Or elles you may chaunce to end on a tre.

x x x

As an epilogue, we are shown Horestes and Hermione, accompanied by Nobilitye, Cominyalte, Truth and Dewty. They are all happy together and Horestes asks if any citizen has any grievance. The nobles reply that they are now at peace because there are no civil or foreign wars and Truth and Dewty crown Horestes. The Commons too voice their satisfaction. When Horestes returns to his palace, Truth and Dewty speak to the audience. The lessons to be learnt from the action we have seen are political lessons :

(l. 1165)Truth: A kingdome kept in Amyte, and voyde of dissention,
Ne deuydyd in him selfe by aney kynde of waye,
Neather preuoked by wordes of reprehention,
Must nedes long contynew, as Truth doth say.

Truth says that from this story we may learn that misdeeds will always be punished and that we must imitate Truth. Dewty prays for Queen Elizabeth, and Truth for the Nobility and the Spirituality, the Judges, the Mayors, the Lieutenants of the city and the Commons :

(l. 1204) That eache of them, doinge their dewties a ryght,
May after death possess heauen, to their hartes delyght.

x x x

It seems that Horestes consists of two plays which are not easily reconciled. On the one hand the story of Clytemnestra, Egistus and Horestes is told as a bald history with a moralised end. It is told as it is related to society, much as the different histories in the Mirror for Magistrates point a political rather than personal moral. Great men are examples to lesser men and must be punished when they do wrong in order that all people may see that evil deeds are punished by just retribution. The allegorical figure of Fame belongs in this context. The chorus of Truth and Dewty after the trial scene show that all estates valued, above all, the prospect of a peaceful reign. The writer is not unaware of the common people and their right to some form of good life and sees as an Utopia, a kingdom in which each estate faithfully and peacefully fulfils its function in society. A suggestion that Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon was a veiled allusion to Mary, Queen of Scots and the murder of her husband, serves only to point the same moral, that the Elizabethans valued stability and peace and hoped that Queen Elizabeth would provide just that, both by her own example and by her actions.

On the other hand, we can also distinguish a Morality in which the Vice is the mainspring of the action. Disguised as Courage, he deceives Horestes into accepting Evil as Good and in the events that follow, he becomes part of Horestes's nature so that Horestes can later call him Revenge without feeling any sense of shock. Horestes's inner conflict is shown not so much through his action or speech, although his first speech gives us an insight into a mind full of rage and pain, but through the allegorical debate with Nature. His mother is his victim and her blood symbolises, in the debate, the guilt which will be on his hands if he murders her. The blood-guilt imagery is linked with the Morality theme in the story and must be taken as a reinforcement of that theme : Horestes on his way to war says : "My hands do thryst her blod to haue....." (l. 405). Nature says : "Nay, stey, my child, from mothers bloud with d aw thy bloudy hand". (l. 408), and later : "Not

withstanding from mothers bloud thou must thy hands refrain".(l. 415), and : "Oh, now requight her for her pain, withdraw thy hands from bloud. (l. 419), and again :

> (l. 425) The cruel beasts yt raung in feldes, whose iause to blod ar whet,
> Do not consent their mothers paunch in cruell wise to eate;

but Horestes replies : "For this is true yt bloud for bloud my fathers deth doth craue," (l. 443).

These references to blood are present only in the scenes which show the conflict between Good and Evil (i.e. the Morality conflict) and do not appear in such scenes which belong more properly to the political, History Play. Although Idumeus does say : "... for now on bloud Horestes mind is set," (l. 510), it does not form part of a web of imagery like the former quotations.

Finally, in the confrontation of mother and son, the theme recurs; Clytemnestra pleads :

> (l. 730) Yf aney sparke of mothers bloud remaynd within thy breste,
> Oh gratious child, let now thine eares vnto my words be prest.

Later she wails :

> (l. 791) Ah heauey fate. . . . .
> Syth nothing can Horestes hands from sheding bloud restraine.

and : "Alacke alacke, with drawe thy hand, my son, from sheding bloud." (l. 821). These references to blood establish a moral framework within which Horestes has committed a dreadful sin, although he has been betrayed by the Vice into accepting it as the only possible thing to do.

Linked to this sin is Horestes's "trial" which is reminiscent of the famous Parliament of Heaven which appears as one of the Morality plots, both in the Coventry Cycle and within The Castle of Perseverance. Although Menalaus accepts that Horestes was commanded by the gods to seek revenge (and at this stage there is no attempt made by the author to contradict this statement), he cannot accept that anyone could kill his own mother. A reconciliation is brought about by Truth and Dewty and this reconsiliation is made possible through a spirit of Amity (Peace?) which pervades the last scene, and to which Revenge refers when he says

he is no longer welcome in their company. It is as if the biblical conception : "Mercy and truth are met together; righeousness and peace have kissed each other," has been translated into a modern political context. It is possible, in this scene, to see a reconciliation of the two disparate plots, in that the Morality machinery is here used to point a political moral, and in this way the two different themes are brought together, but there are too many loose ends to make the characters convincing and the reader is disappointed to find that what promised to be a story of internal conflict, and possible tragedy, is smoothed over by half-truths into becoming a mere "History" with a political moral.

However, the play has shown us that the addition of a Morality framework to a classical story gives the play a possibility of greater depth, greater conflict in the personality of the hero, and therefore a deeper personal insight; although it does seem that this mixture of classical and Morality themes, Christian and Pagan world views, leads to a duality of hardly reconcilable views of life and world.

When the allegory is superimposed in the classical story, experimentation with the allegory is inevitable. The Vice has emerged as showman and clown as well as a spirit of evil which pervades society. The allegory has also become a way of exploring internal states of mind without the concrete personifications appearing on the stage. It begins to approach metaphor; Horestes says :

(1. 171) To caull to minde the crabyd rage of mothers yll attempt
Prouokes me now all pyttie quight from me to be exempt.
Yet lo, dame nature teles me, that I must with willing mind
Forgiue the faute and to pytie some what to be inclynd.

In an earlier play, Pytie and Dame Nature would have been allegorical figures on the stage, as Nature is later in this play, and could not be conjured up by the language alone. This allegorical tradition enriched the language of the Elizabethan drama and great speeches like Macbeth's :

(I,vii, 16) Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne is faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,

> Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubim, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
> That tears shall drown the wind,

owe much to this tradition. When Macbeth talks about Pity he describes it in allegorical terms, to dramatise the emotion and to link it with the whole Christian tradition of the Last Trump, Doomsday and Damnation which is so relevant to the play.

This play marks a transition between the older Moralities and the Elizabethan drama, and we have tried to show that the language is becoming more flexible. In the comic scenes double talk hints at greater and more profound truths about life and war and the use of metaphors (i.e. the Pity, Dame Nature example) and thematic imagery (blood) enrich the play. Like Macbeth, Horestes's problem is that he wished to commit a crime against all natural and moral laws. It is a crime against Nature and the play, almost unwillingly, highlights this problem. In its complexity and its language, therefore, Horestes is a promise of the greater quality of future drama.

x x x

Appius and Virginia[1]

The story of Appius and Virginia has been told by Boccaccio, Gower and Lydgate. It appears in The Romaunt of the Rose and it seems fairly certain that the author of the play used as his source, Chaucer's "Physicians Tale", to which the play bears a striking resemblance.[2] "The Physicians Tale" is told for a moral purpose :

> (l. 278) Heere men may seen how synne hath his merite.
> Beth war, for no man woot whom God wol smyte

This play and the tale are far closer in spirit than the play is to Webster's Appius and Virginia, which appeared in 1639. When we read the later play, we realise how far the drama has travelled during those

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[1] "A new Tragicall Comedie of Apius and Virginia. Wherein is liuely expressed a rare example of the vertue of Chastitie by Virginias Constancy in wishing rather to be slaine at her owne fathers handes, then to be dishonored of the wicked Iudge Apius. By R.B."
A Select Collection of Old English Plays, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.105.

[2] See Willard Farnham, op.cit., pp.252-258.

seventy years. The characters in Webster are entirely different in conception to those in the earlier play and in Chaucer. Although the plots are similar, the later play is full of Roman soldiers and political disputes in Senate, while Appius himself is a smooth villain with the same daring and courage that characterise all Webster's evil characters. The earlier play, however, is an earnest attempt to tell a moral story and to show, through the allegory, the moral conflict within the soul of the main protagonist, Appius.

x x x

The Story

The prologue exhorts all women in the audience to be as faithful and pure as Virginia

(p. 110) . . . . who rather wish/ed/ the knife
Of father's hand her life to end, than spot her chastity:

x x x

Virginius enters thanking the gods for his loving wife and perfect daughter, who is meek, sober, modest and virtuous. He sees them walking to church and hides himself so that he can overhear their grave talk. They are indeed an exemplary pair. Virginia promises her mother that she will remain pure and "unspotted" until such time as her parents command her to marry. Virginius reveals himself and greets them with loving pride. They each vow that they would rather die than let unhappiness come to any of the others. Virginia begs them to be light-hearted :

(p. 115) I your babe, I your bliss, I your health am again.
Forbear then your dolor, let mirth be frequented,
Let sorrow depart, and not be attempted.

They sing together and the chorus of their song again emphasises their happy unity :

(p. 116) The trustiest treasure in earth, as we see,
Is man, wife, and children in one to agree;
Then friendly and kindly let measure be mixed
With reason in season, where friendship is fixed.

As they leave, the Vice, Haphazard, enters. He is another incarnation of the character Folly, who appeared in Magnyfycence, The World and the Child and in The Castle of Perseverance and who was

discussed in Chapter Two. He has no moral code and stands for a world in which duty and responsibility have no place. He follows his own desires and is not deterred by any sense of right and wrong. In jingling, Elizabethan verse he tells us that he has many disguises and that he will be found in all classes of society :

(p. 113) A broom-man, a basket-maker, or a baker of pies,
A flesh or a fishmonger, or a sower of lies?
A louse or a louser, a leek or a lark,
A dreamer a drumble, a fire or a spark?
A caitiff, a cutthroat, a creeper in corners,
A hairbrain, a hangman, or a grafter of horners?
By the gods, I know not how best to devise,
My name or my property well to disguise.
. . . .
Go play and repast the, man, be merry to-yere.
Though victual be dainty and hard for to get,
Yet perhaps a number will die of the sweat :
Though it be in hazard, yet happily I may,
Though money be lacking, yet one day go gay.

Haphazard typifies the kind of self-seeking life which takes no thought for the sorrow and pain of others and he cannot care what the results of his actions may be.

Mansipulus and Mansipula enter. They are two servants meeting in secret. Haphazard persuades them to remain with him and forget their duties while they sing a song together. Mansipula says, "We can be but beaten, that is the worst." (p. 122), and they sing a song about the beating that is waiting for them.

When they are gone, Haphazard philosophises on Chance which can change the station of a ploughman into a gentleman or vice versa. With Chance, anything is possible :

(p. 124) If hap the sky fall, we may hap to have larks.
Well, fare ye well now for better or worse :
Put hands in your pockets, have mind to your purse.

Now Judge Appius enters. He is racked with love for Virginia. He, who is ruler of the realm, is now ruled by love.[1] He dwells in

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[1]Cf. Angelo in Measure for Measure :

(II,ii, 171) Can it be,
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,
Shall we desire to raze the santuary,
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie.. .
What dost thou? or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good?

anguish on her beauty and on the gods who frown at his passion :

> (p. 126) But I, a judge, of grounded years, shall reap to me such name,
> As shall resound dishonour great with trump of careless fame.
> O, that my years were youthful yet, or that I were unwedded!

Haphazard interrupts with a promise that, "Of you she shall be bedded." Appius, remembering the passionate and immoral adventures of the gods themselves, promises "The greatest part of all my realm" to Haphazard if this could be accomplished.

While Haphazard speaks to Appius, the judge expresses himself in the catchy, punning rhythms of the Vice and loses his long lines and imposing speech rhythms.

> (p. 127) I mean so, I will so, if thou do persuade me,
> To hap or to hazard what thing shall invade me?
> I King and I Kaiser, I rule and overwhelm;
> I do what it please me within this my realm.
> Wherefore in thy judgement see that thou do enter :
> Hap life or hap death, I surely will venter.

The plan suggested by Haphazard is that someone else should be persuaded to claim Virginia as the daughter of his slave, and say that she was stolen from him at her birth. Judge Appius will charge Virginius to leave Virginia in his care while the case is pending, and in this way he will have her at his mercy.

Just as Appius consents to this plan, two silent figures accost him :

> Here let him make as though he went out, and let Conscience and Justice come out after him, and let Conscience hold in his hand a lamp burning, and let Justice have a sword, and hold it before Appius' breast.

Appius interprets this allegorical tableau for us :

> (p. 128) But out, I am wounded : how am I divided!
> Two states of my life from me are now glided;
> For Conscience he pricketh me contemned,
> And Justice saith, judgement would have me condemned:
> Conscience saith, cruelty sure will detest me;
> And Justice saith, death in th'end will molest me :
> And both in one sudden me-thinks they do cry,
> That fire eternal my soul shall destroy.

The figures in the tableau have the traditional emblematic symbols of the lamp of Conscience and the sword of Justice. The fact that they are silent, but speak through Appius, makes us aware that this

is an internal conflict within Appius's mind, which is externalised by these allegorical figures, and it is to this very quality which Haphazard refers when he brushes them aside as unimportant. He exclaims : "Why, these are but thoughts, man: why, fie for shame, fie!" (p. 129). He tells the judge that Conscience is drowned and Justice has become corrupted by bribes. Appius eagerly accepts Haphazard's explanation and vows that he will:

(p. 129) ... persever in my thought : I will deflower her youth;
. . . .
Come on, proceed, and wait on me, I will, hap woe or wealth:
Hap blunt, hap sharp, hap life, hap death : th/r/ough Haphazard be of health.

to which Haphazard replies :

(p. 129) At hand (quoth pick-purse) here ready am I.
See well to the cut-purse : be ruled by me.

As they leave, Conscience and Justice appear. Conscience has been "spotted" by lust (his lust) and Justice has been corrupted by lust (his lust), but they are also absolute moral values who, knowing that in the end they shall punish all evil men with sword and fire, appeal to the gods for help in this task.

x x x

Like the fool in King Lear, Haphazard describes a world without order where Justice is corrupted. In this world he will be well looked after, although it is an evil world, where violence is just below the surface, ready to break out at any time :

(p. 130) And so it may happen
To cut covetousness' throat.
Yea, then shall Judge Appius
Virginia obtain,
And geese shall crack mussels
Perhaps in the rain :
Larks shall be leverets,
And skip to and fro;
And churls shall be cods-heads,
Perhaps and also.

It is strange that no critic has commented on the similarity between the language of Haphazard and Lear's fool. The jingling, rhyming, nonsense verse prophesies chaos which will undermine the established values of social morality. This evil world, inherent in Haphazard, is infectious, and Judge Appius, who easily adopts Haphazard's

attitude to life and society, also adopts this jingling verse form, much as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth echo the cadences of the witches.

x x x

Appius enters, calling down the anger of the gods, especially those of the underworld, onto those people who will not help him to ease his lust. Claudius agrees that he will be the man who will charge Virginius with stealing his slave's child.

Left alone, Appius compares himself to Tarquin, who ravished Lucrece. The voice of Conscience speaks "within".[1]

(p. 133) Judge Appius, prince, O stay, refuse;
Be ruled by thy friend!
What bloody death with open shame
Did Torquin gain in end?

Appius asks where this "pinching sound" comes from. Conscience replies that she is about to die and is compelled to cry out against the lusts of the flesh. In spite of her appeal, Appius is still intent on Virginia : "For her my soul doth sink or swim, for her I swear I go." (p. 133), and Conscience replies : "I die the death, and soul doth sink this filthy flesh hath sowen." (p. 134). Appius has chosen damnation. This scene is like Everyman in reverse; in Everyman, Good Deeds is dying and unable to walk until Everyman repents and does penance for his sins. In this scene Appius kills his Conscience. His soul is bent only on the flesh and his eternal soul is killed by his own will. Technically the dramatist is again experimenting with the allegory; we do not see Conscience and this representation emphasises the spiritual nature of the allegory.

x x x

Haphazard enters to tell us what is happening off stage. Here, like in Cambyses, the Vice combines the rôles of nuntius and chorus.

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[1]Cf. Macbeth :

(II,ii, 36) Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep' -

and :

(l. 42) Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:
'Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more : Macbeth shall sleep no more!'

His opening lines remind us that retribution and death await the man who acts like a criminal :

(p. 134) Haste for a hangman in hazard of hemp :
Run for a ridduck, there is no such imp.
Claudius is knocking with hammer and stone
At Virginius' gate, as hard as he can lay on.

The alliteration lends a note of panic and urgency to the description and the cruelty and violence of the crime is emphasised by the exaggeration of "hammer and stone".

At this moment, Mansipulus and Mansipula enter with Subservus. They are singing a song about the delights they enjoy together. They have cast away cares and sing lustily :

(p. 134) A fig for his uncourtesy
That seeks to shun good company.

All three boast about how they have escaped from under their master's eye. This "comic" interlude provides relief from the drama of the story and gives us the impression of a lapse of time between Appius's acceptance of the plan and its execution. The basic immorality of their conversation underlines the uncaring, dis-ordered attitude to life and society which typifies the Vice and which is at the root of Appius's action.

x x x

As they leave, Virginius enters. He has been summoned to appear before Judge Appius and wonders what is wrong. He is sure that he is not guilty of any crime. Appius enters, accompanied by Claudius, who makes his false claim. Appius charges Virginius to bring Virginia to him until he can find out the truth of the matter. The judge and Claudius leave, and the stage direction reads : "Here let Virginius go about the scaffold." (p. 141). This is the only reference to the kind of stage used in this production.

Virginius is obviously in deep distress. His speech becomes a series of patterned exclamations :

(p. 141) Ah fickle fall, unhappy doom, O most uncertain fate,
That ever chance so churlishly, that never stay'd in state.
What judge is this? What cruel wretch? What faith doth Claudius find?

Rumour enters (perhaps like in Henry IV, Part II, "painted full

of tongues"). He tells Virginius that Appius has instigated this action and intends to rape Virginia. Rumour cries for Justice and Revenge; true to his allegorical meaning, he runs quickly on as soon as he has delivered his message.

Virginius reacts with even more passionate, patterned speech :

(p. 142) O man, O mould, O muck, O clay!
O hell, O hellish hound,
. . . .
Woe worth the man that gave the seed, whereby ye first did spring!
Woe worth the womb that bare the babe to mean this bloody thing!
Woe worth the paps that gave thee suck, woe worth the fosters eke:
Woe worth all such as ever did thy health or liking seek!
O, that these gravèd hairs of mine were covered in the clay!

Virginia enters and asks the cause of his sorrow. Virginius tells her of Appius's command and of his intentions. He would rather kill himself than obey this command. On her knees, Virginia asks him rather to kill her as the shame of her rape would fall on her and her family and she would be ccunted guilty of his death :

(p. 144) Grant me the death; then keep I my treasure,
My lamp, my light, my life undefiled.

Virginius emotionally agrees that this is the only way out of their predicament. Virginia kneels. She tells her father to take her head to Appius. Virginius weakly tries to cut off her head. Virginia asks that he bind her eyes and he does this and strikes off her head. He is about to kill himself as well, when Comfort enters to tell him to take her head to Appius and wait until he sees the judge punished before he kills himself. They go out together on this grisly mission.

x x x

Judge Appius is still intent on his infamous purpose, but Haphazard enters with a tale that is full of foreboding. He talks of the hangman :

(p. 147) I came from Caleco even this same hour,
And Hap was hired to hackney in hempstrid :
In hazard he was of riding on beamstrid.
Then, crow crop on tree-top, hoist up the sail,
Then groaned their necks by the weight of their tail:
Then did Carnifex put these three together,
Paid them their passport for clust'ring thither.

Appius understands this: "Is Carnifex : that signifieth hangman." (p.148), but he forbids Haphazard to talk about such things. He is still obsessed by his lust for Virginia and is overjoyed to see Virginius approaching, but Virginius enters carrying Virginia's head. He says that Virginia :

(p. 148) Hath sent her beauteous face,
In recompense of lecher gain,

and that he has killed her.

Appius is furious. He sentences Virginius to death and calls on Justice and Reward to help him carry out the sentence.

(p. 149) Come, Justice, then; come on, Reward; come, aid me in my need.
Thou wicked knight, shalt slaughtered be with self-same knife with speed.

Although Virginius is content to receive this sentence, Justice speaks to the real criminal :

(p. 150) O gorgon judge, what lawless life hast thou most wicked led!
Thy soaking sin hath sunk thy soul, thy virtues all are fled.

Reward says that Virginius must take Appius to prison to await death and Claudius must be hanged immediately.

At this moment, as in Cambyses, the allegorical method gives us effective dramatic economy. Justice and Reward are not mundane figures, but absolute values and when they appear all falsehood is at an end.

Haphazard meets Appius as he is taken out and is probably surprised that Appius does not greet him. He says :

(p. 150) Why, how now, my lord Appius, what cheer?
Why, where is my reward for this gear?

He feels he has been snubbed and rails against the judge, saying he will serve him no longer. He decides that he will go to Reward on the chance that he will be recompensed for his services.

His reward is a rope. He tries to get out of the sentence, first by prayer and then by bribery, but without success. Virginius returns and Haphazard tries to steal away, but is caught again. Appius has killed himself and Virginius prays that Justice show mercy to Claudius. Justice agrees that Claudius may be banished and Haphazard is led out, still protesting, to be hanged.

Justice and Reward prepare to leave to see "the final end of fleshy lust", but they are stopped by Fame, Doctrine and Memory who carry a tomb. Virginius is with them and they are Virginia's funeral procession.

Memory writes on her tomb that Virginia will be remembered through all ages.

Justice: (p. 154)	And Justice, sure, will aid all those that imitate her life.
Reward:	And I Reward will punish those that move such dames to strife.
Fame:	Then sing we round about the tomb, in honour of her name.
Reward:	Content we are with willing mind to sing with sound of Fame.

As these impressive figures leave the stage, the Epilogue enters to give the final moral lesson of the play. Life is short, death is certain, we must all follow the example of Virginia's life, her chastity, her duty. She is a lesson to all to love their wives, husbands and children faithfully. His final prayer is for the Queen and her people.

(p. 155) Beseeching God, as duty is, our gracious Queen to save
The nobles and the commons eke, with prosperous life, I crave!

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In Chaucer's story, Appius is inspired by the devil when he plans to rape Virginia :

(l. 130) Anon the feend into his herte ran,
And taughte hym sodeynly that he by slyghte
The mayden to his purpos wynne myghte.

but in the play the Vice becomes the mainspring of all action. He binds together the sub-plot and the main plot. He invades all classes of society and corrupts all those who listen to him. He prophesies that the reward of sin is death, not to the audience, like in Cambyses, but to the characters themselves. In spite of his death by hanging, he is more of a metaphor than a character. He is closer to the Vices of the old Moralities than to the characters of Iago and Edmund, although they had much in common with other Vices in other Morality Plays. Haphazard points forward, not so much to the Machiavellian stage villain, but to another kind of character in Shakespearian drama; he is a pervading force, a mood, equivocating, unreliable, prophetic, who will influence

people to evil, like the witches in Macbeth, or who will reveal the prevailing evil of the time, like the fool in King Lear.

The main characters are fully developed figures. Virginius, his wife and daughter are presented as a close and loving family and Virginia is the prototype of all chaste maidens, who would rather die a tragic death than suffer a fate worse than death. In the scene where Virginius decides to kill Virginia, the author follows "The Physician's Tale" closely. In Chaucer, Virginia swoons and gives Virginius a chance to kill her while she is unaware of her death. In the play, the moment is drawn out by the episode in which he covers her eyes with a "handkercher."

The Morality framework gives the play its stature. It is not merely a pathetic, touching story with a moral lesson. Judge Appius is a character torn between Good and Evil. The Just Judge is tempted by lust for a pure maid, just as Angelo is tempted by lust for the pure Isabella in Measure for Measure. The allegory raises the conflict from the personal to the theological level. Conscience and Justice solemnly plead with Appius; they are absolute moral values portrayed as emblematic, timeless figures, and Appius transgresses a moral code which must result in his death in this world and his damnation in the next. The allegory here serves to extend the significance of the situation by drawing the whole moral conflict of Good and Evil into Appius's own life, and in this way to universalise the action on the stage.

Although Appius and Virginia is not a great play, it is superior to both Horestes and Cambyses in its allegorical unity and in the unity of its sub-plot and main plot, which is achieved by the Vice. There is certainly too much singing, but the sub-plot echoes the main plot in a more frivolous manner and the songs are catchy and pertinent. The modern reader tires of the boisterous patterning of rhymes, rhythms and puns and of the ornate speeches of the afflicted Virginius, but the author is experimenting with language and has given us, within the language, a clue to the action, or an echo of the action, and is, in this sense, beginning to show the possibilities of Elizabethan verse

drama.

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All these plays take a well-known story from such popular collections as The Fall of Princes or The History of Troy and re-mould it into a Morality pattern. Is this because all secular drama was seen in terms of the Morality Play? This cannot be so because the drama had already produced straight-forward dramatic representations without any allegorical framework being superimposed on the story. As early as 1497, Medwall's play Fulgens and Lucres[1] presents the story of Lucres and her choice between the noble, but dissolute lover and the comparatively poor, but noble (in character) lover. This play is merely a story which is partly acted, partly told to us, and is enlivened by two servants (A and B) and a masque. Other dramatised stories followed, especially dramatised stories from the Bible. It is thus not possible to say that all drama was necessarily conceived within a Morality framework.

It seems therefore that these writers chose the Morality framework for a specific purpose. They wished to portray Evil (as in Cambyses), or the conflict of Good and Evil (as in Horestes and Appius and Virginia) and they wished to give their drama a universal stature. The Morality Plays were conceived against the background of heaven and hell. Man was alone in the world and watching him and influencing him were the great figures of God and His angles and the evil forces of the World, the Flesh and the Devil. Man, Everyman, was necessarily universal. These later plays recapture the conrlict of the good and evil forces for the soul of man, but make them personal attributes of a single, individual man in a specific situation. The allegory serves to refer this situation and this man to the great and timeless moral values which, if transgressed, must lead to retribution for the transgressor in this world and to eternal damnation in the next. It relates the conflict within the hero to the greater context of sin, damnation and redemption and in this way universalises the action. The

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[1] Henry Medwall, Fulgens and Lucres, ed. F.S. Boas and A.W. Reed (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1926).

conflict, externalised by the allegory, is, of course, internal, and the whole allegorical machinery is concentrated on the main figure in the play, who must, through this very process, become larger and greater than the figures which surround him in the drama. The fact, too, that he can transgress these universal moral codes (like Appius, Cambyses) in spite of the damnation which he knows will await him, is a testimony of the strength of the forces for evil within his own character - or the strength of the emotion which leads him to such action. We see here, inevitably, the birth of the type of hero who is born for tragedy because he cannot conform to this universal moral code or because he is swayed by an emotion or a passion that is too strong for him. The allegorical machinery, therefore, with its emphasis on the psychomachia seen against a background of absolute Good and Evil, makes the hero stand out in the great and moving conflict of his own soul. We see here a forerunner of the Elizabethan tragic hero.

CONCLUSION

We have made a close study of a few Morality Plays in an attempt to understand the Morality genus especially as it is related to Elizabethan drama. A study of Elizabethan drama itself is beyond the scope of this thesis, but such a study should not be undertaken without taking into account some of the points made in this thesis. As we have stated, the plays do not form a continuous line of development, some plays lead only to dead ends, but the following general points emerge from the previous chapters.

1. The Morality Play demonstrates a new way of thinking about life. It is part of the homiletic literature of its time, but it develops new methods of presentation because it is drama. The earliest Moralities make use of significant action, costume and grouping of characters, in order to convey spiritual states of mind. This aspect remains important and becomes an integral part of what we consider to be a Morality Play. In our study, exceptional dramatists, like John Bale and the author of <u>The Conflict of Conscience</u>, are shown to make striking use of these conventions. In staging Elizabethan plays a producer could do well to remember how important precedence, dress and movement were in these early plays and to use them to explain and enhance the meaning of the later plays.

2. In the early Sixteenth Century we noticed a secularisation of the Morality. These plays preach a Prudential ethic, where the Aristotelian ideal of "Measure" is substituted for the monastic "Abstinence" as a rule for the Good Life. The plays seem to have been written not only for a small group of professional actors, but also for an aristocratic audience. The traditional Vices become recognisable types to be found in London and at court. One play substitutes a king, who is recognisably Henry VIII, for Everyman, although the play still preaches to all men. It is true to say that in these plays the Morality moves away from the religious, homiletic literature from which it sprang.

3. The successful substitution of Henry VIII for Everyman in Magnyfycence opened the door for an even greater change in the Morality genus. The conflict plot, the battle for the soul of man by the Virtues and the Vices, becomes, in the mid-Sixteenth Century, a vehicle for political and religious propaganda and a means of re-writing contemporary views of history (see our discussion of King John, Appendix). In these plays the Vices become labels to discredit characters and causes, for example in the anti-Catholic plays, Vices like Avarice and Pride become associated with the Catholic Church while Everyman (now sometimes an unseen hero, or re-named, like Philologus in The Conflict of Conscience), is urged to accept matyrdom in the cause of the "true faith". These plays bring the Morality back to the popular stage, at which they are of necessity aimed, and restore it, albeit with a great deal too much rancour, to an important place in the serious thought of the time.

4. Finally, towards the end of the Sixteenth Century, the conflict type Morality Play is used to "frame" stories from legend and history in order to portray the moral conflict of the main character. The plays are no longer Moralities in the true sense, although some do preach virtue in their epilogues, but they use the Morality framework to analyse and express the inner conflict of the main character. By spotlighting the main character in this way, they heighten his stature and universalise the action

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Certain features of the Morality play have deserved special attention.

A. The Vice

The Vice first emerges as a definite character quite late in the history of the Morality Play. In the earliest plays, the World, the Flesh and the Devil are the three great and evil powers who wish to corrupt Mankind, and they are helped in this task by their servants, the Seven Deadly Sins. Covetousness, who plays an important part in The Castle of Perseverance, is not called the Vice, but we can nevertheless

see how the Vice developed from such a dominating and powerful character.

In Mundus et Infans we find that, of the three great powers, only the World remains, while Folly becomes a worldly good-fellow who personifies all the Seven Deadly Sins. This same character re-appears in Magnyfycence in an even more frightening and equivocating rôle. When Magnyfycence follows his two Vices, Fancy (his own inclination to sin) and Folly (his own disregard of all order), he is betrayed and despoiled by the court villians who cluster round him.

In the anti-Catholic plays, the Vice is called by names like Infidelity, Iniquity or Hypocrisy and combines a definite connection with the Devil with a strong identification with the Catholic Church. As we have already noted, the Controversial Moralities often take us a step backwards towards the earlier Moralities. Here, as in the earlier plays, the Devil, a religious reality, is determined, through the Vice, to corrupt Mankind.

In contrast to this appearance of the Vice, the Vices in the Heroic Moralities (Ambidexter, Haphazard, Revenge) continue the line of development first seen in the Middle Moralities. These characters are both human and supernatural. They are loquacious, witty and informative and are on terms of easy familiarity with the audience. They are the compère of the play, provide the comic relief and give advice and information to the audience. Nevertheless they are also supernatural. They represent a perversion of all moral values and corrupt all those who come into contact with them. They must behave in this way because it is in their nature to do so (cf. Iago). Their charm is therefore deadly and becomes horrifying in the light of the action they influence (cf. Edmund). In some plays we have noticed that the Vice becomes a representative of dis-order and that he prophesies this disorder in language which, although it usually sounds simple, like the cadences of a nursery rhyme, is equivocating, ominous, and prophetic. We have tried to show that in this rôle the Vice looks forward, not to the Elizabethan stage villian only, but to those equivocating and/or ominously prophetic figures, the witches in Macbeth or the fool in King Lear.

B. The Allegory

The development of allegory within the Morality Plays has not yet received enough attention. It is assumed that the word "Allegory" denotes a static quality which is always present in Morality Plays and which can be winkled out of Elizabethan drama when we wish to show the influence of the Morality Plays. This has not been confirmed by our study. To emphasise how complicated a study of allegory could become we refer to tentative remarks about the kind of allegory in The Mirror for Magistrates made in Chapter Four.[1]

The group of plays studied shows a definite change in the dramatist's treatment of allegory. In The Castle of Perseverance, Humanum Genus is human only in so far as he represents all of us and his spiritual states are portrayed in sharp, clear detail by the actions of the different allegorical characters, their movements and also by the stage itself (the scaffolds, the castle, the roses, the lance etc.).

In the Middle Moralities the allegory becomes a stumbling block for the dramatist. In Nature, Mankind is represented by so many allegorical characters, who come and go in a bewildering kaleidoscope of spiritual states, that one becomes impatient with an allegory which is so obviously artificial. In Magnyfycence, the author concentrates the Seven Deadly sins into two characters and introduces new and more topical vice-villians, but we are not sure whether his Magnyfycence is

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1. See also C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (London: O.U.P., 1935). C.S. Lewis makes the same distinction between two kinds of allegory which was made in Chapter Four. When the Greek myths lost their religious significance, the characters in them were treated allegorically. In the Fourth and Fifth Centuries this kind of allegory was used mainly as decoration in a dream world of romance, emptied of all religious significance. This kind of allegory existed at the same time as the psychomachia, the moral allegory, which analysed spiritual states of mind, battles in the mind for the soul of man. These two kinds of allegory cannot be separated as they appear together in so many different works, but we are never in doubt as to which kind of allegory they represent.

Thus e.g., Fame, Rumour, Sorrow represent what C.S. Lewis calls "mythological allegory", and

Lechery, Chastity, and later, Murder, Cruelty and Revenge represent the psychomachia type allegory which was not a survival from Greek mythology, but grew out of a desire to write about abstract states of mind with invented characters providing a way in which such states of mind could be expressed.

really representative of all mankind. The allegory is becoming a vehicle for satire.

Satirical allegory is typical of the Controversial Moralities which use (or mis-use) the psychomachia in the social and religious battles of the time. Nevertheless these plays showed the general public that allegory was by no means an out-dated form and are important because, in plays like King John and The Conflict of Conscience, they mix real people in real stories with allegorical characters. In their experimentation with allegory, they show how allegorical characters can act side by side with ordinary characters, and how ordinary characters can come to represent abstract qualities. They also show how the allegory can be used to pin-point or analyse states of mind in situations which are not derived from traditional Morality plots, but grow out of the action of the play itself.

Finally, we noticed how the allegory began to be absorbed into the language of the play i.e. states of mind are referred to in allegorical terms, but without the necessary appearance of the allegorical figures themselves. This is particularly true of the late Sixteenth Century. Confusion of the Mind is referred to in The Conflict of Conscience before the allegorical character appears and therefore presumes a new convention where the allegorical character is not necessary to the drama, but is talked about in terms of metaphor. In Appius and Virginia, the dumb show by Conscience and Justice is explained by Appius, the characters themselves do not speak. Nature and Pity are referred to by Horestes and in Cambyses, Murder and Cruelty are emblematic representations of a cruelty in the character of Cambyses. We have tried to show how these uses of allegory (emblematic and metaphoric), found their way into action and symbol, especially in the plays of Shakespeare.

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Our study has shown therefore that the main legacies of the Morality drama to Elizabethan drama are not to be looked for in the moral speeches in the later plays, nor in such remnants of allegorical

characters as Rumour (Henry V) or Murder (Warning for Fair Women), but firstly, in the emergence of the Vice and the rôle he later played in Elizabethan drama, secondly in the gradual shift from allegory to metaphor which enriched and universalised the language of Elizabethan drama, and thirdly in the habit acquired by the audience of "seeing" a play in allegorical terms and of understanding the allegorical and moral undertones of character and situation.

APPENDIX

King John

This play is part of Bale's propaganda struggle against the Roman Catholic Church, but is different from the Controversial Moralities we have discussed because it deals with actual events and people. Although the events themselves may not be represented in a truly historical manner, we could call it an "Historical Morality". In a series of tableaux scenes, almost like the book illustrations of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, King John is shown as a Christian matyr poisoned by Dissimulation at the instigation of Usurped Power, Sedition and Private Wealth. In the play, however, real people become identified with these abstractions, so that Usurped Power is the Pope, Sedition becomes Stephen Langton, Private Wealth becomes Cardinal Pandulphus, and Dissimulation is both an allegorical figure and an historical figure; Father Simon of Swinsett Abbey. The allegorical figures are created and established by Bale and then identified with real historical figures so that the two realities are merged into one and it is immaterial what they are called. The text for each speaker always gives the allegorical name, so we may assume that it is the allegorical meaning which is dominant in each case and it is a recognition of this allegorical reality which makes Imperial Majesty condemn Sedition to be hanged at Tyburn.

King John, in spite of Tillyard's lack of interest in it,[1] can be be considered as a fore-runner of Elizabethan Tragedy in the same way that Tillyard considered the English History plays to be an intermediate step in the development of Elizabethan Tragedy. Firstly, like the other English History Plays, it takes as its subject a piece of national history and its hero is an English king, not a biblical figure. Secondly, King John is, in the play, a wholly good character. He is

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[1] See E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), pp. 92-93.

the paradigm of kingship and is caught by his function. The play, which is, like all Bale's plays, a propaganda play, constantly shows us the evil characters, who represent the church, in conflict with the good which King John wishes to establish for Widow England. Although he has no internal conflict, he is bitterly disappointed when the nobles and the barons all turn against him and he is left alone, defenceless against the greater power of the church. This is a political play, but it contains potential material for great tragedy and most later tragic heroes (Macbeth, Lear, Antony) are to a certain extent still paradigms of kingship caught by their function in a lonely, tragic situation.

Finally, Tillyard has pointed out how political and religious propaganda plays both use the same techniques to make the audience accept ways of looking at history or at life. In Henry IV, Falstaff can be seen to represent the Flesh (he is surely guilty of gluttony, lechery and sloth !) and even Hotspur can be seen as Pride or Ambition, so that in spite of the attractiveness of these characters we are prepared for their downfall. A modern reader is puzzled by the author's portrayal of such characters, but our reading of the Morality Plays has confirmed this ambivalent attitude to Evil which loves to hear and see the evil characters, but realises that they must eventually be destroyed. In King John, the evil characters are not attractive, but this marriage of real people to allegorical types, a kind of allegory which is closer to Dante than any other English allegory, is an exciting way of looking at history and must be remembered as a possible interpretation of the later drama.

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