EDITORIAL

This issue shows a continued interest in dragons: we have one from Newcastle, presented by John Anderson, and an article on the *St. George's Play* at York by Eileen White. We also include Part Two of the article on *Masks* by Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter, which will be concluded in our next issue.

Last summer there were two large-scale and contrasting productions of the *N-Town* Cycle. We include fairly lengthy reviews of both Toronto and Lincoln productions, which are particularly relevant to the subject of the 1982 *METh* meeting, *Place and Scaffold Staging*. This will take place in Liverpool on March 27th. Everyone who has signed up for this meeting should find enclosed with this copy of *METh* further information, maps, and a leaflet on cut-price rail fares. If there are any stragglers, would they please get in touch *at once* with Dr. David Mills, Department of English, University of Liverpool, Modern Languages Building, Chatham Street, Liverpool, L69 3BX.

Because of the pressure on space in this issue, we have had to hold over till next issue the *Directory* information we have recently received. However, since it is now three years since our first *Directory* appeared, it seems sensible to bring it up to date. We therefore enclose a form asking all our subscribers to fill in publications since their last appearance in the *Directory*, and a brief account of work in progress. We have a considerable amount of evidence that this information has been very helpful in putting people in touch with each other, and in some cases, avoiding possible overlap of effort.

Preliminary notices have been sent out about the Fourth International Colloquium of the International Society for the Study of Medieval Theatre which is to be held at Viterbo on 10th–15th July 1983. Every subscriber to *METh* is thereby a member of ISSMT, and should have received a notice: if, however, anyone has not received a notice, they should write at once to Professor Federico Doglio, Direttore del Centro di Studi sul Teatro Medievale e Rinascimentale, Palazzo degli Alessandri, Quartiere S.

Pellegrino, VITERBO, Italy. The topics for the Colloquium are (1) mysteries, (2) the staging of medieval plays, and (3) the Parliaments of Heaven and of Hell. Offers of papers must be in by 31st July 1982.

Also enclosed is an order form for *METh* volume 4, which will appear in two parts in July and December 1982. We should be grateful for your subscriptions as soon as possible.

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ADVANCE NOTICES
Mary Magdalene at Durham

John McKinnell is producing the Digby *Mary Magdalene* at Durham on 26th and 27th June and 3rd July 1982. The production will be played in an open-air platea and mansion area, in Little High Wood on the University site. Further enquiries and bookings should go to Durham University Celebrations Committee Office, Old Shire Hall, Durham (tel. 0385 64466).

Conference on Translating Medieval Drama

There will be a one-day conference on translating medieval drama at Leeds University on Saturday May 22nd 1982. Enquiries should be sent to the Director, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT.

Medieval Drama Conference at Leuven (Louvain)

The Catholic University of Louvain (Louvain) is holding an International Colloquium on medieval drama on 24th–26th May 1982. Enquiries to Dr. W. Verbeke, Instituut voor Middeleeuwse Studies, Blijde-Inkomststraat 21, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium. The topics for the Colloquium are Symbolism and Structure.

Chester Plays

There is a possibility that there will be a performance of a version of the Chester Cycle in Chester sometime in the summer of 1982. Nothing is yet final: if further information comes to us in time, we will publish it in the next issue of *METh*.

At least two full productions of the Chester Cycle are in tentative planning for the summer of 1983.

THE NEWCASTLE DRAGON

In the 1508–11 volume of the Chamberlains' Accounts of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (ref. Tyne and Wear Archives Department 543/212), several payments for a dragon are recorded, as follows:

f 68 (18th April 1510)

…

Item paid to Gorg howghell ffor xij ȝerdes of Canwes to the Dragon

iij s

Item paid to Iohn Dodes ffor nallis to the Dragon   iij d

…

f 68v (19th April 1510)

…

Item paid to Rogger Sewior ffor goyng with the Dragon	iij s vj d
Item paid to Rogger Sewior ffor beldyng the Dragon	viij d
Item paid to Iohn Swynnow ffor paynttyng the Dragon	ij s viij d
Item paid to Eduerd baxster ffor iij Sparris to the Dragon	iij d
Item paid ffor ij gyrtthis to the Dragon	viij d
Item paid ffor Saylltwyn & Candyll to the Dragon	vj d
Item paid to Rogger Seveor and his ffellowis in reward	iiij d

…

f 97v (10th May 1511)

…

Item paid to Rogger brown ffor the attendans off the Dragon   iiij d

…

Clearly this dragon was built from scratch in 1510: if there was an earlier dragon, there are no references to it in the accounts of 1508–9. The dates of payment suggest an association with St. George's Day, 23rd April, and it may be that Newcastle had a St. George's Day 'riding', as did Chester, Coventry, Dublin, Leicester, Norwich, Stratford, York, and other places, in which the saint and his adversary processed through the town.[1] But there is no mention of St. George in the Newcastle records, and the payments in 1510 are made before 23rd April, including the payment to Roger Sevior for going with the dragon (presumably in the procession). However, the procession need not have taken place on St. George's Day itself,[2] and in any case payment before the event is not unknown elsewhere in the Chamberlains' Accounts.

If there was an annual St. George's Day procession in Newcastle, it may be that the city was not regularly committed to paying for it (the procession was in the hands of a St. George's Guild in other towns), but helped out in a year when a new dragon was needed. The substantial amount paid to Roger Sevior for going with the dragon contrasts with the four pence paid to Roger Brown the following year. No doubt Roger Sevior was responsible for managing the dragon in the procession of 1510, just as he had been responsible for *beldyng* (building) it, and the size of the payment reflects his responsibility.[3] Roger Brown may have had the same role in the procession, though he was not able to command the same fee, or he may have 'attended' the dragon only in a minor capacity.

The dragon was evidently a framework covered by painted canvas, held together by nails; probably the three spars were lengths of timber sawn up and used to make the framework. The amount of canvas needed suggests a structure of some size. The sail-twine and candle-wax were possibly for a flame in the dragon's mouth, the twine serving as a wick; we may compare the expenses for the Hostmen's Corpus Christi play of 1568 in the 1565–8 volume of *Chamberlains' Accounts* (ref. 543/15, f 296ᵛ), which include payments for *pawper mache sayltwyne & candell*, alongside payments for gunpowder and for *A man that kest fyre*. However, it is prosaically more likely that the candle was to wax and waterproof the sail-twine used to stitch the *Canwes* round the framework. The dragon may have been of the Norwich 'Snap' or hobby-horse type, supported on the shoulders of the man who carried it in the procession, with the dragon's canvas skirts hiding the man's legs. The girths may then be explained as straps for attaching the structure to the bearer's body, forming some kind of harness. If the dragon was not intended to be worn, the two girths round its middle may have given the attendants a handhold to enable them to move it about.

University of Manchester

NOTES

1. See E.K. Chambers *The Mediaeval Stage* 1 (Oxford, 1903) 221–4.

2. In Leicester in 1523 the mayor and council enacted that the George should continue to be ridden according to ancient custom, between St. George's Day and Whitsunday; see R. Withrington *English Pageantry* 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1918) 30.

3. In York in 1554 and in Dublin (date uncertain) men were paid a similar sum (3s 4d) for playing St. George in the St. George's Day riding; see *REED: York* 1, 319; Withrington *English Pageantry* 31, and Eileen White in this issue.

MEG TWYCROSS   UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER
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MASKS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH THEATRE: THE MYSTERY PLAYS 2.

3. The Characters Who Wore Masks

Who wore masks in the mystery plays? M.D. Anderson seems to be right when she says that 'they seem chiefly to have been used to denote extremes of Good and Evil'.[1] They are seldom used for ordinary human beings. (This is rather different from the use made of masks in the moralities, which needs a separate treatment.) In the York *Creed Play* inventory, Christ is distinguished from the Apostles by his *laura aurata*.[2] The only play in which ordinary *good* human beings wear masks is *Doomsday*: the York Mercers' 1433 inventory gives *vesernes* to the *ij gode saules* as well as the *ij euell saules*: but they are hardly in a normal everyday situation, and the blackening of the Coventry Bad Souls' faces suggests that the *Doomsday* plays reinforced their black/white Judgement Day message by stylising the souls to match.[3] The *iij diademes with iij vesernes* worn by the York *Doomsday* Apostles presumably showed their beatific status. Extremely wicked characters also wear masks, and we shall look at them after we have looked at devils.

However, this may not always have been the case. Several though scattered records suggest that the early *miracles* – which were not necessarily either our mystery plays in embryo or liturgical drama – were played in masks. As early as the twelfth century we find Gerhoh of Reichersberg talking about *daemonum larvas* in liturgical drama,[4] but devils are probably a special case, as we hope to show later. However, the famous story from the *Life of St. John of Beverley* (c.1220) talks of a *Play of the Resurrection* played outside, not inside the church, as a *larvatorum, ut assolet … repraesentatio* ('a masked performance, as is customary').[5] Unless this is a meaningless tag, it strongly implies either that all the actors were masked, or else that masking was a very striking and characteristic part of the performance.

Is it likely that the performance at Beverley was by professionals? We have seen how the *histriones* described by Cobham in the thirteenth century put on *horribiles larvas*, but they sound more like contortionists that actors.[6] Then Bromyard, in the fourteenth century, talks of two kinds of people who wear masks, *uidelicet ludentes et spoliantes. Ludentes enim in ludo, qui vulgariter dicitur miraculos, laruis utuntur, sub quibus personæ non apparent, quæ ludunt* ('For those who play in the play called *miracles* in English make use of masks, beneath which the persons of those who play are hidden').[7] He is again specifically talking about devils, but he does not say that only devils wear masks: indeed, as we have said, he rather implies that the devils are hiding their natural hideousness under a pleasing face. Raoul des Praelles, in his commentary on *The City of God* (1370), talking of the masked Roman theatre, speaks of *gens*

desguisez qui … faisoient ces jeux ainsi comme tuvois que len fait encores au jour duy les jeux de personnaiges et charivalis ('costumed persons who … used to perform these plays in the same way as you still see dramatic performances and carnivals being done nowadays').[8] One might expect the *charivari*, but the *jeu de personnages* comes as a surprise. Perhaps these early players were professional, and not only had a tradition of masking, but also had to double parts, where masking would be convenient?

However, the *Manuel des Péchés* (c.1300) associates *miracles* and masking with the clergy:

> Vn autre folie apert
> Vnt les fols clers cuntrové
> Qe *miracles* sunt apelé.
> Lurs faces vnt la desguisé
> Par visers, li forsené,
> Qe est defendu en decrée   4292–7

('The crazy clergy have invented another manifest craziness, which is called *miracles*. There they have disguised their faces with masks, the lunatics, which is forbidden in the Decretal'.)[9] Normally what is *defendy en decrée* is masking of the Feast of Fools type, but the *Manuel* specifically mentions *miracles*, as Bromyard does at the end of the century. Robert Mannyng, translating soon after the date of the Manuel, does not, however, take up the *viser* theme, but Nicholas Davis has sent us the same passage as translated by a mid-fourteenth century prose writer (St. John's College, Cambridge, MS G 30, f 38ʳ):

> anoþer opone folye þey maketh. and folie clerkes habe fonde hyt up.
> þat *myracles* byth called. þere þey habe here faces dyscolored. by visers þe
> cursede men for hyt is defended in lawe þe more is here synne.

As he points out, the interesting thing here is that the translator says *dyscolored* for *desguisé*. 'Discoloured' makes sense in a folk-masking context, but here again, he is talking about *miracles*. Does its use here mean, as Dr. Davis suggest, that 'full masks have dropped out of currency'? Is Bromyard copying some earlier preacher without reference to what was happening in his own day? (But the general tenor of the *Summa Praedicantium* is the use of modern instances.) Have we merely got here the common confusion between masks and facepainting? Without further good contemporary evidence the problem will have to rest.

However, for whatever reason, mystery plays were not fully masked performances. Instead, we have the interesting theatrical situation of masked actors on stage alongside unmasked actors. We would like to take each group of masked characters separately, and consider who they were, what they might have looked like, and as far as possible, what the effects of their particular kind of masking and of their mingling with unmasked actors might be. Here we are well aware that we are

bringing modern sensibilities to medieval theatre: but in the absence of the crucial contemporary criticism, it is the best we can do.

A. Devils

Devils are the only characters who seem always to wear masks. Account after account plays variations on *for makinge i j denens heades*; *for paynttyng of the demones hede*; *payd for a demons face*; *vj deuelles faces in iij Vesernes*.[1] The mention of the devils' *visers* slips causally into other writings: *Suche fendis with þer visers maken men to flee pees* (Wyclif).[2] Hocleve, putting words into the mouth of the dying man, makes him see *Horrible feendes and innumerable* lying in wait for his miserable soul:

> The blake-faced ethiopiens
> Me enuyrone / and aftir it abyde
> To hente hit / whan þat it shal passen hens …
> Hir viserly faces, grim & hydous
> Me putte in thoghtful dredes encombrous.   679[3]

In a mumming made to Richard II in 1377, among the characters were *8 or 10 arayed and with blacke vizards like deuils appearing nothing amiable*.[4]

Devils are traditionally black. The Devil in *The Castle of Perseverance* refers to himself as *Belyal þe blake* (199), and rallies his *boyes blo and blake* (2195) to the attack on the castle; when the little devils are driven away in *Wisdom*, Wisdom himself says *Lo, how contrycyon avoydyth þe deullys blake*! (979). The wicked souls in the York *Doomsday* lament that they are henceforth *In helle to dwelle with feendes blake* (143).[5] Devils are often compared to Ethiopians, as in the Hoccleve quotation above.[6] They were charred when they fell from heaven,

> Fellen fro the fyrmament fendes ful blake.   *Purity* 221

Arrived in hell, the York Lucifer cries

> My bryghtnes es blakkeste and blo now.   101

In French drama and Germa carnival masking, devils, if not wearing visers, had their faces blackened, like the Coventry *blakke soulys*, and it seems likely that minor English devils looked like this too.[7]

It is not specified anywhere precisely what the *viser* should look like: stage directions usually content themselves with saying *here xall entyr a dylle In orebyll aray* (*Mary Magdalene*), or *here enteryth Satan … in þe most orryble wyse* (*N-Town*), or by implication *Here Anima apperythe in þe most horrybull wyse, fowelere þan a fende* (*Wisdom*).[8] Provided the effect was *þe most orryble* he could produce, the medieval maskmaker and costumier was presumably set free to create as many freaks of nature as his imagination and his materials would allow: and probably the more devils he had to

clothe, the more variations he could produce, as we saw at last year's Wakefield *Harrowing of Hell*. Allardyce Nicoll prints a whole page of German devil-masks, each with its own particular wyse of being *orryble*[9] (Fig. 1).

FIG. 1: Three of the medieval devil masks from the Ferdinandeum Innsbruck:
after the photograph reproduced by Nicoll.

However, both with these and in pictures of devils, especially those which would be easily translatable into stage costume, certain features seem characteristic. The French devil of the Avignon *Praesentatio* of 1385 was to be dressed *tali ornamento sicut eidem decet turpissimo et abhominabili, cum cornubus, dentibus, et facie horribili* ('in the type of costume that befits him, extremely nasty and repulsive, with horns, teeth, and a horrible face').[10] Horns seem almost mandatory: they were presumably also fairly easy to come by at the local butcher's. Cow's and ram's horns seem most popular: see the *Holkham Bible Picture Book* devil (FIG 4), though there are local variations: German devils, for example, seem to go in for the Alpine goat. There are also one-horned devils, like those in the *Triumph of Isabella* (FIGS 11 & 17).

FIG. 2: French devils from *Le grant kalendrier et compost des Bergiers*,
printed Nicholas le Rouge, Troyes, 1496.

Besides horns, most devils also have large animal ears, either erect and of any length from cat to donkey, or drooping and spaniel-like:

FIG. 3: *Das buch Belial*, Augsburg, 1473.

FIG. 4: Devil, *Holkham Bible Picture Book* fol 11ᵛ, c 1330.
For the original colours see https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/
illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=34288

FIG 5
Kalend
-rier

They also, especially in woodcuts, where it suits the technique, have the up-blown quiff of hair flaring from the forehead which is a scaled-down version of the Romanesque devil's wild but stylised coiffure. In the *Rohan Hours*, the guardian angel swooping in to save man's soul has grabbed the devil by this quiff.[11]

A large red tongue adds to the animal-like look. Etienne de Bourbon tells of a woman who saw the devil in the shape of a hideous tom-cat, about the size of a large dog, *habens … oculos grossos et flamentes, et linguam latam et longam et sanguinolentam et protractam usque ad umbilicum* ('with great big fiery eyes, and a wide, long, blood-red tongue which stretched down to its navel').[12] Many of them are also fanged, with tusks coming upwards from the lower jaw, and the jaw itself could be

FIG 7

Belial

wired to snap: the German devil costume illustrated by Allardyce Nicoll has an almost crocodile jaw which seems to have worked in this way,[13] and the Dorset

FIG 6
Kalendrier

Ooser (a mysterious but distinctly demonic mask, made of wood) 'was provided with a lower jaw which was moveable, and gnashing teeth, the jaw being worked by a string' (Fig. 8).[14] It would seem that the *secundus demon* of the Wakefield *Doomsday* girned and gnast like this.[15] Lucifer in the *Fall of the Angels* window in St. Michael Spurriergate, York, is distinguished from an angel of light by his horrible gappy teeth (FIG. 9).

Craik suggests that one of the most prominent features of the morality devil was his 'bottle nose':

An important characteristic is an ugly nose, large and misshapen – he swears by his crooked snout in the Newcastle miracle of *Noah* – and in some interludes the vice ridicules it, saluting him in *Like Will to Like* as 'bottel nosed god-father' and 'bottle nosed knave', in *All for Money* as 'bottel nosed knaue', and in *Susanna* as 'crookte nose knaue'.[16]

Presumably the nose is being compared to a leather bottle, and is thus bulbous: but the majority of devils in pictures have long curved noses more like an old-style tin-opener than a bottle, and the *NED* tentatively suggests (though it rejects) an etymology from *bytel* 'cutting instrument'. It could be bottle-like in that it had an

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Fig. 8: The Dorset Ooser.

Fig. 9: *Fall of the Angels*: St. Michael Spurriergate, York, c 1400–25.
Both images © Meg Twycross

opening at the nostril end, as the more sensational devils could be fitted up to breathe fire, smoke, and squibs. Most of the devils in the Bourges *Monstre*, the procession and Banns for *The Acts of the Apostles* performed in 1536, emitted *feu par les narines et oreilles, et tenoient en leurs mains quenouilles à feu* ('distaffs': a hollow baton shaped like a serpent and filled with gunpowder).[17] Belyal in *The Castle of Perseverance* has *gunnepowdyr brennynge In pypys in hys handes*, presumably in a *quenouille* or *skwybe* ('squib') *and in hys erys and in hys ars whanne he gothe to batayl*.[18] One imagines he had metal pipes fitted down all available orifices: even so, playing the devil must have had its dangers.

Nicoll points out how many of the devil-masks appear to sport large and conspicuous warts[19] (see the lefthand mask in Fig. 1). He believes that this is a feature descended from the comic masks of the Atellanae, and hence evidence for a continuous tradition of costume. The Dorset Ooser had 'Between the eyebrows … a rounded boss for which it is difficult to find an explanation'.[20] It could be a well-developed version of the devilish wart (Fig. 8).

One particularly interesting effect which clearly fascinated medieval maskmakers can be glimpsed in the York Mercers' 1433 Inventory: *iij garmentes for iij deuells vj deuelles faces in iij Vesernes*.[21] Two-faced characters appear more often in the masques and moralities, and we will say more about them in a later article. In the Revels accounts there are several specimens: for example, *A woman with to faces and in eache hand a glas*, who is glossed as *pride*.[22] Presumably Pride looks at each face in one glass, which suggests that she has a face over each ear. In 1553 there is *a maske of Medyoxes being half man and half deathe … for xvj hedpeces for the same doble visaged thone syde lyke a man and thother lyke deth*.[23] Unfortunately it does not say precisely how they were *doble visaged*, or what sort of effect they were intended to produce. Were they front-and-back, so that they changed when the masquers turned round? Or over the ears, so that the masquer only had to turn his head from side to side? Or half and half, so that one half of the face was Man and the other half Death, and the two melted into and provided a commentary on one another? Hall describes a masquing in 1522 where the masquers' *garmentes were russet sattin and yelowe, all the one side was yelowe, face and legge, and all the other side was russet*.[24] One can imagine the effect as they turned in the dance.

Apart from the delight in optical illusions, the double-faced mask also, in the moralities, makes a moral point. Cloked Colusyon in *Magnificence* says *Two faces in a hood covertly I bear*.[25] The hood is presumably the 'masking hood' of which one hears in disguisings: but what are the two faces? A double face, like the Medyoxes, half man, half devil, where the actor draws his hood to conceal the ugly side until the time comes for him to be revealed? Two masks? or the mask and the face that it covers? The image of masking and hypocrisy is well-developed in literature and sermons: but this must again be postponed until we discuss the moralities.

The devil's double face is probably just another perversion of nature, rather than a moral emblem. The Bourges *Monstre* of 1536 had a two-faced devil: Lucifer, seated

Fig. 10: Two-faced Janus: Calendar illustration from MS Auct D inf 2 11 fol 1^r (French for the English market, the Fastolf Master, c 1440–50).

See <https://www.flickr.com/photos/28433765@N07/49305411266>;
also images in <https://ima.princeton.edu/2018/01/10/looking-forward-and-backward-with-janus/>,
and BL Additional MS 36684 (c.1318-1325) fol. 1v at
<http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_36684_fs001r>.

Fig. 11: The Devil and St. Gudula: detail from Van Alsloot *The Triumph of Isabella* Brussels 1615. Copyright Victoria and Albert Museum.

on top of Hellmouth, dressed in a bearskin each hair of which was spangled, *avoit un tymbre à deuxmuseaux*.[26] Unfortunately again it does not say what this looked like, or where the two faces were in relation to each other, only that *il vomissoit sans cesse flammes de feu*.

The most remarkable description, however, of what sounds very much like a York *Doomsday* two-faced devil comes from the English versions of *The Seven Sages of Rome*. The 'Saracens' are besieging the city of Rome, and one of the Wise Men devises a plan to drive them away. In the French prose version he causes himself to be

habilllié d'un vestement fait de queues d'escureurs, et en sa teste avroit deux visières ou visagières grandes et lées, toutes semées de grands mireurs reflamboyans contre le soleil. et en ses deux mains tendroit deux espées cleres et reluisans.[27]

The English version goes into much greater detail, and produces a rather different effect:

He let make hym a garnement
As blacke as any arnement   *atramentum*: black paint
And hyng theron squyrelle taylys
A m[1] and mo, samfaylys,
And a veser he made hym mo,
Too facys behynde, another byfore,
And ij nosys in eyther halfe
More horrybeler thenne any calfe
And the tonge also there on rede
As euyr was brennynge lede.
He sent to the Soudans, samfayle,
He shulde be redy to byde batayle[28]

This version seems slightly scrambled, as it suggests three faces: MS F has *two vysers … Oon before and anodur behynde*, and adds

And eyen þeron, for sothe to telle,
As hytt had be a deuyll of helle.

The Wise Man goes up into a tower on the wall, taking with him (in the English version) *a woundyr merovre*, and skirmishes with the two swords in front of it, shouting and yelling. The Saracens are *ny wode and owte of wyt, and flee*: the reason is variously given. In the French, it is because *ilz cuidoient certainement que ce feust le dieu des Romains qui les venist secourir*. In the English versions they think, somewhat surprisingly, that he is *god þat dyed on rode* (MS B), *Jesu owre sauyour* (MS F), or, more convincingly,

þei wente be þe merour
It wer þe devyll in þe tour (MS Ar)[29]

This resourceful person, who in English is called variously *Gemes*, *Genus*, *Junius*, and *Julius*, then has the month of January named after him. This explains the origin of

the two faces: it is all an aetiological romance. There are two interesting things about this episode, however, apart from the object lesson in the hazards of textual transmission. One is the way in which the English versions expand the original: wanting to make the costume as terrifying as possible, they add the blackness, the calf snout, the fiery red tongue, (and incidentally the adjective *horrible*), and two of the MSS take the final step to identifying it with a devil costume.

The other is the context. In the English versions, the story is introduced with the enquiry

> Sire, hastou owt herd þe geste
> Why men made folen feste?[30]

'Have you heard the story of how the Feast of Fools was invented?' The squirrels' tails are originally part of a fool's costume: not the familiar motley, but an apparently earlier and more 'folk' type. Robert of Sicily, in the romance of that name (c. 1390), when deposed by the angel and become the court fool, was *Cloþed in a lodly garnement Wiþ ffoxes tayles mony aboute*.[31] Here dressed in squirrels' or foxes' tails, it appears that the fool can wear any type of rags and tatters. Rolle's *Prick of Conscience* says of the fashionable young men in their dagged and scalloped garments *Some gas tatird als tatird foles*.[32] When the Wakefield devils fall from heaven, they actually compare themselves with tattered fools:

> Now ar we waxen blak as any coyll   *coal*
> And vgly, tatyrd as a foyll   *fool*[35]

We said earlier that we thought that the mask (and probably the costume) of the play devil was descended from the *larva* and ragged or hairy costumes of the folk maskings and disguisings. We are not of course alone in this: a whole generation of earlier writers on the folk play has made the same assertion — and like us, signally failed to come up with any more convincing evidence than a strong impression.[34] This is always the problem when one is dealing with medieval folk lore: the case of the diabolical Janus is a very fair example of the sort of material which creates a very strong impression of the interrelation of masking, 'fool', and devil, without actually making an outright statement about it.

In themselves the costumes worn by the early maskers — the animal horns, the hairy pelts, the blackened faces, the rags and tatters, the *capita bestiarum*[35] — are no more especially diabolical than the costumes of the characters of any English folk play as recorded by a nineteenth century antiquarian. We have, however, good evidence that when the word *larva* is used from the eleventh century on, it is usually associated with the word *daemon*[36]: and that at the end of the period, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, folk maskers were actually identifying at least one type of masked attire as a devil costume:

> I haue harde that a certayne man was slayne
> Beynge disgysed as a fowle fende horryble

Whiche was anone caryed to hell payne
By suche a fende, which is nat inpossible
It was his right it may be so credyble
For that whiche he caryed with hym away
Was his vysage: and his owne leueray.   ccxlviʳ

This cautionary tale against masking was translated in 1508 by Alexander Barclay from Sebastian Brandt's *Stultifera Navis*.[37] Barclay's *Shyp of folys* is a 'creative translation', in that Brandt, writing in Latin, tends to use classical allusions and epithets which Barclay converts into contemporary ones: for example, Brandt's

sic deformior ille est
Tartara qui terret murmure cerbereo   ccxliiiᵛ

becomes   They are more fowle than the blacke Deuyll of hell   cclvʳ

Barclay elsewhere is ready to tell us when he thinks a certain practice (as for example serenading) is not as common in England as on the Continent.[38] He is thus at least expecting to be understood when he writes about the abuses and effects of masking. This particular passage concerns *folys disgysys with vysers and other counterfayte apparayl*, which takes place at

Christis feste or his Natyuyte
At Ester / and most speciall at wytsontyde   ccxlvᵛ

Over and over, Barclay, even more than Brandt, insists that carnival maskers wearing *vysers* are disguising themselves as devils, in order to do the devil's work,[39]

for all that euer they meane
Is under theyr deuyls clothynge as they go
The deuylles workes for to commyt also   ccxlvʳ

though he says he does not intend to go into as much detail on this as Brandt did in the original, for fear of putting ideas into his readers' heads.

We have investigated this in some detail, because if the devil of the plays is related to, identified with, or descended from the devil-figure of folk masking, it is both going to condition the way in which the medieval audience will apprehend them and their masks, and enable us to use some of their reactions towards the folk-devil as a measure of the reactions towards devils in plays. A possible scenario runs something like this. We have an apparently irrepressible tradition of folk masking, which is officially condemned as giving oneself to the service of 'evil spirits': this during the conversion period, which in some parts of Europe lasted effectively until the tenth century. Then at some point, possibly around the eleventh century, the masks worn by the disguisers are said specifically to *represent* these evil spirits. It is clear that here we have a strong folk tradition which can be very usefully converted into representing the Devil or devils when their turn comes to appear in plays.

How far this was a conscious move, taking the characters of the masquerade and very pointedly turning them into the villains of the piece, and how far it was merely the obvious available convention when something non-human and frightening was required, we shall never know. In either case, if it happened, it would have been a clever and shrewd move. People enjoyed masking, but it could get out of hand: and even in the later Middle Ages there was at least a historical suspicion that these were superstitious practises. Wearing the same costume to play the devil in a liturgical or mystery play kept everything within the proper bounds. One still clearly enjoyed playing the devil: and plays like the Wakefield *Doomsday* suggest that the audience were meant to enjoy it too: but probably the official attitude to this kind of masking could be safely reversed when the *daemones* became devils, as both theatrically and theologically they have this curiously equivocal role of Evil willy-nilly playing the agent of Good. One may not have approved of them, but they were not set in the right structure.

It is interesting that devils as we know them hardly appear in art until the eleventh century, precisely at the same time as *larva* masks seem first to be attributed to the *daemones*.[40] Pre-Romanesque devils are angels that have been caught in a nuclear holocaust: winged, humanoid, but black and shrivelled. The *Book of Kells* Temptation of Christ shows a typical if more than usually scrawny one (Fig. 12).[41] Romanesque devils tend still to be winged and scrawny, but the emphasis is now on their horrific *larvae* (Fig. 13), and they tend to be tufted with hair as well (Fig. 14). The official art-historical explanation is that they are descended from the classical satyr.[42] This may well have contributed to the picture: but it does not explain the *larvae* or really, why

FIG. 12: *Book of Kells* (c.800)   FIG 13: Autun (1120–30)

FIG 14: *Psalter* of Henry of Blois,
12th c.: BL MS Cotton Nero C IV,
fol 18[r]. Original ©British Library.

FIG. 15: Devil, from St. Martin,
Coneystreet, York: c. 1437.
Photo © Twycross.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons.
The detail is in the centre background of the painting
of the Procession of the Guilds:
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O132427/
the-ommegang-in-brussels-on-oil-painting-alsloot-denys-van/

FIG 16: The Devils and the Butterwife: Van Alsloot *Isabella* 1615.
© Victoria and Albert Museum.

it should have been the satyr rather than, say, the dragon from the passages in *Isaiah*[43] which was adopted as a figure of the devil. If there was already a *pilosus* with whom he could be identified it makes more sense.

It seems quite possible that here we have a genuine influence of masking on art. It is also interesting that, as Lynette Muir pointed out in her paper on the stage directions in the Anglo-Norman *Adam* (twelfth century) 'costumes are specified for everyone except Satan and the devils'.[44] It may be that they were the only characters whose costumes were already totally familiar.

Certainly by the twelfth century Gerhoh has varied the old decretal formula against folk masking to make it fit liturgical drama: *viri totos se frangunt in feminas, quasi pudeat eis, quod viri sunt, clerici in milites, homines se in daemonum larvas transfigurant* ('men degenerate themselves into women, as if they were ashamed to be men: clerics transform themselves into soldiers, humans into gargoyles of devils').[45] From the original 'men become women, clergy become soldiers, humans become animals', it has changed to 'humans turn themselves into devils by putting on masks'. Gerhoh disapproves of this, but it shows that the change has taken place. The masked devil remains a feature of liturgical drama; the only character in the Avignon *Praesentatio* of 1385 to wear a mask is Lucifer.[46]

From the Romanesque devil there develops the familiar 'Gothic' devil, hairy (often indistinguishable from the woodwose), horned, fanged and taloned, and goggle-eyed. The devil from the St. Martin window in St. Martin Coneystreet, York, can serve as a general example of an English devil of the fifteenth century (Fig. 15). He is more humanoid than animal-like, though he has animal features. The humanoid devil is more easily transferred to the stage than the fantasy creatures of Bosch or Brueghel. It is interesting that the humanoid devil is also the one that naive illustrators tend to pick, rather than the more freakish variety: though when they wish to illustrate a large company of devils, they will add more clearly animal-like ones for variety (as in Fig. 19).

Can we work out what sort of effect these masked devils would have on the audience of a play? To say that we think they were related to the devils or carnival masking does not necessarily mean that they would have the same effect as them: everything depends on context, and the devil of the mystery play is set in a moral framework which would considerably alter his profile. However, perhaps there are some similarities. Richard Axton points out how the early devils of the *Adam* seem to enjoy a special relationship with the audience, a

Freedom to roam through the open spaces (*per plateas*) between the structures and to run in among the audience. Running is their characteristic activity. The *demones* are purveyors of entertainment as well as object of doctrinal terror … always full of

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The detail is just to the right of and behind the Jesse Tree in the
painting of the pageant waggon procession:
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O18973/the-ommegang-in-
brussels-on-painting-alsloot-denys-van
Scroll through the thumbnails beneath the main image
for a closeup

Fig. 17: Devils chasing Bystanders: detail from Denis Van Alsloot
The Triumph of Isabella 1615. Copyright Victoria and Albert Museum.

energy and hilarity, dancing with glee at the imprisonment of Adam and Eve, 'shouting to one another in their joy' – apparently *ex tempore*.[47]

In this respect they are rather more like the devils of morality plays than of mystery plays, at least as far as the text is concerned. But the script isn't everything: it would seem almost impossible for the devils of a processional play not to set up a relationship with the audience. The various *Doomsday* plays, especially of course Wakefield, suggest this kind of improvised interaction with the audience, as does any play in which the devils come to take away their prey: *Harrow, harrow, we com to town*![48] The painting of the *Triumph of Isabella* (Figs. 16–17) gives a very good picture of how the devils could be used as stitlers, harassing *shrewd boys* who got in the way of the procession with whips and *squertes*. Barnabe Googes' translation of *The Popishe Kingdome* (the *Regnum Papisticum* of Thomas Kirchmeyer or Naogeorgus) says about his carnival maskers.

> But some againe the dreadfull shape of deuils on them take
> And chase such as they meete, and make poore boyes
>   for feare to quake[49]

But though the devils may be enjoying themselves, *gaudentes et tripudiantes*, one can (most early critics do) overemphasise their comic side.[50] If they are wearing masks, their relationship with the audience will always be something more than just good-natured fun.

Contemporary descriptions of masking emphasise the disguise element: *laruis utuntur, sub quibus personæ non apparent, quæ ludunt* ('they make use of masks, beneath which the persons of those who play are hidden').[51] A devil costume is more concealing than most. Of the stage devils we have seen, the devil-suit and the devil-head form a totally enclosing carapace, under which the human actor is completely abolished, except for his voice, and possibly his eyes. At the most, you are aware that there is someone in there, but you don't know who.

The fifteenth century French illustration from the romance of *Renaud de Montauban* demonstrates the effect very well. On the left the figure is conspicuously a man dressed in a devil-suit: the cleric holds the headpiece. The costume is a dark brownish black, and the inside of the mouth fiery red: the teeth are white, and the eyes, horns, and flame-like hair picked out in gold. On the right, he has put on the head and become a completely alien being (FIG. 18).[52]

Here we must distinguish between the devil as he might relate to the audience, and the devil as he relates to the other characters. To the audience he will behave much more like the devil or masquerade. Here again, it is emphasised that disguise confers licence. The masker being unrecognised, cannot be held to account for what he does; and what he does will usually overstep the normal laws of society:

> Nowe they with vysers dayle disgysed be
> Them self diffourmynge almost in euery thynge
> Whan they are disgysyd to them it is semynge

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For a colour image, go to
https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8426778v/f65.item.r
=Renaud%20de%20Montauban

FIG 18: Devil costume and Head: *Renaud de Montauban* c 1475.
Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS 5072 Rés. fol 28]

> That no syn is gret: nor soundynge to theyr shame
> Syns theyr foule vysers therof can cloke the fame.[53]

The context here is of course different: Brandt (via Barclay) is saying that the maskers use their disguises as an opportunity to let their baser natures run riot. Transferred into a play context, the licence is still present: the audience are presumably used to seeing creatures dressed like this behaving like this, and to allowing them liberties which they would not accept from a normally-attired fellow citizen. As characters in the play, the actors in devil costume are representing creatures an essential part of whose nature is licence.

This licence can be in *baudy wordes* or deeds, or in actual physical violence (several carnival stories end in violent death) or the threat of it. In our case, the devil-actor is hardly likely to do more than threaten, though, as we can see from both the *Isabella* picture and the Kirchmeyer quotation, the threat itself can be frightening enough.

In any exchange between a masked person and an unmasked, there will be a certain tension, in which the unmasked person is at a disadvantage. He does not know who the masked person is, so does not quite know how to approach him. This is basically unsettling anyway, but then one had to add the effect of socially 'playing at' a completely impassive face. The voice may give clues as to the masked person's reactions, but one whole vital dimension of response is missing. In Court masques, as at the court of Henry VIII, this tension is exploited sexually, but according to carefully laid-down alternative rules of behaviour.

When the masked person is a devil, the relationship becomes that of a tormentor and victim. The mask and costume, with the bestial teeth and claws, emphasise the predatory intent: they also emphasise the fact that this creature is not like us, and that there is no way of knowing what it will do. We assume that whatever it is, it will not be what a human would do. The possibilities seem endless, and the more horrible for being undefined. Even if the devil decides to play with you, it is like a cat playing with a mouse: you cannot take the initiative.

There is a comic role, but it is an uneasy one. In sermons, when we are invited to laugh at the devil, it is usually at the devil's discomfiture: when he falls off the lady's train into the mud, or accidentally bangs his head against the wall.[54] On stage, this sort of comic discomfiture will happen as part of the action, and the audience can laugh because they are safely insulated away from the devil and, usually, triumphing through someone stronger than themselves: God, or Christ. In a carnival setting, whether in a real carnival or in the actor/audience relationship of the plays, the interaction is between masked and unmasked, actor and audience. If the Devil plays the fool in front of you, you may laugh, but the laughter will have a nervous edge, because he still has the advantage of inscrutability. Even if he is tormenting or duping someone else, like the *shrewd boys* in the Isabella picture, or, as in some sermons, when

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the victim is unaware of it,[55] the laughter will still be potentially nervous, as you are still within his range of attention, and he may turn on you next.

When the audience are not personally involved in the action, but watching something taking place safely onstage, what impression does the devil give you? Stage devils are, as we have been saying, of necessity humanoid, and the effect ought to be one of humanity warped. This may happen in some plays, notably the Falls of the Angels and of Man, but usually the carapace effect of the devil-suit and devil-head tends rather to emphasise the otherness of the devil, the Dalek rather than the Frankenstein side. He is an alien, the Adversary, contrasting with the human but not commenting on it, in the way that Death, for example, comments on it by being a stage in its corruption. Anima in *Wisdom* produces the rather different effect proper to the morality: she was human, and has become deformed.

He does and was meant to frighten. You do not suggest *orebyll aray* unless you intend to produce horror. After the devil has gone in (quietly) to Pilate's Wife in *N-Town*, she comes rushing out *makyn a rewly noyse* and *leke A mad woman*, saying

> Sethyn þe tyme þat I was born
> was I nevyr so sore A-gast   530[56]

In the York *Death of Mary*, the Virgin prays especially that she shall not see (as Hoccleve's dying man did, and as most medieval people expected to) the devil at her deathbed: Christ replies that he cannot grant her this:[57]

> But modir, þe fende muste be nedis at þyne endyng
> In figure full foule for to fere þe   155

FIG. 19: Frustrated devils at a deathbed: *Ars Moriendi*, Augsburg, 1471.

It is unlikely that the characters were frightened, and the audience meant to remain unmoved, or even laugh. If there was laughter, it was much more likely to be the laughter of nervous reaction or of self-reassurance. To suggest, as Allardyce Nicoll does, that 'these devils, *for comic purposes*, appeared "in orebyll aray"'[58] is like saying that all horror films are meant to be comedy programmes.

It is interesting to compare the effect of the devil-mask with the possible effect of blackening the souls' faces in the Coventry *Doomsday* play, especially since, as it seems, this was an alternative way of deforming the devil's face. At first it seems to have much the same effect as masking. Painting the face any uniform colour, but especially black, flattens the features and all the small details of planes catching the light, and change of colour which give a face expression. It takes the face one stage towards inscrutability. It is also not the colour of face that a Northern European expects to see, and therefore gives the initial stomach-churning shock of the unexpected. A human being with the blackened face is therefore felt to be both unnatural and mystifying.

It should perhaps be pointed out here that we tend to think of masking as donning another personality: we can forget that sometimes the point is to abolish the personality completely, as with the stocking masks of robbers. Bromyard, it will be remembered, actually makes the comparison between actors and robbers, though we don't know what kind of masks his robbers wore:[59] but the same effect can be achieved by putting on a totally incongruous mask: fairly recently there was a film in which the bank-robbers put on Mickey Mouse masks, and Lionel Davidson uses the same effect in *The Chelsea Murders*.

The black also throws up the whites (or yellows) and reds of the eyes, the red of the inside of mouth and nostrils, and the white of the teeth by contrast, so that they become more vivid than normal. One can see this in the otherwise familiar face of the coalminer, and it used to apply to chimney sweeps.[60] (Thomas Hardy describes the same effect with Diggory Venn the reddleman, though he was dyed a different colour.[61]) It also incidentally upsets the normal balance of colour and texture between face and hair, so that the hair, paradoxically, looks false: we saw this at Wakefield with the silver-painted angel of *Abraham and Isaac*, whose normally light-brown hair looked suddenly like hemp: this could be another reason why there are so many wigs. The effect is to make us concentrate on features which are not normally that dominant, which is again unsettling and disturbing, and also, possibly, on those features, like eyes and mouth, which are defenceless, which makes the face seem curiously vulnerable.

At this point, again, what we make of the blackened face depends on the context into which we read it. If we look at accounts of past black-faced masking, we see that it could be read as impersonation of the dead (by the very early maskers); as *sordidatio … faciei* by the disapproving Church,[62] and incidentally by the later folk play,

which calls one of its characters 'Dirty Bet'[63]; as ambassadors from some exotic land, *Moreskoes* or *nygrost or blacke Mores*, in the court masquings.[64] If the figure is a devil, it will communicate menace or moral blackness. If it is a damned soul, we relate it to ourselves, and the blackness becomes a shocking disfigurement, as of the badly burned we hope we will only see on safety posters. Either way, it is something that both is us and isn't us: and as a damned soul, it seems to convey a curious sense of pathos and helplessness, possibly because, unlike a mask, it is halfway between impassivity and communication.

B. Humans: especially extremely wicked characters

We said that extremely wicked characters also seem to wear masks or have their faces painted. 'Extremely wicked' seems to include Herod and the Tormentors, but not Annas, Caiaphas, or Pilate. We have no information about Cain, Pharaoh, Antichrist, or the other sub-demonic figures. In fact we really have far too little information altogether about the ordinary humans in the plays, and it may well be that because Chester and Coventry both provide us with Herods, his part in this masking has assumed an excessive prominence.

However, a striking amount of attention is paid to his *face* or *viser*. The Coventry Smiths, who played the *Passion*, paid in 1477 *for peyntyng … herods face* and in 1516 *for peyntyng & mendyng of herodes heed*.[1] Similar entries appear for 1547, 1554, and possibly 1508, where the item is *for colour and coloryng of Arade*.[2] (In Beverley, Herod may well have been painted black.[3])

In 1498 it would seem that not only Herod was made up or masked: *Item paid to the peynter ffor peyntyng of ther fasses*. Much the same entry appears in 1502, and in 1548, where it is *payd to the paynter for payntyng the players facys*.[4] It is not specified how many of the players were painted: but the Chester Shoemakers in 1550, playing their extended play which seems to have taken in most of the Passion, paid *for geyldeng of godes ffase & ffor payntyng of the geylers ffases xij d* (*the geylers* were *the geyler* and *the geylers man*: Annas and Caiaphas appear in the cast list, but not Herod).[5] In 1558 the Shoemakers *payd ffor mendeng the tormentors heydes*,[6] which could refer either to wigs or masks. One assumes that the Tormentors and Herod were masked or painted in order to make them look misshapen and subdemonic. There is no verbal evidence for this, but some pictorial: the *Holkham Bible Picture Book*, for example, makes its tormentors snub-nosed, pock-marked, and bestial-looking (Figs. 20–21).[7] M.D. Anderson illustrates a window from St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, where a jailer is shown apparently wearing a mask with a pig's face, snout, gappy teeth, and all.[8]

The Coventry Herod also had a *Creste*.[9] It is marginally possible that this *Creste* was part of a helmet – it had *plates of iron*, gold foil and silver foil – and that the face was in actual fact a visor.

Figs. 20 and 21: Tormentors, the *Holkham Bible Picture Book*, c. 1330, fols 30ᵛ and 31ʳ.
Note the grotesque noses and 'eye make-up'. © British Library.

Fig. 22: Grotesque helmet, German, c. 1525. The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York: Gift of William H. Riggs, 1914 (14.25.562) [public domain].
https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/26504

Grotesque German parade helmet of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries do survive. They are said to be based on Shrovetide carnival masks, called *Schembart* masks from the Nuremburg festival of that name.[10] There are several examples in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which bear a striking resemblance to the Saracen and bird faces worn by the maskers in the *Freydal* of Maximilian[11] (Figs. 22 & 25). The helmets are garnished with holes in the skull which not only provide ventilation but could act as housings for plumes and other crests. Another of these grotesque helms was given by the Emperor Maximilian to Henry VIII and is now in the Armouries of the Tower of London (Figs. 23–4).[12] It was described in an inventory of 1547 as *A hedde pece with A Rammes horne silver parcell guilte*. The ram's horns are in fact made of steel 'embossed and etched to simulate the natural surface of the horn and gilt in transverse bands'.[13] The face, which, it is suggested, may be a caricature of Maximilian himself, once had a pair of latten spectacles, which may have formed part of the original armour. In the seventeenth century it formed part of what was called 'Will Somers' armour', and a ribald story was made up to account for the horns and spectacles. We do find Will Somers fighting a mimic duel with the Lord of Misrule in the Revels Accounts for Christmas 1551: *A devise by the kinge for a combat to be fought with Wylliam Somer*, for which however he wore cardboard armour, *a harniss of paper boordes*,[14] but it is interesting that the link was made, even if erroneously. It shows that the helmet was associated in people's minds with the revels rather than the serious combat. Herod's ostentatiously irascible character ad his predilection for sword-flourishing would suit a grotesque helmet: but we shall probably never know if he wore one.

Putting human characters in masks clearly creates different problems and effects from the masks of devils. Since the devils (and God) clearly belong to 'other worlds', it is not surprising or disconcerting that their non-human quality should be demonstrated in masks. But Herod and the jailers, being human, offer a different case. Whatever a mask is like, it is going to set the character apart from the other unmasked players. The interactions of a mobile human face with a static masked one, whether the mask is grotesque or naturalistic, tend to produce striking, and often sinister effects. So Herod and the tormentors would thus appear to be given a status beyond that of mere human beings. The difficulty is compounded by our uncertainty about what the masks actually looked like. We have suggested that they were probably bestial or devilish in appearance, but obviously we do not know quite how grotesque, or human, they were. If they are devil's faces, then a devilish nature is imposed on all their human words and behaviour: if they are almost human, then they may combine even more oddly with the unmasked faces of the other characters. So how far is it possible to guess at the effect produced by these 'human' masks?

Yet another difficulty in estimating these effects is the lack of correlation between

FIGS 23 & 24: Grotesque Helmet, Gift of the Emperor Maximilian to Henry VIII:
Armouries, Tower of London. Crown Copyright: reproduced with permission of the
Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

FIG 25: Armour with Grotesque Helmet, German, c 1510. Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York: Rogers Fund, 1904.
Helmet only: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/35825

the texts we have, and the references to masks in the records. This is a problem which runs right through our discussion of masks. Many of the clearest allusions to masks come from records which pre-date the play texts, sometimes by as much as a century or more. Even when the references, from the sixteenth century, appear to be approximately contemporary with the play MSS, because of the necessary imprecision of dating the performance of any specific text we can never be certain that the text we have would have used the masks mentioned in the appropriate guild accounts. Unfortunately there are, anyway very few cases where both a guild reference to masks and a text of that guild's play survive. However, in spite of the problems, it seems vital to look at the plays we know where it seems that masks probably were worn, for only by doing this can we even begin to speculate about the effects.

One of the few examples of play-text-plus-reference that we have is the Chester Coopers' pageant of the *Trial and Flagellation*, where *Arrates vysar* was mended in 1574.[15] There are no references to masks for the other characters. The surviving text of the Chester Coopers' pageant is very interesting, and even puzzling, if we approach it assuming that its Herod was masked. He does not have nearly such a pronounced ranting manner as in many other Herod plays, and is therefore far less obviously associated with the forces of evil. He seems on the whole relatively controlled, and indeed fairly reasonable in his interrogation of Christ. The only indication of the traditional devilish ranting is the one lines, 'Alas! I am nigh wood for woo' (187). Apart from this his general manner is one of suave politeness:

> A! Welcome, Jesu, verament! …   167
>
> I pray these, say nowe to mee,
> and prove some of they postie,
> and mych the gladder would I bee …   177
>
> for Pilate shall not, by my hood,
> do the non amys …   185

If he is wearing a devilish mask then this moderately reasonable tone is presumably transformed into a sadistically ironic game, as the courtesy of the words is belied by the evil of the face. Yet there is no indication in the lines that this is intended. Pilate is similarly reasonable, and the mildness of his approach does not seem to be intended cynically. Yet if Herod is wearing a mask, and Pilate is not, then the apparent similarity of their attitudes will be transformed on stage into a striking contrast.

Interestingly, Annas and Caiaphas, who from the records do not appear to be masked, are far more aggressive, ranting, and 'devilish' in manner than Herod is. If Herod did wear a mask in this version of the play, then it does seem to have been used for deliberate, and quite subtle, theatrical purposes. If this mask is a grotesque or demonic one, then it noticeably alters the effect of his part as it is written: if not, it is hard to see quite why he should be wearing it at all.

There is one possible reason. It is likely that in this play Pilate and Herod were doubled, which would require an extremely quick change: the 1571 expenses read *payde for the carynge of pylates clothes vjd*, the 1574 *paied vnto pylat and to him that caried arrates clothes & for there gloves vjs vjd*.[16] *Arrates vysar* would thus be an essential bit of disguise in the doubling. We should however stress that this makes no *theatrical* difference to the effect we have just been talking about.

The Chester Shepherds seem to be the only exception to this general rule that masks or make-up in ordinary people are grotesque, and therefore denote evil or disfigurement. But this depends on *to bone the pleares* (1571) meaning 'to make the actors' up.'[17] The Coopers' accounts of 1574 use the word *Bowninge* with its opposite *vnbowninge*,[18] but only in the general sense of 'get ready', which includes dressing, and possibly putting on make-up, but is not sufficiently precise to deduce anything from. From the script as we have it, at least two of the characters are bearded, Joseph conspicuously:

> His beard is like a buske of bryers
> with a pound of heares about his mouth and more   499[19]

and the 1575 accounts show that they paid *for the hayare of the ij bardes and trowes cape*[20]: the *paintes* may have been for making Joseph and *Primus Pastor* up as old men. However, we really have such a random selection of accounts that it is possible there were more instances of make-up than have survived.

C. God and the Angels

At the opposite end of the scale come the good supernatural characters: God and the angels. Besides the York *Creed Play larua aurata* for God, and the Norwich *face and heare for the Father*, we also have the York Mercers' 1433 *Array for God … a diademe with a veserne gilted*, and the Chester Smiths' and Cordwainers' *for gildinge of Gods face*.[1] The gilt mask, or the gilt face, is presumably meant to show divine radiance: God revealed in His godhead: *His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength* (*Revelation* 1 16) or, as the York *Transfiguration* play says

> His clothyng is white as snowe,
> His face schynes as þe sonne   97–8

(*Matthew* 17 2). In the *Passion* of Jean Michel, Jesus goes 'into' Mount Thabor and comes out again with *une face et les toutes d'or bruny Et ung gran soleil à rays brunys par derriere*.[2] *Une face* presumably means 'a mask', as there would hardly be time to gild his face, or to restore him to normal afterwards: presumably *les mains* are gilded kid gloves. There would certainly be time in the York *Transfiguration* play for a similar change, to match the quotation.

The Mons *Passion* also painted the angel Raphael's face red for the Resurrection scene, so as to represent the Gospel *Erat aspectus eius sicut fulgur* (*Matthew* 28 3): *Nota*

d'ycy advertir ung paintre de aller en Paradis pour poindre rouge la face de Raphael.[3] There is no evidence from the Coventry *Resurrection* accounts (the only full ones we have) that English angels were painted like this, but the *Cursor Mundi* renders the verse variously *his cher lik was slagt o fire* and *And his semblaunt like to ffyr*.[4] The thirteenth century *Ingeborg Psalter* shows the Angel at the Sepulchre with a face painted red in precisely this way: it also shows Christ at the Transfiguration with a gilded face.[5]

It would seem, then, that here we have playwrights using masks and painted faces to try and reproduce a Biblical text literally, in the same way as the *Psalter* artist had tried to. There are one or two stage directions in liturgical drama which show attempts to produce the same effect using a red *veil*: the (undated) Narbonne *Visit to the Sepulchre* printed by Young gives the direction

Quibus dictis, sint duo pueri super altare, induti albis et amictibus cum stolis violatis et sindone rubea in facies eorum et alis in humeris, qui dicant
Quem quaeritis in sepulchro …[6]

('These words having been said, let there be two boys above the altar, dressed in albs and amices, with violet stoles, and red muslin over their faces and wings on their shoulders, who are to say: "Whom do you seek in the sepulchre …?"')

Another *Quem quaeritis* from an unidentified French monastery of the thirteenth century asks for

duo pueri stantes iuxta altare, unus as dexteris, alius a sinistris, albis induti, rubicundis amictis capitibus et uultis coopertis, cantando dicant versum
Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, o Christicole?[7]

('two boys standing near the altar, one at the right, one at the left, dressed in albs, their heads and faces covered with red amices (*or* with red amices on their heads and their faces covered) who shall sing this verse: "Whom do you seek in the sepulchre, o dwellers in Christ?"')

This is ambiguous, and the translation uncertain, but it could be trying to convey the same as the first quotation. The veiling is in face a perfectly common method of masking: types of veil used varied from a coarse net or *caul*, with meshes large enough for the features to be seen through them, to *pleasance*, a very fine gauze: we shall talk of this type of masking later.

This is understandable as a means of producing a certain effect for a particular transformation or apparition; but as we know, the masking does not stop there. The gilding (or silvering) of faces is also used to signify divine radiance as a permanent

characteristic. At Henry V's triumphal Entry into the City of London after Agincourt, he was greeted at London Bridge by

> innumerosi pueri representantes ierarchiam angelicam, vestitu candido, vultibus rutilante auro, alis interlucentibus et crinibus virgineis consertis laureolis preciosis[8]
>
> ('innumerable boys representing the hierarchy of the angels, clad in pure white, their faces glowing with gold, their wings gleaming, and their youthful locks entwined with costly sprays of laurel').

An earlier pageant, the Reconciliation of Richard II with the City of London, in 1392, presented God the Father seated above the hierarchies of angels:

> Supra sedebat eos iuvenis quasi sit Deus ipse:
> Lux radiosa sibi solis ad instar inest.
> Flammigerum vultum gerit hic niveas quoque vestes,
> Supra ierarchias ille sedet celicas.   329–32[9]
> ('Above them (the angels) was sitting a young man representing God himself: a radiant light, in appearance like the sun, was his. He bore a blazing face and snow-white robes: he sat above the heavenly hierarchies'.)

The angels surrounding God the Father seem to have gleaming faces:

> Sicque micant facies iuvenum tam in hiis quam in illis   325
> ('Thus the faces of the young men sparkled, both these and those'.)

The *flammigerum vultus* ('like to ffyr'?) and the sparkling faces of the angels suggest the same sort of make-up and possibly gold-leaf as the God of the plays. But here the pageant characters are painted and gilded as a permanent state, not for a temporary transformation. We tend to think of God in a gold mask as just another curious feature of medieval theatre: no-one has, as far as we know, asked why and how these faces came to be masked in the first place.

Despite the two red-veiled angels in the liturgical pieces, it does not seem to have been an effect of liturgical drama. God rarely appears *in propria persona*, and when He does, attempts to convey divine radiance usually give Him a crown: just as the radiance of the angels of the Resurrection can also be symbolically represented by one of them carrying a candelabrum.[10] There is sufficient evidence in (mostly fifteenth century) art to show that a gilded face was one of the ways in which painters and glaziers showed the divinity of God: but not enough to show that the plays must have copied the art (or, as Anderson suggests, vice versa[11]). It is possible that, if most Royal Entries were constructed, as Gordon Kipling suggests in a forthcoming book,[12] on an Advent pattern, particularly of the Second Coming, that the shining-faced God

of the street pageants was a direct representation of the figure in the first chapter of the *Book of Revelation*, and that this figure was then generalised as the God of the mystery plays. But we would need a chronology for this: and again, we wonder what the God of the masked miracles wore. Or did the mystery reinvent a convention that seems natural to the religious drama of other cultures, that of masking its divinities to mark them out from ordinary humans?

The use of God-masks is a widespread phenomenon throughout the world, and one that does seem to work extremely effectively in religious drama, as well as religious rituals. There is clearly something about a masked face that conveys a sense of 'human-like but more than human' that is particularly appropriate to the representation of anthropomorphic divinities of all sorts, as the use of God-masks in cultures as diverse as North and South America, African, and Asian demonstrates. So close is the connection between the presentation of God and the use of masks that in many societies the mask itself, at least as used in rituals, seems to embody or become the god rather than representing him.[13]

It is perhaps partly this apparently deep-rooted sense of appropriateness that makes the use of the golden mask for God the Father in the mysteries seem so acceptable. For God in Heaven to have a golden face or mask is especially naturally impressive, since he is clearly separate from and above mankind. The effect does, perhaps, become a little more complicated when God descends and interacts directly with men: with Noah, or with Adam and Eve, as *the Father* with (possibly) gilded *face and heare* does in the Norwich Grocers' *Creation* play. Yet in many ways the use of a mask in a situation like this adds immeasurably to the power of the scene. The masked actor moving among unmasked ones automatically gains an authority and a mystery which is wholly appropriate for this divine/human relationship. In fact a mask moving among open faces can create a sense of divinity on stage without any help from the words that are spoken.

We find it reasonably easy to see the rationale behind this sort of transformation of the human actor's face. But Chester at least would seem to go further that this. (So too does the York *Creed Play*, though we know nothing about the script.) The annual gilding of 'God's' face that we see in the Smiths' and twice in the Cordwainers' accounts is not for Christ in His Divinity, but Christ in his Manhood. The Cordwainers' play was *Simon the Leper and the Entry into Jerusalem*, though in the 1550s it was extended into a Passion play involving Annas, Caiaphas, and the Tormentors;[14] the Smiths' *litle God* is the child Jesus of the *Purification and Doctors* play.[15]

One could argue that the Chester *litle God* was only gilded for the Midsummer Watch, when he rode out with the two Doctors as part of the Smiths' Show. This is certainly true for part of the time: for example, the 1564 entry reads *for Guilding of Gods face* but the accounts are headed *midsomer euen*.[16] But the evidence is complicated

by the fact that, as Clopper says, 'the performance schedule in the 1560s and 1570s was erratic – plays were performed only in 1561, 1567, 1568, 1572, and 1575',[17] and apart from the very earliest entry, in 1545,[18] and the very latest, in 1571,[19] all the Smiths' entries concerned with the gilding of God come from the 1560s.[20] In 1563, 1564, 1565, 1566 and 1569 there was no play, and the records either show that the gilding took place in midsummer, or mention it only in conjunction with expenses for Little God and the two Doctors. In 1545, the item appears with what are clearly expenses for the play, as in 1561, 1567, and (apparently) 1571. In 1568 the entry is included in playing expenses for the whole year, but definitely states that it is *for gylding Gods face on midsomer euen*, which rather suggests that it was not gilded at Whitsun. In 1571 it is again clearly among the play expenses, being preceded by *for breckfast on Tuesday morning 8s*. In 1572, despite the fact that the plays were played, there are no expenses for them, and Little God has been replaced in the Riding by a *child*, as in 1573.[21] In 1575 the play is played again, and Little God is paid 20d for performing, but nothing is said about gilding his face: however, there is a general item for necessities costing xijs at the beginning of the account which might include the gilding;[22] the 'child' appears to ride again, and in any case this year the plays were played as a one-day event, at Midsummer, not Whitsun.[23]

The same applies to the much sparser evidence for the Shoemakers' Christ of the Passion. In 1561 they paid *for the gyldynge of godes fase on medsomar heue iijs*[24] (three times as expensive as for gilding Little God), but there are no other play expenses mentioned, except for an enigmatic *spende on the playeres on mydsomar heue*: were the *playeres* merely those who walked or rode in the procession, and not the whole play? However, eleven years earlier the item *ffor geyldeng of godes ffase & ffor peyntyng of the geylers ffases xijd* appears among what seem definitely to be play expenses.[25]

It is a curious problem, and would certainly suit our sensibilities more if the gilded God only rode in procession, while a human-faced Christ was left to act in the plays. That still however leaves the question of how the processional God came to be gilded in the first place, and since the characters in the procession seem to have been taken from the plays, one is forced to assume that the play characters were either gilded or masked in gold. It is unfortunate that our fullest records come from a time when they may have been becoming uneasy about the effect of *a face gilt*, and found it more acceptable in a carnival procession than a play.

However, the very terminology of the accounts gives us a clue as to their approach to the figure of Christ. He is called *God*: the child Jesus is called *litle God*. So is the Christ of the Coventry Smiths' Passion play: *imprimis to God ij s*. Sharp remarks of the name *God* 'or as it is sometimes more correctly expressed Jesus'.[26] In fact, of the nine references to the character in the accounts, only one is to *Jesus*, and that in the

convenient, almost automatic abbreviation *Ihē*: the other eight are to 'God'. The Coventry Cappers for their *Harrowing and Resurrection* play

payd to God   xx[d]
paide to the sprytt of God   xvj[d].[27]

God is Christ: *the sprytt of God* is the soul of Christ who harrows Hell while his body lies in the grave. The Coventry Smiths' Passion Play God wore a garment made of *vj skynnys of whit ledder* (1451): this was renewed in 1498, and the entry reads ... *for sowyng of gods kote of leddur and for makyng of the hands to the same kote*.[28] The word *kote* seems here to imply something closefitting, like a bodystocking, with, apparently, gloves to match: it is worn with, not a gold mask, but a *cheverel gyld* (1490), which seems to have been an alternative way of showing divinity. For us, the stripping of Christ suggests the pathos and vulnerability of a human nudity: but what must it have been like when he was stripped to a *kote of leddur* and a gold wig?[29]

The script of Chester gives no clue that the Christ in the Passion plays had a gilded face, but in the Wakefield *Scourging*, the *Secundus Tortor* says

I shall spytt in his face, though it be fare shynyng   72

and in the *Talents*, *Primus Tortor* says

At caluery when he hanged was
I spuyd and spyt right in his face
When that it shoyn as any glas.   84[30]

It would seem that for the medieval playwright and costume-maker, Christ had to show his Divinity even in the most humiliating moments of his life in the flesh.

Although this may to us, at least initially, seem difficult, and distancing, one can see that it might actually increase the complex expressiveness of these plays. Clearly a major element in the Passion plays is the naturalistic human suffering of Christ, which is presumably intended to have its undoubtedly moving affective purpose of provoking our human response. Yet it is not impossible that this response to vulnerable human distress should be combined with a recognition of divine glory. Theologically the two ought not to be mutually exclusive, and it may be that dramatically they need not be either.

One way to examine some of the possible implications is to look at those plays we have in which the figure of Christ in his Humanity, rather than God the Father, probably wore a golden mask or a gilded face. There is a text for the Chester Smiths' *Purification* pageant, which includes the child Christ with the Doctors in the Temple. Again, we cannot tell if this was the precise form of the play in which *litle God* wore a gilded face, but it was presumably similar if not exactly the same. Given the subject matter of the play, it would be easy to assume that its effect relied heavily on the

endearing quality of children on the stage among adults. But it seems that the gold face, apart from setting the little Christ off from the unmasked characters, would reduce this purely naturalistic effect. It looks very probable that there would be rather less emphasis on the 'little boy among grown ups'. This is supported by the very formal quality of Christ's speaking part in the text. His words are cool and doctrinal rather than tender and human. Even with is Mother at the end of the play he is detached and formal – the emotion at the reunion is expressed by Joseph and Mary.

The interaction between the Doctors and the little God is interesting, too, The Doctors never mention the golden face, so presumably it is intended to represent divinity to the audience only, not to the other characters. At first the Doctors treat the child with a patronising irreverence that shows that they do not see anything special about him at all. But since the audience can see the shining face, their recognition of the incomprehension and misjudgement of the Doctors must be sharpened. The Doctors themselves are not aware of it, but what the spectators see is the face of God being mistreated. As the play progresses the Doctors become increasingly aware of Christ's divinity, and as this happens their response to him becomes increasingly reverent. By the end of the play the golden face of Christ seems quite appropriate for the language in which they describe him:

> Syr, this child of mycle price
> which is yonge and tender of age,
> I hould hym sent from the high justice
> To wynne agayne our heritage. 299–302

So while at the beginning of the play Christ's golden face and the brisk humanity of the Doctors are working at quite different levels, and indeed at cross purposes, by the end of the play the two have come together into a harmonious expression of Godhead.

All this seems to support the suggestion that Christ in the mystery cycles may not be treated with quite the unmixed human naturalism that we tend to expect. His human nature is clearly very important, and the human emotions prompted by his life and suffering are fully exploited in the plays. But it looks as if there is a more overt reminder of his non-human quality than may at first appear. This perhaps mirrors, at the level of religious meaning, an aspect of these plays that we mentioned earlier: the fact that very different styles of presentation, ranging from the most movingly naturalistic to the most formally heightened, coexist and are combined in the same drama. In the Smiths' play the golden face and stylisation of Christ interacts with the very normal and mundane emotions of the Doctors, Mary, and Joseph. In fact even in the person of Mary herself the two are combined. All the while she is pursuing her lost child and expressing ordinary maternal anxiety over her son she is, according to the guild records, wearing a crown.[31]

This complexity of styles requires a complexity of response that we may not be used to making. When we staged the *N-Town* sequence of Mary plays some years ago in Oxford, we tried to put a crown on the Virgin at the Annunciation. But we were then left with a crowned Mary for the much more mundane and comic episodes of Joseph's Doubts and the following plays.[32] This seems so odd to a modern audience that we eventually left the crown out altogether. But it may be that we would have come closer to the requirements of the plays if we had left it in. To ignore or omit the visual stylisation is perhaps to simplify the statement that the plays are making. It may seem to us that the gold masks, like the crowns, wigs, and leather coats, to some extent work against the powerful human involvement the plays evoke. But they are important in providing a constant visual reminder of the Christian divinity-in-humanity that the mysteries celebrate.

The complexity of these issues is very well illustrated in the final example we have of a play text with which a reference to a God mask is associated: the York Mercers' *Doomsday* pageant. The Mercers' 1433 indenture describing God's masked costume obviously seriously pre-dates the play text, creating the usual difficulties of interpretation. But it does show that in the fifteenth century a version of *Doomsday* was played in which a gold-masked Christ ascended in Judgement. A consideration of the text that survives may suggest something of the effect that was created. It is helpful that the Mercers' pageant should be *Doomsday*, as the Judgement Day plays in themselves present a coming-together of Christ's humanity and his divine judgement. The York play demonstrates this particularly clearly.

The 'God' or 'Deus' of the pageant appears to be a single figure incorporating all the divine and human aspects of the Godhead – they are not made into separate characters to represent the Father and the Son. He first speaks as the Father, describing how he sent his Son to be incarnated on earth, then descends as Christ to judge, and to invoke man's gratitude and repentance by showing his bleeding wounds. The indenture records only one costume for 'God', and it is a costume which itself combines the attributes of the divine and the human: *Array for god þat ys to say a Sirke wounded a diademe With a veserne gilted.*[33] The glory of God in majesty is presented in the mask and *diademe*, the humanity of Christ in the wounded *Sirke*. We cannot tell whether the *Sirke* was an ample one and therefore a stylised representation of the wounds, or whether it was of the close-fitting leather type which would come closer to an imitation of Christ's actual wounded body. But either way the combination of the golden face with the bleeding wounds must have been very striking.

The *Doomsday* play as a whole is very formal in structure, with stately exchanges of speeches in Heaven, the stylised balance of Good and Bad souls (themselves masked), and the pageantry of the descent and ascent of God. The formal distancing of the gold mask, particularly when God is in Heaven, therefore seems natural and appropriate. But when Christ descends and addresses mankind the effect becomes very interesting.

Once he has descended he speaks to Man, presumably the audience, in a complaint that is parallel and very similar to the complaint from the Cross at the Crucifixion. This complaint, first spoken from the Cross, has been repeated in the following plays until it builds up a surprising level of intensity of which the *Doomsday* play is the climax. Our problem with assessing the effect of this climactic repetition is that we do not know how Christ was presented in the Crucifixion plays. It is quite possible, as we have suggested, that he did not appear quite as naturalistically naked and unadorned as we may have assumed. But there is no direct evidence that the York Christ was masked, or had a wig or halo, and the Passion plays are deeply concerned with his human suffering. There are therefore two distinct strands of possibility in interpreting the *Doomsday* play.

If the Christ of the York *Crucifixion* is, as we usually assume, visually fairly naturalistic, then the complaint from the Cross is spoken from a context of relatively realistic humanity. The Mercers' *Doomsday* pageant would therefore replay the human agony of the Crucifixion with the added dimension of triumphant majesty represented by the diadem and gold mask. The complaint reinforces the *Sirke wounded*, the golden face asserts God's majesty. So again the two aspects of God coexist. The contrast between them would be made even more powerful by the tone and content of the speech. As usual it is profoundly and directly emotional, seeking to raise feelings of love, guilt, gratitude, and suffering in the audience:

> Beholdis both boy, bak & side,
> How dere I bought youre brotherhede …   250
>
> Behalde mankynde, þis ilke is I
> þat for þe suffered swilke mischeue …   266

Such a speech implies that the stylising and distancing effect of the mask does not prevent, or perhaps even reduce involved emotional response. Yet on the other hand, this complaint spoken with a mask at Doomsday is clearly going to be very different from the same complaint spoken without a mask at the Crucifixion. Perhaps the effect would be to focus the powerful human emotions of the audience which were raised by the suffering man they saw at the Crucifixion, on God himself in his glory in Heaven.

But the Christ of the Passion plays may not have been played in this way. If we take an analogy from the Coventry play records it offers a very different picture. The Coventry Drapers' *Doomsday* God is wearing a *cote* of leather and three yards of red sendal. The extended Passion play of the Coventry Smiths also has Christ in a gilded leather cote with hands, and a gilded wig, for the Scourging and the Crucifixion.[34] If the York Cycle used similar visual conventions, then it looks as if the effects we have associated with masks are not used simply for contrast with more naturalistic modes, but are central to the whole method of the plays. The formal splendour of *Doomsday*'s

gold mask would not be set against the image of a naturalistically suffering Christ from the *Crucifixion* plays. The combination of splendid stylisation and human realism would be present right through the cycle, with Christ on the Cross demanding the same mixture of involved and distanced response as Christ at Doomsday does. Problematical as this may seem to us, it might well manage to provoke the blend of human emotion and divine awe that the plays seek to inspire, lifting them beyond the simply affective and human to something more complex and profound.

If this is so then perhaps the masks actually help to achieve the effect that Pauper advocates in his defence of images – that men must not worship the image, but the God that it represents:

> Make þin pylgrimage nought to þe ymage ne for þe ymage, for it may nought helpen the, but to hym and for hym þat þe ymage representyȝt (to) the.[35]

In its non-naturalism the mask may help to evoke this proper response to the image of God presented in the drama. By combining the emotive humanity of Christ with the mysterious splendour of the golden face the play expresses in its visual style the religious understanding it wishes to create in its audience.

<div align="center">(TO BE CONCLUDED)</div>

<div align="center">**NOTES**</div>

Abbreviations

See the Notes to the first part of our article in *METh* 3:1 (1981) 36–7 for abbreviations.

Notes to 'Introduction'

1. *Anderson* 164.

2. *REED: York* 78, 98.

3. *REED: York* 55; *Sharp* 70.

4. *Young* 2: 524.

5. *Chambers* 2: 339.   6. *Chambers* 2: 262.

7. Bromyard *Summa Praedicantium* (Venice, Nicolini, 1586) f 152ᵛ. On *miracles*, see Owst *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1961) 480–5, *Woolf* 35–6.

     Mary H. Marshall (see *METh* 3:1, 43, note 105) 373 quotes a passage from a thirteenth century metrical vocabulary, apparently English, since it is attributed both to Alexander Neckham and John of Garland, which lists *larva* among a number of theatrical terms, mostly of a minstrel or entertainer kind.

8. Millard Meiss *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: the Limbourgs and their Contemporaries* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1974) 52 and 442 note 204.

9. *Manuel des Pechiez* in *Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne* edited by F.J. Furnivall *EETS OS 119* (1901) lines 4292–7. Quoted *Young* 2: 417. This passage is in fact rather peculiar, as it implies that the *fols clers* are using *visers* in the '*miracles*', but goes on to say that liturgical drama is permissible, if chastely and devoutly done. Liturgical drama and '*miracle*' seems therefore not to be the same thing. But the decretals which he adapts seem all to be about the *ludi … in eisdem ecclesiis theatrales* ('stage plays in the churches themselves'), into which *monstra larvarum* have been introduced to make the *spectacula* more farcical (*ludibrior*), and which even lead to parodies like the Feast of Fools (*Young* 2: 416). Here the *larvae* are clearly of the grotesque kind. Is the *Manual* merely condemning the use of masks in *miracles*, or the whole proceeding? It seems to contrast (as does Mannyng in his translation) the *miracles* which take place outside the church and are masked with the sober liturgical drama which goes on inside the church.

Notes to 'Devils'

1. *REED: Chester* 179; *Sharp* 31, 69; *REED: York* 55. See also *REED: Chester* 176; other entries on *Sharp* 31, 69; *Ingram 'Players'* 36–7; *REED: York* 242; *Chambers* 2: 396.

2. NED sv *visor*. This is apparently a familiar image: Wyclif uses *visered devils* when he wants a vivid metaphor for the hypocritical and corrupt clergy. It is clearly theatrical, as he also says that they *bicomen þe deuelis iogelours and ben a spectacle to angelis & men*: Wyclif *English Works* edited by F.D. Matthew *EETS OS 74*.

3. *Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems* edited F.J. Furnivall & I. Gollancz, revised J. Mitchell & A.I. Doyle, *EETS ES 61, 73* (1892, 1925: revised 1970): *Ars … sciendi mori* ('Learn to die') 671–9.

4. *Chambers* 1: 394–5, note 2. *Chambers* quotes from MS Harley 247; Stowe *Survey of London* edited by C.L. Kingsford (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1908, 1971) 1: 96 paraphrases this to *black visors not amiable, as if they had been Legates from some forrain Princes*, where the original has *black vizards like deuils appearing nothing amiable seeming like* (Papal) *legates*. It is an interesting comment on the reinterpretation of the black faces that they are read as the familiar masking *moriskoes*.

5. *Macro Plays: Castle of Perseverance* lines 199, 2195; *Wisdom* line 979; *York Plays* Play 48, line 143. See also *Chester Plays* Play 1 line 251; *N-Town* Play 23 line 198.

6. For example, Étienne de Bourbon, in a chapter *De fugiendis choreis* ('Of the shunning of round-dances') relates how the devil appeared to a certain holy man *in specie parvuli Ethiopi stantem super quaedam que ducebat choreas … et springantem super caput eius* ('in the form of a very small Ethiope standing on a woman who was leading the dance … and cavorting on top of her head') edited by A. le Coy de la Marche *Anecdotes Historiques* (Paris, 1877) 397. The story comes from Vincent of Beauvais *Speculum morale* Lib. 2, Dist.ix, Pars ix. In Stephen Hawes *Pastyme of Pleasure* edited by W. Mead *EETS OS 173* (1928) line 5147 the hero kills a dragon and *A foule ethyope* flies out in a cloud of smoke and disappears with a bang. See also Owst *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge UP, 1926) 175–6.

B.J. Whiting *Proverbs, Sentences & Proverbial Phrases from English Writers Mainly before 1500* (Oxford UP, 1968) cites various traditional phrases about the blackness of the devil: for example *The devil is not as black as he is painted* (D 189); *As black as the Fiend* (F 131); *the devil as black as coal* (C 324). For the devil as a collier, see *100 Mery Talys* edited by W.C. Hazlitt (London, Sotheran, 1881) 103–4.

7. *Purity* in R. Morris *Early English Alliterative Poems* EETS OS 1 (1864); *York Plays* Play 1.

   G. Cohen *Histoire de la Mise en Scène dans le Théâtre Religieux français du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1926) 221; M.J. Rudwin *The Origin of the German Carnival Comedy* (Stechert, New York, 1920) 34. The devil of the folk-play usually has a blackened face (see *METh* 3:1, 38–9, notes 25 and 26).

   Hrotswitha's Dulcitius is mistaken for a devil when he emerges from the kitchen, where he has been fondling the pots and pans, with a sooty face (*Axton* 27).

   For the Coventry *blakke soules*, see *Sharp* 70.

8. *Digby Plays*: *Mary Magdalene* 91; *Ludus Coventrie* 287; *Macro Plays*: *Wisdom 143.*

9. *Nicoll* 191–3 Fig. 130. *Anderson* 169–70 discusses and illustrates various 'devil' masks in stained glass and woodcarving (PL 3c, 24a, b, c).

10. *Young* 2: 230. See also Rabelais quotation in W.M. Tydeman *The Theatre in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge UP, 1978) 211.

11. See *The Rohan Book of Hours* Introduction by Millard Meiss and Marcel Thomas, Commentaries by Marcel Thomas (London, Thames and Hudson, 1973) PL 63 (f 159).

12. A. le Coy de la Marche *Anecdotes Historiques* (see note 6) 35.

13. *Nicoll* Fig. 127. Sebastian Brandt translated Alexander Barclay *The Shyp of Folys* (London, Richard Pynson, 1509) talks of what sound like fake 'Dracula' fangs: he calls them *dentes emptos*, 'purchased teeth' (f ccxliiiiᵛ). See also *Chambers* 1: 268 note 4.

14. H.S.L. Dewar *The Dorset Ooser* Dorset Monographs 2 (Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Dorchester, 1968). Nicholas Davis kindly sent us a copy of this article. The Ooser mask disappeared in 1897, but a photograph of it is reproduced in the monograph, and our line drawing is made from this. Since the mask itself no longer exists, it is impossible to tell how old it was, but it has many of the devilish features which can be seen in the German-Swiss devil masks. It is definitely humanoid. It was made chiefly of wood. Etymologies suggest *Guiser* and *wyrse* 'devil'.

15. *Towneley Plays* 30, line 103.   16. *Craik* 51–2.

17. Jacques Thiboust *Relation de l'Ordre de la Triomphante et Magnifique Monstre du Mystère des SS. Actes des Apostres* edited by Labouvrie (Bourges, 1836) 20. The devils here were inordinately fine in their apparel, being dressed in velvet and damask, with gilt and silvered masks.

18. *Macro Plays: Castle of Perseverance* 1. For *sqwybes*, see Robert Withington *English Pageantry* (London, 1918–20) 1: 72, 74, and illustration facing page 74. Here the *sqwybe* is concealed in a large tight bunch of greenery, as with the Nuremburg *Schembart* pageants, for which see Sumberg (see note 27), and BL MSS Add. 15684 and Add. 15707 passim. See also *Feuillerat Loseley* 67: *one hollowe clubb to burne squibbes in − ijˢ*. *Nicoll* illustrates one two-faced dragon club of this sort among his devil masks in Fig. 130.

19. *Nicoll* 191 and Fig. 130.   20. Dewar (see note 14) 1.   21. *REED: York* 55.

22. *Feuillerat Loseley* 245 (undated). Étienne de Bourbon (see note 6) compares old women who paint their faces to Janus *qui ex una parte depingitur habere faciem senis, ex alia juvenis* ('who was depicted as having an old man's face on the one side, and a young man's on the

other'): a little earlier he has said *Ante habent faciem nature, retro artis, scilicet vani ornatus et artificialis composicionis per quam, cum sint ante senes, apparent retro juvenis* ('In front they have a face provided by nature, behind by art, that is to say by empty decoration and of an artificial make-up, through which, though they are old women in front, they appear from behind as young') 228–9. Female figures of pride are usually shown looking in a mirror showing pride in their appearance. The comparison with Janus suggests that he was a sufficiently familiar figure, through Calendar paintings, to be evoked when the idea of a double face is called for (though one might have expected Fortune, but the old/young collocation is the important thing here). We illustrate a couple of Calendar pictures of January as Janus feasting, which show how the double face could be arranged: one shows the tri-cephalous arrangement, a very old motif which also appears in pictures of the Trinity. However, this is a complicated motif, which again is more important in morality than mystery, and we postpone its discussion.

23. *Feuillerat Losely* 133–4.   24. *Hall* 631.

25. John Skelton *Magnificence* edited by Paula Neuss (Manchester UP, 1980) 109, line 710. See also *Wisdom* lines 718–9. For the proverb, see Whiting (see note 6) (F13).

26. Thiboust *Monstre* (see note 17) 22.

27. *Deux Redactions du Roman des Sept Sages de Rome* edited by Gaston Paris SATF (Paris, Didot, 1876) 29. The other redaction, which follows the Latin *Historia Septem Sapientium*, has a robe of peacocks' feathers. The mirrors appear as part of the costume of the Bourges Satan: *ses aelles estoient faites a myrouers que semblablement il dressoient souvent* (21). They are also part of the costume of the Mirror Man in the Schembart carnival in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: see BL MS Add 15684 f 73 f 73[r] and Add15707 f 79[v]: Samuel M. Sumberg *The Nuremberg Schembart Carnival* (Columbia University Germanic Studies NS 12, 1941).

28. *The Seven Sages of Rome* edited by Karl Brunner (Southern Version) EETS OS 191 (1933) 132–3, MS Egerton 1995 (finished 1469). The textual history is very involved. MS E includes more of the individual details of the costume than any of the others.

29. *Seven Sages* 134. In the story as told by Bede *De divisione temporum* (Migne PL 90) 659, after extracting from the Romans a promise that they will honour him as a god after his death, he wraps himself in linen cloths soaked in wax, oil, and paint, and appears on the battlements on fire and blazing like a torch. He is then honoured as the god Janus.

30. *Seven Sages* 128–9. Janus is thus linked with the Saturnalia and its Christian successor. The costume is connected more closely with the ragged attire of fools (and maskers?) as the story is retold. Later writers on masking were aware of the connection between masking and the Saturnalia: Brandt *Navis Stultorum* (see note 13) says *Larua representat nunc Saturnalia festa* (f ccxliiii), which Barclay translates

> These folys that them selfe disgysyth thus
> In theyr lewde gestis doth outwarde represent
> The frowarde festis of the Idoll Saturnus   f ccxlv[v].

31. W.H. French & C.B. Hale *Middle English Metrical Romances* (New York, Russell, 1964, reprint of 1930 edition) 2: 940, lines 248–9. He is said to be *clothed like an ape* (lines 157–60 and 271–2) and his crown is shaven *Al around, lich a frere An hondebrede boue eiþer ere, And on his croune … a crois* (lines 171–3). *Ipomedon* is shaven in the same way line 1645 (edited by Kolbing, 1889).

32. Richard Rolle *The Pricke of Conscience* edited by R. Morris (Philological Society Transactions, 1863) 1537.

33. *Towneley Plays* Play 1 lines 136–7.

34. For example Rudwin (see note 7) 36–7: '*As a matter of fact* (our italics) the fool and the devil originally were identical in person and may be traced back to the demonic clown of ancient heathen days' (37); 'the fool's twin brother, the devil' (47). See also R.J.E. Tiddy *The Mummer's Play* (Minet, Chicheley, 1972: reprint of OUP, 1923) 112–3: he draws his evidence mainly from Mankind, however, and earlier says 'I think we must admit that the Miracles ad the Moralities made a very vigorous attempt to keep the Evil Spirit as a more or less serious and formidable person. All that is claimed is that popular pressure invested the Devil with some of the attributes of the black-faced fools of the folk-play' (96); Chambers 2: 91 and *Folk Play* 210; Withington *English Pageantry* 74–5 (connection with *wood* men); Welsford 77, 379, though in *The Fool* (London, Faber, 1935) she distinguishes much more clearly, and points out that he Fool is a luck-bringer (69–75); *100 Mery Talys* (see note 6) 148, where a figure of the devil at the feet of St. Dunstan is described by a London beadle as a fool.

35. *Chambers* 2: 294 (Severian, c.400 AD) *Namque talia deorum facies ut pernigrari possint, carbo deficit, et ut eorum habitus pleno cumuletur horrore, paleae, pelles, panni, stercora, toto saeculo perquiruntur* ('For there is not enough coal in the world to blacken the faces of such gods properly, and, so that their get-up should reach the heights of grisliness, everyone gathers up straw, skins, rags, and dung all over the place'); 297–8 (Caesarius of Arles, 470–542) *cervulum facientes* ('horn-dancing') and *vestiuntur pellibus pecudum* ('they are dressed up in animal skins'); 305 (Pseudo-Theodore, 9th century) *vestiuntur pellibus pecudum et assumunt capita bestiarum* ('they are dressed up in animal skins and put on the heads of beasts'). See also Barnabe Googe (reference in note 37).

36. See *METh* 3:1 26–8 and notes.

37. Alexander Barclay *Shyp of folys* (London, Richard Pynson, 1509). This is a two-language edition: Brandt's original is followed by Barclay's (free) translation, plus envoi, section by section. This quotation is on f. ccxlvi[r].

     Another excellent source of information on (Continental) carnival costumes and customs is Naogeorgus (Thomas Kirchmeyer)'s *Regnum Papisticum*, translated by Barbabe Googe as *The Popishe Kingdome* (London, Henry Dereham for Richard Watkins, 1570). See f 48[r]–48[v] for carnival costumes, which include wild beasts, *Cranes with winges & stilts vpright*, *Apes*, *Fooles*, men dressed as women and vice versa, men stark-naked except for *visars close, that so disguisde, they might be knowne of none*, and of course devils.

38. F ccxxiii[v]. He says Englishmen go in for drunkeness rather than serenading!

39. The riders in a fifteenth century French *charivari* wore *larvis in figura daemonum, et horrenda ibidem commituntur* (Chambers 1: 153 note 2).

40. We have not found a really good iconographic survey of the development of the devil. Most studies – e.g. Maximilian Rudwin *The Devil in Legend and Literature* (Chicago, 1931); Jacques Levron *Le Diable dans l'Art* (Paris, 1935) – are more interested in the diableries of Bosch and Brueghel, and the psychology of diabolism. Louis Reau *Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien* (Paris, 1956) 2:1, 63 says (*Le diable*) *n'apparait guère qu'au XIe siècle, à l'époque roman*. Robert Hughes *Heaven and Hell in Western Art* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968) 248 says 'The appearance of Satan changed abruptly around AD 1000'. He is inclined to attribute this to the Council of Cluny (956), but gives no direct evidence. Didron *Christian Iconography* translated E.J.M. Millington (Bohn, London, 1851) which is still probably the fullest treatment, says 'from primitive times down to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Christian devil constantly assumed the human form. These forms varied, but not in any vital point, and sometimes the devil was only a very ugly man' (125). Gertrud Schiller *Christian Iconography* (Lund Humphries, London, 1971) translated Janet Seligman, treats of the Devil only in the

context of the Temptation (Vol 1, 143–5) and the Harrowing of Hell *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (Mohn, Gutersloh, 1971) 3: 56–66, and then only in passing. But the illustrations make the pattern fairly clear. See Volume 1 PL 389–400 for the development in the Temptation scene from man through scorched angel to crook-nosed, long-eared, hairy figure. The Harrowing of Hell pictures (Schiller 3: PL 99–170) start with the Byzantine *Anastasis* which show Satan as a bound man, often a black man with white hair. In the eleventh century, this varies with the creature with animal muzzle, teeth, and flaming hair: then the hairy type appears in the twelfth century. According to Jurgis Baltruišaitis *Le Moyen Âge Fantastique* (Colin, Paris, 1955) 152, the bat-winged devil only appeared in the second half of the thirteenth century: he compares them with (and derives them from) Chinese demons.

Rhoda-Gale Pollack 'Demonic Imagery in the English Mystery Cycles' *Theatre Notebook* 32 (1978) 52–62 is unfortunately too general to be of much use here.

41. *The Book of Kells* edited by Françoise Henry, facsimile (Thames and Hudson, London, 1974) PL 68 and pages 189–90. She suggests that the black devils are Byzantine in origin (see note 40 above).

42. Robert Hughes *Heaven and Hell* (see note 40) 237, 252 says that the devil's relation to the satyr is 'quite clear'. 43. *Isaiah* 13: 21–2, 34: 13–15.

44. See also *Axton* 115–6. Ducange sv *capucium* quotes an early thirteenth century devil costume: *Sybilla … fecit quippe nigram tunicam fieri hispidam, et capuciumdiabolicum vultum habens etc.* ('Sybilla … had a hairy black tunic made, and a hood with a devil's face, etc.').

45. *Young* 2: 524. 46. *Young* 2: 230.

47. *Axton* 116. 48. *Ludus Coventrie* Play 41, line 457.

49. F 48ʳ (see note 37). The *squertes* in the picture were presumably of the kind made for the Lord of Misrule and his men in 1552/3 at the English court: *for vj great wooden squertes by him* (Anthony Phenyx the turner) *turned and made for the combat of the lord of mistule lyke vnto dragons at ijˢ the pece* (Feuillerat Losely 107: see also 124).

50. Joseph Strutt *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (third edition by William Hone, London, 1841) start this idea rolling with a section headed succinctly *Mysteries, How Enlivened* (153): 'Beelzebub seems to have been the principal comic actor, assisted by his merry troop of under-devils, who, with variety of noises, strange gestures, and contortions of the body, excited the laughter of the populace'. See *Nicoll* 187: 'Obviously the devils were dear to the medieval imagination, and clearly not because of their evil, but because of their comic irresponsibility, their posturings, their extravagance'. Bamber Gascoigne *World Theatre* (Ebury Press, London, 1968) comes nearer when he says 'Like the best villains, they were funny and frightening at the same time' (71). V.A. Kolvé *The Play called Corpus Christi* (Arnold, London, 1966) thinks that we laugh at the devil: 'His exits are grotesque, sprawling, obscene – and undoubtedly, to the Middle Ages, funny' (143). *Axton*'s comments (116) are particularly directed to the *Play of Adam*, which is rather different, and nearer in its effect to *Mankind* than to the mystery plays: but even then, we should remember that the fact that the devils laugh at Adam and Eve does not necessarily imply that the audience were meant to laugh too. However, on the idea that devils in literature are essentially humorous, see G.R. Owst *Literature and Pulpit* (see note 7) 511–5.

51. Bromyard: see Introduction note 7.

52. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5072 Rés. f 28: *Renaud de Montauban*. We would like to thank Roger Savage for drawing our attention to this picture, and Gordon Kipling for running the reference to earth in Silvio d'Amico *Storia del Teatro Drammatico* 1 (Garzanti, 1968) PL 152.

53. Barclay *Shyp of Folys* f ccxlvʳ (see note 37). See also Rudwin *German Carnival Comedy* (see note 7) 31: 'It is recorded that when, in 1499, a girl had stabbed during a Carnival a

masked young man to death because he had teased her, she defended herself in court by declaring that she had not killed a human being, but a demonic creature'. See also *Ducange* sv *visagium falsum*: and Tydeman (see note 10) 234: 'At Romans in 1509 one of those playing the devils attacked a woman in the audience who owed him money'.

54. Étienne de Bourbon (see note 6) 233–4: here one devil is laughing at another: also the Knight of the Tour Landry, quoted by Kolvé (see note 50) 140.

55. See e.g. Owst *Literature and Pulpit* (see Introduction note 7) and *Preaching* (see note 6) 271: Bromyard (see Introduction note 7) 153ᵛ: Étienne de Bourbon (see note 6) 397.

56. *Ludus Coventrie* Play 31 lines 529–30 and preceding stage direction (289).

57. *York Plays* Play 45 lines 154–5. This was pointed out by M.J. Wright *The Comic Elements in the Corpus Christi Drama* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Armidale, 1972). The story *Of John Adroyns in the dyuyls apparell* from *100 Mery Talys* (see note 6) 14–17 proves that people still believed in the devil and would be frightened by someone they thought was him: unfortunately it does not describe the devil costume, though the general effect bears a marked resemblance to 'Cups and Cans'.

58. *Nicoll* 189.   59. *Summa Praedicantium* 1: f 152ᵛ.

60. The chimney sweeps became the lineal descendants of the black-faced maskers: see Roy Judge *The Jack in the Green* (Folklore Society Mistletoe, Brewer for the Folklore Society, 1979).

61. *The Return of the Native* chapter 8.   62. *Young* 2: 418–9.

63. Chambers *Folk Play* (OUP 1933) 125. 'Dirty Bride' of the Flemish folk-play of Brueghel's *Battle of Carnival and Lent* may be the same figure.

64. *Hall* 513, 514.

Notes to 'Humans, especially extremely wicked characters'

1. *Sharp* 28.   2. *Coventry Plays* 86–7.
3. *Woolf* 391 note 64.   4. *Sharp* 35; *Coventry Plays* 90.
5. *REED: Chester* 50.   6. *REED: Chester* 60.
7. *The Holkham Bible Picture Book* edited by W.O. Hassall (London, Dropmore Press, 1954: see e.g. ff 29ᵛ – 31ʳ).
8. *Anderson* PL 15a: see also her discussion of grotesque types (185–6 and PL 16a).
9. *Sharp* 17, 28–9; *Coventry Plays* 87. The assumption that Herod's *creste* was entirely of iron is mistaken: the entry for 1494 reads *item payd for iij platis to Herrodis crest of iron vjᵈ* 'for three iron plates for Herod's crest'. It was also decorated with *colours and gold foyle and sylver foyle* (1499) as was his *fawchon*.
10. For the *Schembart* Festival, see Sumberg ('Devils' note 27).
11. Baron Quirin von Leitner *Freydal des Kaisers Maximilian I* (Vienna 1880–2): see PL 92, 203: also reproduced in Stella Mary Newton *Renaissance Theatre Costume and the Sense of the historic past* (London, Rapp and Whiting, 1975) Fig. 59.
12. Claude Blair 'The Emperor Maximilian's Gift of Armour to King Henry VIII' and the Silvered and Engraved Armour of the Tower of London' *Archaeologia* 99 (1965) 1–52: see 17–19. See also 'The Art of Chivalry' *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 32:4 (1973/4): no pagination.
13. *Blair* 17.

14. *Feuillerat Loseley* 73. Somers attended the Lord of Misrule bearing a mace (67), and the Lord of Misrule himself had a *fawchon* (73). Is there a Herod link?

15. *REED: Chester* 109.

16. *REED: Chester* 95, 109.

17. *REED: Chester* 92.

18. *REED: Chester* 109.

19. *Chester Plays* Play 7, lines 498–9.

20. *REED: Chester* 106.

Notes on 'God and the Angels'

1. *REED: York* 78; *Non-Cycle Plays* xxxv; *REED: York* 55; *REED: Chester* 50, 53, 67, 68, 70, 73, 75, 86, 88, 91. See also *Anderson* 27.

2. Cohen *Histoire de la Mise en Scène* (see 'Devils' note 7) 223; *Livre du Régisseur* 177 note 3.

3. Cohen *Régisseur* 410.

4. Richard Morris *Cursor Mundi EETS OS* 62 (1876) 3: 996 (MSS Cotton and Fairfax lines 17372: the other two MSS copy one of these versions). The *Southern Passion* edited B. Brown *EETS OS* 169 (1927) lines 1767–8 have

    His lokyng and his fface was as red so eny ffur is,
    And as li3tinge and his cloþinge whyt so snow ywis.

5. Jean Porcher *L'Enluminure Française* (Paris, Arts et Métiers, 1959) PL 41: Angel at the Tomb. Gertrud Schiller *Iconography* (see 'Devils' note 40) 1: 151 and PL 418: Transfiguration. Dated c. 1210 (Schiller) or 1200–05 (Porcher). Schiller *Ikonographie* 3: PL 31 (Hildesheim, c. 1160) and PL 288 (English, School of St. Albans, 1125–50) also appear to have red-faced angels.

6. *Young* 1: 285.

7. *Young* 1: 293.

8. *Gesta Henrici Quinti: the Deeds of Henry V* edited and translated by Frank Taylor & John S. Roskell (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975) 104–5.

9. Richard Maydiston *De Concordia inter Ricardum II et Civitatem London* edited by Thomas Wright (Camden Society, London, 1838) lines 329–32. We are grateful to Gordon Kipling for this and the previous quotation.

10. *Young* 1: 399 and 474 (crown), 372 (diadem and beard), 394, 408 – as soon as the angels appear, the soldiers fall to the ground as if dead.

11. This is not as common a motif as one might think. It seems mainly a feature of stained glass, but even there the evidence is fairly sparse. See Christopher Woodforde *Stained Glass in Somerset 1250–1850* (OUP, 1946: reprint Kingsmead, Bath, 1970) 80 note 1: he cites Doddiscombeleigh and Bampton in Devon and Burrington in Somerset; also Clifford Davidson and David O'Connor *York Art* (EDAM Reference Series 1, Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, 1978) 17 and 85. We would be interested to hear of other examples from Britain.

    The Fall of the Angels page from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (facsimile, Jean Longnon and Millard Meiss, London, Thames and Hudson, 1969) 65 (f 64ᵛ) gives some idea of the possible effect: the gold is laid over a red ground.

    Woodforde suggests the motif is taken from drama. It seems to be one of several alternatives for suggesting divine radiance, among which are the halo, the gold crown, and the gilded wig. *Anderson* PL 17d illustrates a roof-boss from Peterborough where God the Father is wearing a gold sun-burst mask.

12. We are grateful to Gordon Kipling for allowing us to see the drafts of his first two chapters.

13. See e.g. Andreas Lommel *Masks: Their Meaning and Function* (Elek, New York, 1972); Walter Sorell *The Other Face: the Mask in the Arts* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1973); Oto

Bihalji-Merin *Masks of the World* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1971); Peter Arnott *The Theatres of Japan* (London, Macmillan, 1965), especially chapter 5; A.C. Scott *The Theatre in Asia* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972); Michel Leiris and J. Delange, *African Art* translated by Michael Ross (London, Thames and Hudson, 1968), especially chapter 5; Wolfgang Haberland *North America* (Art of the World Series 24, London, Methuen, 1968).

14. *REED: Chester* 32 (Early Banns), liv: Clopper says it 'included the Meeting of Christ with Mary and Martha, the Last Supper, and the captivity of Christ'; see 50 (1550).

15. *REED: Chester* 32, 36. The Coventry Weavers' play was also of the Purification, and in 1564 they paid *for payntyng of Jesus heade viij^d Coventry Plays* 109.

16. *REED: Chester* 73. 17. *REED: Chester* liv.

18. *REED: Chester* 53. For the dating of this record, see John Marshall 'The Chester Whitsun Plays: Dating of post-Reformation Performances from the Smiths' Accounts' *Leeds Studies in English* NS 9 (1977) 51–61.

19. *REED: Chester* 91.

20. *REED: Chester* 67 (1561), 70 (1563), 73 (1564), 75 (1565), 75 (1566), 78 (1567), 86 (1568), 88 (1569).

21. *REED: Chester* 97, 100. 22. *REED: Chester* 105.

23. *REED: Chester* liv–lv, 110. 24. *REED: Chester* 68.

25. *REED: Chester* 50. 26. *Coventry Plays* 83; *Sharp* 26.

27. *Sharp* 49.

28. *Sharp* 26.

29. On 'nakedness' in medieval drama, see Tydeman (see 'Devils' note 10) 212–3; Stella Mary Newton *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince* (Boydell Press, 1980) 78, and *Renaissance Theatre Costume* 153, 158, 200, 212, 213; Twycross 'The Flemish Ommegang' *METh* 2:2 87 and 98 note 113.

30. *Towneley Plays* Play 22 line 72 and Play 24 lines 82–4.

31. *REED: Chester* 67 *crowne for Mary*, and 78; also *Coventry Plays* 93, 96 *paid for mendyng our Lady's crowne*, 97 *skowryng of Maryes crowns* (in a *Harrowing and Resurrection* play). See also, briefly, Peter Meredith 'Item for a grone' *REED Colloquium* edited by JoAnna Dutka (Toronto, REED, 1979) 40.

32. *Joseph's Doubts* is of course an interpolation, but the *Visitation* play which follows seems to belong to the original sequence, and is a mixture of the liturgical and domestic: Mary stays *to wasche skore and swepe* for Elizabeth (*Ludus Coventrie* 120 line 111).

33. *REED: York* 55.

34. *Coventry Plays* 85–6 (Smiths), 96 (Cappers), 100 (Drapers).

35. *Dives and Paupers* edited by Priscilla Barnum *EETS* 275 (1976) 85.

Erratum: Note 1 on page 37 of *METh* 3:1 should read '*Coventry Plays* 86 (15<u>5</u>4)'.

'BRYNGYNG FORTH OF SAYNT GEORGE':THE ST. GEORGE CELEBRATIONS IN YORK

The evidence for the events held in York on St. George's Day begins and ends with cancelled performances:

1546 (Summary of the time of William Holme, Mayor):

Memorand*um* this yere dyd Saynt George day fall vppon good ffryday and therefore thay did not Ryde with Saynt George this yere

House Book 18, f 69: *REED York* 1 289

1558 (*Pater Noster Play* to be played this year: the banns to be read on St. George's Day):

St George play to be sparyd

It*em* it is agreyd in consydracon abovesayd that this yere St George play shall be left & not playd / and the provision of thynges alredy boght & mayd for the ffurnyto*ur* therof shall be payd of the Chambre costes / and broght in to the Chambre to be kept ageynst a nother yere /

House Book 22, f 125ᵛ: *REED York* 1 327[1]

Between these two dates there are sufficient entries to allow speculation on the nature of the celebrations of St. George's Day and the identification of some of those concerned.

The primary evidence begins with the decision in the council meeting of 20th April 1554 to follow *the auncient Custome* and hold a solemn procession and a mass with a sermon on St. George's Day, and *alsoo saynt George that day to be brought forth & ryde* (*House Book* 21, f 43: *REED York* 1 310). On 11th May they formally agreed to pay for the expenses *of rydyng of Saynt George in procession made on his day*, and decreed that this event should be *yerely vsed as hath ben*. The expenses are listed in teh *Chamberlains' Book* of 1554 (*House Book* 21, f 44: *Chamberlains' Book* 4 (1554) 162: *REED York* 1, 311 and 318). The Riding was certainly repeated in 1555 (*House Book* 21, f 85: *REED York* 1 320–1) and 1557 (*House Book* 22, f 56ᵛ), and was in preparation in 1558 although cancelled at the last moment.

The elements of the day are clearly discernible in the entries of these few years: there was a procession, a mass with a sermon – located at St. George's Chapel, below the Castle, and/or St. George's Close, which reached from the Chapel to the river Ouse – and the Riding of St. George. The wording of all the decisions suggests this distinction, so that a 'procession' is linked with a mass and a sermon, and the 'riding',

although part of the day's events, is another element. There are two references, in the 1554 *Chamberlains' Book* and the 1558 *House Book* entry, that suggest that the 'riding' included – or was part of – the performance of a play, but on the evidence this play cannot be on the same scale as the other major Plays in York, the *Creed Play*, the *Pater Noster Play*, and the *Corpus Christi Play* itself. It is associated instead with the religious procession centred on St. George's Chapel, and its revival in 1554 was authorised at the same time that the Corpus Christi Procession and Whitsun Tuesday processions were revived (*House Book* 21, f 43: *REED York* 1 310–11).

Procession, Mass, and Sermon

The procession on St. George's Day was described as *Solempne* in 1554, and it is, as in 1555 and 1557, most closely allied in the sense of the sentences with the mass and sermon. The sermon was located at St. George's Chapel in 1554 and 1555, although the 1554 accounts suggest that it actually took place outside, for *Doctor Robynson* was paid for making *the Sermond in Saynt George Close*, and a pulpit and forms were taken there for the occasion. The suggestion that the procession was a religious one, separate from the Riding of St. George, is strengthened by the fact that all references have both a procession and a riding, never a procession *or* a riding; and the enthusiastic city council, after the success of the 1554 revival, decided that *the sayed Procession & rydyng* should become an annual event (*House Book* 21, f 44: *REED York* 1, 311). As the sermon and the mass, when mentioned, always divide the procession from the riding, the final impression is of a procession to St. George's Chapel where the service took place, and after that St. George was brought forth and rode.

The Riding of St. George

The term 'riding' had a special connotation in York, usually being attached to the proclamation of the King's Peace by the Sheriffs. This event developed through the sixteenth century. At first it was done on a small scale, with the Sheriffs and one or two followers, and took place in December.[2] Later in the century the days associated with the Sheriffs were Corpus Christi Day, Midsummer Day, and St. Peter's Eve, but although the ridings were ordered regularly many of the Sheriffs preferred to pay a fine rather than organise the event, and it may not have been as customary a sight in the streets of York as a first reading of the records would suggest. By the end of the century, however, an annual 'Show of Armour' was attached to the original riding, and all able citizens were expected to join in, bearing their own harness. As this development began when it was realised that the *Corpus Christi Play* and other *Plays* were lost for good, it seems probable that the city council attempted to create an alternative form of street pageantry.[3] In the 1550s, the Sheriffs' Riding was about halfway between the earlier Proclamation and the later Show of Armour: in 1553 the council agreed that the Sheriffs should

accordyng to the auncient custome of the same Cite in peaceable maner ride w*ith* ~~a numbre~~ the officres and a numbre of fotemen w*ith* theym in harnesse orderly On Corpus Chr*isti* day / And than their officeres on Mydsomar even ffor the worship of the Cite & seeing the kinges peax than kept

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House Book 21, f Mv, 9th May 1553: *REED York* 1 307–8

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The *Chamberlains' Book* account refers to the armour for St. George & *his followers*, and so he may have led them, some on horseback and others on foot, in much the same way that the Sheriffs at the time were expected to ride with their officers and *a numbre of fotemen*.

The Play of St. George

Consideration of the 'play' – especially from the evidence of the *Chamberlains' Book* – suggests this was yet another aspect of the day, attached to but separate from the riding, and comparable to the presentation of one of the pageants in the much larger *Corpus Christi Play*. The City Waits offer a link between riding and play, as they were paid *for Ryding & playng before St George and the play*, which may mean that they rode with St. George and his followers, and were also present to provide music for the play. In the 1554 agreement of 20th April, St. George was to be 'brought forth', a phrase elsewhere associated in York with the presentation of Corpus Christi pageants. The tradition in York was for the individual pageant waggon to be taken from place to place along a fixed route through the city, and this method of performing a cycle of plays could possibly be imagined for a single play about St. George. The Chamberlains' account includes the cost of canvas *to the pagyant* (possibly a pageant waggon), and the cost of painting both the canvas and the pageant. That a waggon accompanied the riding may be suggested by the payment of 18d to the porters *for beryng of the pagyant the dragon and St chr**ist**ofer*,[4] but the word 'bearing' is somewhat ambiguous. Further evidence for a play separate from the riding can be seen in the 1554 account, where *the king & Quene that playd* were given 12d, and *the may* received 8d. John Stamper was paid 3s 4d *for playng St George*, a sum only equalled by that paid to the preacher that day, Dr. Robynson. There is no suggestion that he had to share his fee with his followers – presumably they were part of the riding – and the other characters, the King, and Queen, and the May, must have had more to do than be passive followers in a riding, or they would not have been picked out for payment.

The riding suggests a progression through part of the city, and the play performances in York were also linked with a procession of pageant waggons. There is one hint at the route of the St. George procession, because three labourers were paid *for clensyng away the ffylthe at the postron of Skeldergate* in 1554. Further attempts to recreate the St. George's Day celebrations can only be speculation. Was a *St. George Play* performed several times along a fixed route, including each time the fight with a

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dragon? Or was there a riding, which included the dragon and St. Christopher, and possibly the pageant waggon, in its procession, which culminated in the play? If Skeldergate Postern was part of the route, did St. George ride from there along Skeldergate to Ouse Bridge, cross over the river, and return down to St. George's Fields where those who had attended the sermon were waiting to see the play? The Fields would be an appropriate place to stage a fight with a dragon. Or conversely, did the riding start from St. George's Fields after the sermon and end at Skeldergate Postern – and if a pageant waggon was included in the riding, would it be able to get through the postern if the fight with the dragon took place on open ground outside the city? Was the filth at Skeldergate postern removed to give a clean stage for action, or was it caused by the action? If a processional route and one or more acting areas were used, were they decorated by the *Skutchons of the beste sorte* and the *v hundreth Skotchons of the bays sort* paid for by the Chamberlains, or were these more like badges, to be worn by St. George's followers and even distributed to the spectators?

Nothing is known of the nature of the *St. George Play* itself, apart from the characters of St. George, the King and Queen, the May, and a Dragon. There is a folk tradition of St. George plays, where he battles against Turkish Knights more often than dragons, but none of these can be traced back as far as the sixteenth century. These plays, however, do give the traditional plot, of which the characters are documented in York: a King and a Queen, and a daughter (the May) to be rescued from the dragon by St. George. Whatever form the play took, and despite its association with a mass and a sermon, it clearly comes in a different category from the *Corpus Christi*, *Creed*, and *Paternoster Plays* which were specifically created to propound Christian doctrine. Another play with possible 'folk' associations, despite an attempt to interpret its meaning from a Christian standpoint, was the riding of *Yule and Yule's Wife*.[5]

Less speculation is needed to investigate who '*thay*' were, who did not ride with St. George in 1546, and who had presumably 'brought him forth' in earlier years. Apart from this one reference, the civic records did not mention the event until 1554, when they revived it at the Chamber's cost. The first thing to notice in 1554 is that preparations for the celebration must have been already under way by the time the Council officially sanctioned the revival, for they did so only three days before it was due to take place. In 1558, when they cancelled the *St. George Play* at a similar three days' notice, there were *thynges alredy boght & mayd for the ffurnytour thereof*: these were paid for by the Chamber and *broght in to the Chambre to be kepte agaynst a nother yere* (*House Book* 22, f 125ᵛ: *REED York* 1 327).[6] In this preparatory period, one or more people had already spent their own money in anticipation of the Chamber's contribution. The second point is that the 1554 accounts show what was not needed: on the one hand, a script, or someone to devise the celebrations: one the other, a

dragon or a St. Christopher figure, which only needed repairs, and perhaps a pageant waggon. It seems, therefore, that people were prepared, both in 1554 and 1558, to organise the event when it was allowed again, and that the innovatory act of the city council was to pay for it. Unlike their organisation of the *Corpus Christi Play*, and of the *Creed Play* (especially after the demise of the Corpus Christi Guild), the council did not apparently need to arrange the route of the event, audition for actors,[7] or even arrange for the preacher of the sermon. The Mayor invited certain councillors and others to dine with him afterwards, and it was decided to establish this practise, but this was a private arrangement (*House Book* 21, f 44: *REED York* 1 311).

Mention of the Corpus Christi Guild, which had held the *Creed Play* in York, suggests that the original organising body for the St. George's Day celebrations was a religious guild: and York had a Guild of St. Christopher and St. George which had been dissolved in 1549. The combination of St. George and the otherwise surprising inclusion of an effigy of St. Christopher in the day's events seems a good argument for making this assumption, but the will of Sir William Todd, dated 11th March 1502/3, gives added proof:

> Also I wil my fyne Salett to Saynt Chr*isto*fer gyld and my will is it be vsed eu*ere* at the Ridyng of Saynt George w*ith* in the said Citie

<div align="right">Borthwick Institute: Probate Register 6, f 59[8]</div>

How long the guild had been in the habit of celebrating St. George's Day with a riding or play is unknown. The two guilds had amalgamated some time about 1470, and before that the St. Christopher Guild itself had been in possession of a different play, bequeathed to it by William Revetour in 1444:

> Item lego ffrat*ernita*ti Corp*or*is chr*ist*i in Ebor*acum* quemdam librum vocat*um* le Crede Play cum libris & vexill*is* eid*em* pertinent*ibus* Et gilde sancti chr*isto*fori quemdam ludum de sancto Iacobo Ap*osto*lo in sex pagin*is* compilat*um*

<div align="right">Borthwick Institute: Probate Register2, f 138ᵛ: REED York 1 68[9]</div>

At first sight, the St. Chrisopher Guild seems a strange choice as a custodian of the *St. James Play*, but this is not its only association with that particular saint. The Guild had a major share in the building of the city's new Guildhall in 1445, and for this they were to have the right to occupy the hall, pantry, and buttery for five days before and four days after the feast of St. James (York Archives: Document G4 *Agreement between the Mayor and Commonalty and the St. Christopher Guild*). Obviously they held their annual feast on St. James' Day, 25th July, and this is in fact also St. Christopher's Day.[10] The combined Guild of St. Christopher and St. George could in theory have celebrated both its saints' days with a dramatic performance, although there is no evidence for the performance of the *St. James Play*.

The St. George riding has been definitely linked to the guild by Sir William Todd's will, and presumably this also means the play, which emerges in the 1554 account as an integral part of the day's events, and in 1558 as the only part to be cancelled.[11] Another entry in the civic records indicates that the St. Christopher and St. George Guild celebrated both their saints' days.   By 1539, the council had obtained oversight of the Guild's financial affairs, and acted as its auditors. A meeting on 31st January 1538/9 was recorded in *House Book* 13a (ff 22ᵛ–23), and is in fact a meeting of the council acting as auditors for the Guild, attended also by the current Master and one former Master.[12] After several financial decisions, the meeting agreed

> th*a*t the M*aste*r shall keip Saynt George day as haith beyn accustomyd
> w*ith*out other com*m*aundment / Item it is also Agreyd that Saynt James day
> shal be sparyd for p*ro*cession & the obett   *House Book* 13a, f 22ᵛ

Even before the demise of the Guild, the city council, as auditor, gave its assent to the celebration of St. George's Day, but it was the Master who organised the event. That it took place in and around St. George's Chapel is not surprising because this had been the headquarters of the St. George Guild when it was founded in 1447.[13]

The riding did not take place in 1546, although it may have done in the uncertain years of 1547 and 1548. The Guild was dissolved in 1549, but the celebrations were revived only five years later.   While the Guild had gone, the former members remained, some of them city councillors. Even if the councillors as an official body did not organise the events, it is feasible that the former members who had originally done so initiated the revival. If those who were also councillors were involved, it explains why they could go ahead before official confirmation was made and recorded in the *House Book*.

Finally, it is possible to discover something about the actor who played St. George, who can be representative not only of the sort of people who put on the St. George Riding, but also the pageants of the *Corpus Christi Play*. John Stamper was a tiler who lived in the parish of St. Martin's in Micklegate, and he was a man of some authority and standing. He served several times as churchwarden from 1541, and was a Constable of the parish in 1558. He married a widow in 1549, and she may have brought him some extra wealth: she was a brewster, and no doubt through her work he was able to be licensed to keep an ale house in 1552 and 1562. He began to hold minor offices in the city, first as Bridgemaster in 1550, and then as Chamberlain in 1559. Already seen as an honest and substantial parishioner, he had sufficient goods to be assessed for tax from 1551. As a tiler, he is recorded working on floors and roofs: in 1562 he was rewarded for his work on the repair of Tadcaster Bridge, for which the city had some responsibility. He made his Will on 18th January 1562/3, and probate was granted on 11th February 1563/4.[14] He left no children. A man of average means, a craftsman, a minor office holder and churchwarden, John Stamper is an example of the sort of person who was active in the dramatic presentations in York.

The revelation of an existing dramatic tradition in York in the 1550s shows that there must have been many more processional and semi-dramatic events in York than are recorded. There were several religious guilds, ranging from the parochial guilds to the St. Christopher and St. George Guild, and the Corpus Christi Guild. Individual parish churches would also have provided spectacles on such occasions as the riding of the bounds of their parishes on the *rogationes comonly called crosse weke or gang dayes* until this event was muted by Archbishop Grindal's *Injunctions* of 1571 (Borthwick Institute: *Archbishops' Register* 30, f 130, Item 18). The St. George's Day riding and play had obviously been a regular occurrence in York, linked to the celebration of its saint's day by the St. Christopher and St. George Guild. It must have been one of the most popular events of the year, for the council chose to finance its revival as soon as they could after the demise of the Guild. It was this, rather than the procession of the St. Christopher half of the Guild, that was revived, and no doubt the newly repaired dragon was welcomed back by the York citizens. The brief emergence of the events of St. George's Day show that up to the mid-sixteenth century, an actor in York like John Stamper would have had more outlets for his talents than is apparent from a study of the *Corpus Christi Play* alone.

NOTES

1. All original records are in the York City Archives, unless stated otherwise. References are given when the quotations are to be found in *REED: York*: *Records of Early English Drama: York* edited by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (University of Toronto Press/Manchester University Press, 1979) 2 vols.

2. For example, in 1500 (*House Book* 8, f 102^v; *REED: York* 1, 184).

3. See *REED: York* 1, under the years 1500 to 1600, for the development of the Sheriffs' Riding into the Show.

4. Comparing this payment with payments for the pageant in the *Corpus Christi Play* performances can only be tentative through lack of contemporary evidence. In 1461–2 the Mercers noted: *Item for putyn of ye pagant ouer ouse and settyng vpe viij^d* (*REED: York* 1, 91). The Bakers paid 5d *to the putters of the pagyant in bread & ale* at the last performance of the *Pater Noster Play* in 1572 (*REED: York* 1, 372). When one pageant was used by John Grafton for his play included with the Show of Armour in 1584, he claimed *more paid to eight putters on of the pageaunt after 6d per man 4s 0d* (*REED: York* 1, 411). In this year the pageant was taken along the old route of the *Corpus Christi Play*, ending at the Pavement (*REED: York* 1, 406). In 1554, the number of porters is unknown, as is the length of the route.

5. See *REED: York* 1, 359–62 and 368–70, for the years 1570 and 1572; and Alexandra F. Johnston 'Yule in York' *REED: Newsletter* 1976: 1, 3–10. The growing puritan spirit could accommodate neither folk nor Catholic elements. The *St. George's Play*, *Corpus Christi Play*, and *Pater Noster Play* had their last performances.

6. The loss of the *House Books* for the following two years – the first of Elizabeth's reign – means that we have no record of any decision to abandon the celebration of St. George's Day.

7. See the instructions for the *Creed Play* performance in 1568 (*House Book* 24, f 104ᵛ; *REED: York* 1, 352–3).

8. This will was pointed out by Angelo Raine *Medieval York* (London, 1955) 199, although his quotation has wrongly expanded the original: *I wil my fyne salett to Saynt George & saynt Christopher gyld …*

9. *REED: York* 2, 746 translates this as: 'And to the guild of St Christopher a certain play concerning St. James the Apostle compiled in six pageants'. In an earlier article 'The Plays of the Religious Guilds of York: The *Creed Play* and the *Pater Noster Play' Speculum* 50 (1975) 81, Alexandra F. Johnston translates this as 'a certain play concerning St. James the apostle compiled in six pages'. In theory, either of these widely differing translations could be possible.

10. George Benson *Later Medieval York* (York, 1919): Appendix A, The York Calendar, 135.

11. Was the sermon, or even the riding, still held in 1558, or did the term 'play' stand for the whole day's events, which were all cancelled?

12. Two Aldermen and one of the Sheriffs had also been Masters of the Guild, and five former keepers were councillors, including the Mayor, John North. For members of the Guild in the 1530s, see *Yorkshire Star Chamber Proceedings* 2, edited H.B. McCall (*Yorkshire Archaeological Society Records Series* 45 (1911) 13–36).

13. York City Archives, Document A19: Licence to found a guild in the Chapel of St. George near the Castle of York. See also *Calendar of Patent Rolls* Henry VI 1446–1452, 80–81. After the suppression of the religious guilds, the chapel became the property of the city, and they leased it in 1552 to Thomas Nycollson (*House Book* 20 f 125; *Chamberlains' Book* 4 (1554) 46). No doubt it was stripped of its religious attributes and probably that is why pulpit and forms had to be taken there; perhaps also it was one of the reasons for the sermon being held outside in the close.

14. This summary is made from entries in the *House Books*, *Chamberlains' Books*, and other volumes in the York City Archives; and the churchwardens' book and parish register of St. Martin's in Micklegate, and *Probate Register* 17a in the Borthwick Institute.

THE TORONTO PASSION PLAY   TORONTO, 1ST–3RD AUGUST 1981
POCULI LUDIQUE SOCIETAS

For 'Toronto', read '*N-Town*', or more properly, vice versa. The text used included both *Passion Play 1* and *Passion Play 2*, from the Prologue of Demon to the end of the Appearance to Mary Magdalen. The performance ended with a transformation scene of Christ and the Saved in glory, taking its cue from Peter's closing

> Gracyous god if þat ȝe plese
> late us haue sum syght of the
> oure careful hertys to sett in ease   336: 101

There were no cuts except for a few stanzas of Christ's preaching at the Last Supper, and the performance as a whole ran for five hours with a forty-five minute break after *Passion Play 1*. There were 107 characters plaued by 53 actors, of whom only about four were extras. The script was a lightly modernised version by Stan Kahrl.

The place-and-scaffold setting was a grassy, tree-lined lawn in an angle of Victoria College, about 120 feet square, and circled with scaffolds built mainly over the York Cycle waggons: in some cases, as with the scaffolds of Annas and Caiaphas, over one cart only, but mostly over two set side by side. There were five raised scaffolds, plus Jerusalem Gate (which also doubled as the pillar of the Scourging), and the *lytil oratory … lych as it were a cownsel hous*, which was situated right *in þe myd place* of the circle, and was at ground level. This also doubled as the Temple to which Mary retires after the Crucifixion. The scaffolds were hung about like pavilions with heavy net curtains sprayed in rather unmedieval pale rainbow colours, which were raised for reveals, and lowered again at the end of scenes.

The scaffolds were not arranged in any particular relation to each other, nor were they orientated: Heaven, indeed, ended up in the North and Hell in the East: save that Calvary was in the West, and during the Crucifixion the sun set slowly and typologically behind the crosses. There does not in any case seem to be any particular logic in the text for one arrangement rather than another.

All the scaffolds doubled as at least two locations: this, as the Director (Kathy Pearl) pointed out, was made necessary when two consecutive years' plays are played one straight after the other in one afternoon (though in fact *Passion Play 2* envisages scaffolds for Annas and Caiaphas as well as for Herod and Pilate, with which they were doubled here). The most dubious doubling was the use of the largest scaffold for both Upper Room and Judgement Hall: in the programme, and in the discussion which followed Sunday's performance, Kathy Pearl stressed the interesting patterns of

contrast which arose out of this ('the same and not'), and seemed to suggest that this might have been intended in the original staging. However, since in the original a year would have intervened between the playing of the two scenes, it seems more likely that any parallelism was a happy accident. The only theatrical effect of which I was aware was a worry that they hadn't removed the supper table before sitting down to judgement. This was a large and structural T-shaped block which took up most of the scaffold, and apart from supporting the splendid displays of fruit at an apparently vegetarian Passover, did not actually contribute much to either decor or action. It took up so much room that the disciples had to sit on it to have their feet washed, thus obviating the need for Christ to get down on his knees and provide a visual parable of service. Without it, the scaffold would merely have been, like the others, a fairly neutral place which took its character from its current inhabitants and a slight change in decor, which would have been just as acceptable.

To this space, enter a standing audience: an audience which for the most part didn't have the faintest idea of what was about to happen, and therefore presumably behaved like Natural Man when confronted with this particular type of staging. The first thing they realised was that they would not be able to see and hear everything that was going on unless they kept moving. Being an audience was going to be rather more strenuous a business than one usually expects.

To begin with, there is a natural instinct to get close to whoever is at the centre of the action. At first, the audience tried to follow everything. When Demon began to speak from Hellmouth, everyone surged towards him across the place. After a few stanzas he came down and ranged through the crowd, with the result, in these numbers, that one lost sight of him, and hence of what he was saying, for minutes on end. Then he retired to Hell, and John the Baptist spoke up from behind our backs, and everyone turned round to pursue him: then Annas appeared, again behind our backs, and everyone wheeled round to face *him*. It began to feel like a Spot the Ball competition between players and audience.

It is clearly highly necessary in this kind of staging to indicate where the action is going, and give the audience time to catch up, both mentally and physically. There is such a strong tendency to follow the players around that you could even feel stranded when they moved out of the place, because your attachment figures had gone: for instance, when Christ rode out of the place for the first time (though judging from the behaviour of the donkey, the stage direction should be rewritten *here cryst rydyth out of þe place And the Asse wyl*). This circular continuum seems to be so much better orchestrated in *The Castle of Perseverance* that I wondered whether in fact *N-Town* was meant for a circular place-and-scaffold staging, or for something much more like the Valenciennes layout, where the actors would do most of the moving, and the audience stand, or even sit, in front of the stage area.

In this respect, it was instructive to have been there on two consecutive days. On
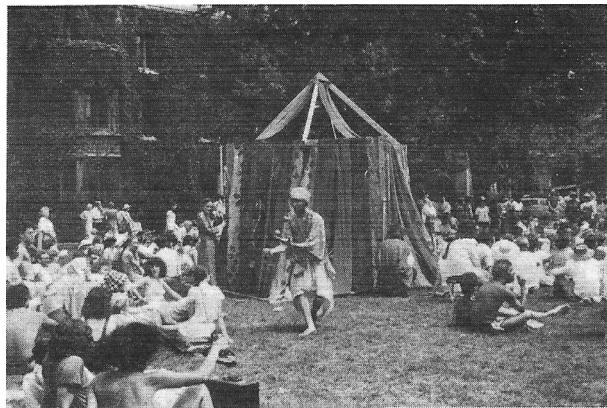
Arfax juggling.

TORONTO PASSION PLAY

St. John and Soldiers.   Anima Christ binds Satan.

the first day, the audience remained standing most of the time. On the second, they were asked to sit down as soon as they had found a convenient space. This produced two distinctly different effects. On the first day, it was difficult to see and hence hear the actors, and one had to make an effort to find a new vantage point each time the focus of attention changed. This paid off dramatically in some scenes, especially in the Entry into Jerusalem, where on struggled for a glimpse of Christ in a very authentic way, and in the Via Dolorosa: also, during the rest of the play, when you came up unexpectedly in the crowd against one of the agents of Annas and Caiaphas, watching narrow-eyed for evidence of treason or blasphemy, or one of the Apostles trying to get a glimpse of the Passion without actually being implicated as Peter nearly was (St. John scaled every tree in the courtyard). The effect was very much 'You were there'.

On the second day, when the audience were asked to sit down, the effect became much more Feeding of the Five Thousand (actually about 750). The whole thing then appeared much more a show that was being put on for you, the shape of the action became much more visible, and most of the effects I mentioned above disappeared, as, for example, the agents of Annas and Caiaphas now stood out (literally) among the sitting crowds. There was still a fair amount of audience mobility, but the actors had got used to it, and the stitlers had become much more adept at clearing spaces, which had to be done fairly well in advance. (I nearly tripped up Pilate's Wife through not being able to grab my camera off the grass quickly enough.) David Parry now reckons that with well-trained stitlers he could have done *The Castle of Perseverance* like this. The audience themselves were much better able to see where the action was likely to go: and one lady said that she actually liked being made to move on, as it stopped her behind getting numb with sitting for five hours in the same position.

There still remained the problem of acoustics. Not many of the actors (with the exception of Annas and Christ) had sufficient flexibility as well as power of voice to enable them to do more than shout, or shriek. When the Three Maries announced *lett us sey with voys wul shrylle*, it was rather too uncomfortably accurate. Thus the verse came over as very flat. One problem was that the actors did not seem to fall happily into the rhythm, which seemed all too often to come across as doggerel, or flat statement. There also seems to be something about Canadian intonation patterns that is inimical to this kind of verse: a phonetician colleague tells me that transatlantic English has a much narrower pitch range than British English, which, to a British ear at least, tends to level everything out. This is not chauvinism, but an honest attempt to try and assess the quality of the verse: quality in both senses, for the outstanding impression was that we were being given the words to accompany the story rather than that the story was being mediated by the words. We seemed to be getting a pageant Passion play – very much more like the modern version of the York Cycle in general effect: where what we saw was much more important than what we heard, and where we were meant to follow the broad sweep of the narrative, and not to worry too much about the details of characterisation or motivation.

It is perfectly true that the *N-Town Passion Plays* give us a remarkable amount of the traditional action in the stage directions without in some cases any accompanying dialogue:

> and qwan he is skorgyd. þei put upon hym A cloth of sylk and settyn hym on a stol and puttyn A kroune of þornys on hese hede with forkys and þe jewys knelyng to cryst takyng hym A septer and skornyng hym. and þan þei xal pullyn of þe purpyl cloth and don on A-geyn his owyn clothis and leyn þe crosse in hese necke to berynt and drawyn hym forth with ropys. And þan xal come to women wepyng and with here handys wryngyn seyng þus

<div align="right">N-Town 294</div>

Compare this with York, or even the much briefer Chester, where each detail is pinned down in the dialogue. However, though there is more purely visual narrative in *N-Town* than perhaps anywhere else, it is by no means like that. There is verbal detail and subtlety. This was clearly displayed in this production in the Last Supper, where the characters were grouped on one scaffold for a considerable length of time, there was conflict between Christ and Judas, both strong actors, the words were reinforced by symbolic gesture, and, interestingly, there was a considerable amount of exposition. In contrast, the 'football huddle' in the council house, though it gave a satisfying sense of eavesdropping on a politicians' garden party, produced nothing much more than a general sense of animus against Christ, and the feeling that a lot of reasons could be produced for this if necessary, but none had really stuck in one's memory. Interestingly, the cast saw this very much as a political play, where 'The other stuff comes through because it's there', whereas the audience were I think almost unaware of the struggle between Pilate and the Jews, and only conscious of Christ's suffering. The motivations, as with the other verbal detail, somehow evaporated.

This must be almost entirely a question of scale in open-air playing. There comes a point where detail gives way to broad outline, and the first thing to go is vocal detail: visual detail lasts rather longer. In evidence of this, I was lucky enough while in Toronto to see the videotape of their 1979 *Castle of Perseverance*, and to compare it with my fairly recent memory of Philip Cook's Manchester production. The open-air, wide-angle Toronto *Castle* had much the same qualities as I am trying to define here: it was spectacular, sweeping, more detailed than the *Passion* in some respects, but on the whole declamatory, declarative, and flat: while Philip's much smaller-scale indoor production was more subtle, the characterisation stronger and more detailed, and the climaxes better engineered, but missed out on the grand-scale pomp and pageantry. It was not a matter of preferring one to the other: the different circumstances of production made different effects come to the fore. If one wanted to preserve the subtleties of the smaller-scale performance while playing in the huge arena, one would need first some kind of acoustic reflector (in the *Castle* partly

provided by the stands), and secondly some smaller-scale units against which to play to focus the action.

One tends, in a place-and-scaffold staging, to think of the scaffolds as providing the points of focus, and the action as moving from focus to focus. In this production a great deal of the action happened in the place, and the iconic quality was lost. This will always be a difficulty with a Passion play: it happened here particularly with the Stations of the Cross. The Buffeting and Scourging were orchestrated with a great deal of imaginative detail, but it was never held in a contained space so that the pictures were impressed on the memory. The same thing happened later with the Resurrection, which was dissipated because it took place from a freestanding chest-tomb surrounded by space (whereas the stage directions suggest something that the actors can go *into*). The traditional Crucifixion grouping was here rejected in favour of a more 'human' situation where the soldiers kept Mary, John, and Magdalen away from Christ with their spears: this gave the Virgin the opportunity to break through dramatically and *renne and halse þe crosse*, but also meant that Christ consigned her to John fortissimo over a space of some thirty feet: both the traditional picture and the chance of a moment of intimacy were sacrificed.

This last scene was typical of another interesting but arguable feature of the production. Having lost the subtlety and detail in the words, the Director supplemented it with visual ad-libbing. Almost our entire impression of Christ's character and charisma came from the scene of the Entry into Jerusalem, where before healing the blind man he stopped to play ball with the children, accept a half-eaten apple from a common woman (later to be identified with Magdalen), and drink appreciatively from an offered waterflask. More often, this intimacy of detail was spread away from the main action, over a multitude of little 'naturalistic' incidents among the characters on its periphery. During the discussion, the Director talked, rather revealingly, about 'adding life' to the main movement of the play. This was partly the modern desire to make everyone react 'naturalistically' which, for example, added a lot of restless and unnecessary twitching among the Apostles trying to communicate grief or enthusiasm at the Last Supper, together with some rather bathetic verbal ad-libbing ('Get out of here!' to Judas). When it was so near the centre of the action, it could be fussy and distracting: further off, it produced a very interesting multi-focussed effect.

Exemplary of this was the way the messenger Arfax became almost a comic subplot in his own right, as a mad Saracen conjuror whose one aim was to wheedle baksheesh from his masters, or, failing them, from any promising-looking member of the audience. As he ran his messages through the crowd, bent double, kaftan flapping, he would pause hopefully before likely-looking groups (especially children) to do some expert juggling with orange, green, and yellow tennis balls, and then hold out his hand expectantly, always to be disappointed. When the Passion got under way, he became the messenger who cries 'Tidings! tidings! Jesus of Nazareth is take!',

and attached himself to the group of tormentors, urging them on by rattling a tambourine or blowing a cow's horn, which served the useful purpose of adding to the mounting noise and tension.

The assumption behind this was that you were willing to be distracted from the main action (which was usually a long way away) by this subsidiary entertainment: and you usually were, partly because you knew the story anyway, and knew you could get back to it when it became important to you, and partly because the human attention-span does deem to be able to cope with more than one thing at once. There were all sorts of little scenes going on: the conspirators spying, the blind man being led begging through the crowd, Magdalen and John embracing the newly-converted Centurion. On the first day, even Judas' suicide became one of these asides: it was marvellously effective, and only about thirty people saw it, as meanwhile Annas and Caiaphas were leading Jesus away to the Judgement Hall.

The question is how far this multiplicity of images was originally medieval, and how far it was a modern imposition. It certainly bore some resemblance to one of the more crowded Gothic crucifixion: of the compartmented Passion scenes I am not sure, as we can't tell whether we are meant to read them one at a time. It is certainly true that the main pattern of the play use simultaneous action:

> Here þe sympyl men xul settyn up þese ij crossys and hangyn up þe thevys be þe Armys *and þer whylys* xal þe jewys cast dyce for his clothis and fytyn and stryvyn and *in þe mene tyme* xal oure lady come with iij maryes with here and sen Johan with heme settyng hem down A-syde A-fore þe cros. oure lady swuonyng and mornyng and leysere seyng
>
> *N-Town* 298

Here three distinct actions are going on simultaneously, though our attention may be directed to them each in turn. In practice, if certain scenes are to be set up on time, several things *must* be going on at once. For example, in this production the thieves' crosses had to be got across to Calvary before Christ's journey there. This was done while everyone was watching the Dream of Pilate's Wife: but at the end of the dream she ran across the place to her husband and accidentally ran into them as they were being moved: they acted most effectively, both as a nightmarish barrier to prevent her reaching him, and as a concrete proof that the crucifixion machine was grinding inexorably forward. At other times, the *meanwhile* merely serves to distract the audience's attention away from the vanishing of things or people: the thieves' crosses with the thieves on them disappeared during the Harrowing of Hell, and *Anima Christi* slipped out of the tomb while everyone was concentrating on *Salve, Sancta Parens*.

It would seem that this is at least a possible consequence of having a large set with multiple staging, and a very large cast and audience. It did however mean that there was a blurring of the shape of the central action, especially as the original multiple

action was then overlaid with yet more. I could not be sure how far in this production it was due to my position in the audience, how far to the rather loose overall direction, and how far to the author's treatment of the narrative. I did not feel any particular shape or build-up to the Passion sequence (though from their accounts in the discussion the actors did). It may have been that all this subsidiary activity was allowed to continue at full pelt throughout, so that the overall level of engagement was always the same: it may have been that the space was too large and the intensity just dissolved into it. It is also true that the Passion is a very long and tiring sequence for actors as well as for audience, and, when it is not divided up into neat Guild-size scenes, there if no relief for either. One should remember that in the original there are two *Passion Plays*, not one.

It was noticeable that towards the end of the play the *meanwhile* structure became more and more marked, even to the extent of slicing up the narrative in the most inconsequential way. Why does Mary disappear into the temple declaring she will stay there for three days and then come out again for the Deposition? Why is the Harrowing of Hell frozen in the middle? Christ disappeared into Hellmouth, presumably to do a bit more harrowing, and left us feeling vaguely cheated, not suspenseful. The earthquake (which itself was very impressive) seemed to come in the wrong place: and the sealing of the sepulchre looked futile, as *Anima Christi* was already out and about. The narrative logic seemed to have gone adrift, whether as a result of patching, or flogging control. This was strange, as in the earlier scenes it is of course used very powerfully to emphasise the simultaneous progression of the Last Supper with the Conspiracy. One unexpected effect was that it emphasised the fact that Judas communicated in bread but not in wine, and thus threw the Eucharistic theme of the play into even stronger focus.

One effect of knowing the story so well is that any interpretation the author lays upon it stands out, *sens* over *matière*, much more clearly than would a similar theme in a less familiar plot. Here there was an extremely strong sense of engagement with the Eucharist, much stronger than a subsequent look at the text seems to justify. This is probably because it was the single decided line of exposition. Preaching altogether came over very strongly, partly because the actors were taking trouble to address the audience clearly, partly because the balanced patterns attracted one's attention:

> Ffor hope withoutyn drede is maner of presumpcion
> And drede withowtyn hope is maner of dysperacion
> So these tweyn must be knyt be on Acorde …   230: 36–8

It is a very curious play. Some of the odd things one felt about it are probably due to the Passion narrative itself: the *agon* goes on for such a long time, the provocation seems correspondingly so small, however well the Entry into Jerusalem is played. What must be intended is a conflict between Christ and Satan, which is set up at the

very beginning, but somehow it never came off. This was possibly partly due in this production to the way the devils were presented. The Prologue of Demon sounded completely irrelevant to the audience to which it was intimately addressed (it is interesting here to compare this with the Lincoln production, reviewed on pages 131-4 by Bill Tydeman, where it was largely spoken from one position in front of the audience, and we saw it as a possibly valid fifteenth-century statement which we could then translate into our own terms). Here he was dressed just like the Demon King, and followed everywhere by a child devil who mopped and mowed distractingly in his wake. He never made a serious impact, and the later devils and their diableries seemed irrelevant. The exorcism of Mary Magdalen was based on the *Wisdom* stage direction, and the same little children produced the same kind of laughter described by Avril Henry in our last issue (redoubled when they refused to go away and Christ shooed them off like chickens: a nice moment in itself, but one which refused to take the concept of diabolical possession seriously). Hell was a comic Disneyland ruined castle with dental caries, and not in the least frightening, and since it appeared to be defended entirely by five-year-olds, its Harrowing seemed a serious challenge. Thus the play ran out of steam with no really triumphant conclusion. David Parry's Tityvillus in *Mankind* has proved that devils can be both grotesque and frightening, but most modern producers will have to take them much more seriously before they can achieve the right balance in the plays between incarnate Good and personified Evil.

It is difficult to say what effect the continuity of action has on the presentation of character, as many of the characters appear in only one or two episodes anyway. Even so, there di not seem to be any particular interest in character development as such: even characters who were there from the beginning spoke from fixed, traditional roles. Similarly, since the story is familiar, there is no attempt to introduce them: I was thinking absent-mindedly, when the Blessed Virgin began her first lament, that in any other play you would at least have been told who she was and given some kind of indication of her relationship with Christ and the other characters, when the person standing next to me in the audience, after staring at her bemusedly for several stanzas, suddenly said to his wife, his brow clearing, 'Oh, it's *Mary* …!' Most characters really had to do very little more than look right and sound fairly convincing, so one's judgement tended to be of the order that St. Peter wasn't quite old enough, Herod was a bit self-effacing … For a lot of the time they may be taken as shorthand for what we know already.

It did have a curious effect on Mary Magdalen. Since she was introduced at the Last Supper, without previous history, as the woman with the pot of ointment, and then stayed around (as suggested by the cancellation of the stage direction that tells her to go out) for the Supper itself, we got the uncomfortable feeling that she was intruding on private grief, and her transports read with all the fervour of the newly

converted: I felt that next year she'd probably be heavily into EST or jacuzzis. It needed a very firm knowledge of her history and role not to see her as a disturbingly unstable influence.

The costumes were adequate, but not really either detailed or solid enough. It is difficult, when your central character has to be distinguished by the simplicity of his garb, and is accompanied by twelve followers robed in grey blankets, to make them catch the eye, but at least they could do it by contrast with the other characters. For some reason, open air production needs sharp detail: costumes need to look either like real clothes, or, as Richard Axton said, like the lavishly tinselled carnival costumes of the Caribbean festival going on alongside that weekend. As it was, only Annas and Caiaphas looked sufficiently meant: most of the others were in fancy dress, largely the usual quasi-Biblical garb which belongs neither to the Middle Ages nor the Middle East.

If I have appeared to criticise this production at some length, it should not be taken as antagonism, but as a tribute. We cannot be too grateful to the *PLS* for mounting productions on this scale, which gives us a chance to test our theories against their practice. It is disturbing to think that at the moment the fate of the *PLS* and of this practical type of theatre research seems to be hanging in the financial balance.

MEG TWYCROSS   **UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER**

N-TOWN **PLAYS AT LINCOLN**   **22nd–4th JULY 1981**

Coffee-mugs, T-shirts, and badges all over Lincoln proclaimed the sponsors' faith in their project, and if one's overall response to this staging of plays from the *N-Town* Cycle was ultimately one of qualified disappointment, the feeling partly stemmed from prior expectations that this would be a really staggering production. The omens were excellent: the stupendous West Front of Lincoln Cathedral as a backdrop to the traditional performance-site; a well-raked arena catering for a thousand spectators: the use of Martial Rose's tactful translation; the choice of splendidly appropriate music mostly performed 'live'; an experienced, dedicated director (Keith Ramsay) whose robust approach worked well in 1978; capable and versatile players for most of the important roles, including professionals as Christ and Lucifer. One awaited the opening sequence with an intense willingness to enjoy a theatrically memorable evening.

Moments of excitement there were, but regretfully they were too infrequent to enliven a three-hour vigil often enough. Part of the weakness lay in the plays chosen for performance: *Creation*, *Fall*, *Annunciation*, *Nativity*, *Passion*, *Trial*, *Crucifixion*, *Resurrection*, and *Doomsday* could scarcely be dispensed with, but more judicious

cutting within these episodes (notably a protracted *Last Supper*) would have made space for scenes which could have rendered certain transitions less abrupt and unmotivated. One felt this keenly when God's decision to reprieve mankind came hard on the heels of Cain's banishment without even the intermission of the *Noah* play; it recurred when through the omission of *Joseph's Return* Joseph's sourness towards Mary in the cherry-tree incident was made to appear unreasonable in context, while from a combination of what one understands was the actor's refusal to deliver the central speech, plus the absence of both the Guarding of the Sepulchre and the very brief *Harrowing*, the *Resurrection* made little impact, so speedily did it follow the Entombment.

These factors would have mattered less had some of the most characteristic incidents of the *N-Town* Cycle not been virtually or wholly obliterated: the sequence may lack the Gothic splendours of York or Wakefield, and the home comforts of Chester, but it has its own satisfactions, and the decision to deprive us not only of the neatest *Abraham and Isaac* play outside the Brome version, the *Trial of Joseph and Mary*, and the *Woman Taken in Adultery* (surely the finest play of the Ministry there is?), but also of the comic suspicions of Joseph and Herod's encounter with the Kings, left at least informed spectators with a sense of being cheated. To be fair to the director, his 1978 production did include several of the incidents whose absence was felt in 1981, and one of Keith Ramsay's general problems was clearly how to avoid repeating himself, but he might have been true to the livelier parts of his text.

A version lacking some of its most theatrical portions needs enterprising staging if it is to regain its full impact, and here again too little was made of what promised to be exciting facilities. A flexible assemblage of a *platea* backed by a long wooden 'bridge' approached at each end by steeply-raked steps and topped in the centre by a similar shorter 'upper deck', offered a pleasing variety of performance areas and heights, although it was a pity that the majestic effect of opening and closing the west doors on exits and entrances was masked by the platform itself: a design incorporating this feature into the set would have been a bonus. It was unfortunate too that structural problems made it impossible to use the central area beneath the stage more freely for such inner locations as the tomb and the stable: Mary and Joseph must have found their quarters crampled indeed! But technical matters apart, it seemed odd not to use the multiple levels more often: too many scenes were set largely or entirely at ground level, and opportunities for simultaneous action (which the setting encouraged) were overlooked, while passage between levels was rare. This partly explains why, visually as well as dramatically, the Temptation, Agony, and the Crucifixion made a strong impression and why some of the other episodes tended to blur into an indeterminate huddle of people standing around.

This tendency was strengthened by a certain reluctance to come to grips with the sheer physicality of these plays: certainly too few people touched each other, and chances of exciting movement or grouping were too often passed over. God had no throne so that Lucifer's presumption in sitting o it could not be made visible, nor his Fall actual; Lucifer tempted both Adam and Even not insidiously but at long distance; Adam and Even discovered their nakedness almost dispassionately; the encounter with the doubting midwife was toned down to an act of witness, possibly in deference to modern sensibilities, though an audience that can laugh without embarrassment at Lucifer's lusty farts arranged for trombone would surely not blench at a little gynaecological detail. It is also symptomatic that too few attempts were made to make contact with spectators: Lucifer opened Part Two by entering through the auditorium, but spoke from the platea the lion's share of his satire on contemporary fashions (a speech definitely ripe for pruning), and Christ made his Entry into Jerusalem between the seats but towards a totally silent crowd. Their relative lack of animation or reaction was a further factor in bringing the plays dangerously close at times to Dr. Johnson's 'certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation'. To this the over-reverential, deliberate speech of one or two leading characters undoubtedly contributed.

It was the general rarity of dramatic vigour which made certain performances stand out so strikingly: there were tiny hints of what was required in the otherwise virtually immobile Eve's facial expressions and in Joseph's restrained irritation, but for the real thing one had to await the arrival of the Shepherds whose pastoral bumbling was moving as well as genuinely funny: they really acted like some trio straight from a misericord. Herod, too, skilfully emphasising feline craftiness, lifted immensely those scenes in which he appeared, though his lack of inches might have been compensated by a tall crown; the performances of the high priests revealed a commendable desire not to exaggerate, but were a shade too naturalistic for the vastness of the stage. This could not be said of Lucifer and Christ, who adapted well to performing in virtuoso roles alongside amateurs, but it was unlucky that both adopted the same dynamic, attacking style so that all contrast between them was lost. Christ lacked the calm tacit authority his part demands, and too often relied on vocal and physical assertiveness to command the stage, while his baleful air of suppressed hatred under persecution challenged one's conditioned responses in a way which was stimulating but irrelevant to the matter in hand. Lucifer was suitably menacing and exultant, but a trifle dull, partly the fault of his all-black outfit; a grotesque half-mask might have enhanced the performance and also complemented the splendidly-bearded God's crown with golden rays sprouting antler-like from it.

Apart from the be-jeaned stagehands, the costumes of the other characters were a triumph: the sheer golden body-stockings of Adam and Eve, usually so awkward to clothe convincingly; the turquoise, emerald, and sapphire of the Magi's robes; the blotches of blood on the white dresses of the mothers of the Innocents, even if this

kind of symbolism could have been utilised more often, possibly for the chilling figure of Death, whose black-and-white striped gown was too voluminous to satisfy a taste for skeletal attenuation. Music, lighting, and sound were completely satisfying, though one might argue as to the justification of unleashing a battery of modern technical devices on unsophisticated dramatic material: given the setting and the occasion, it would have been unreasonable to ignore the opportunities for *son et lumière*, and to be fair, their use did not in any way outshine or outblast the plays.

So the verdict must be that here were many ingredients for a first-class treatment, but that the highest honours finally eluded a hard-worked, honest-minded director and a gallant company: the finest moments were the static ones, so that the plays became a series of beautiful tableaux, though even here the climactic *Doomsday* with its superb roof-top fanfares could have been presented with a better eye for symmetry of effect, and greater physical contact between the understaffed Devils and the over-dressed Damned whose final squeal was only incongruous because preceded with too few signs of anguish. But lively compensations there were, often of an unscripted kind: the pigeons that flew out of the arches at the opening gong the wind ruffling the peasants' dresses and the steam rising from Christ's breath in the Arctic June evening: the dog who barked at God during the Last Judgement; the Palm Sunday donkey making up his brief appearance by giving rides offstage to the small children who obviously enjoyed the audience as much as it enjoyed them. After a while, the vital thing seemed to be simply being there: it was exciting to sit and stare at that fascinating facade, to gaze up at the Minster towers against the deepening blue of the night sky, to watch small domestic dramas being enacted in the auditorium, to savour an experience for which the plays provided the justification but not the sole ingredient.

Man proposes: the Weather God exposes. Certainly on the evening the present reviewer attended the plays, enthusiasm among a largely barefooted cast and a seated audience was understandably curbed, not so much by those heavy showers accepted nowadays throughout the northern hemisphere as inevitable accompaniments to open-air drama, but by the cold off the Wolds, refrigerating Minster Yard, penetrating even the whisky layer beneath car rugs, blankets, and anoraks, and no doubt numbing the histrionic as well as the critical faculties. Adam and Eve must have rejoiced that their parts began the evening's events rather than concluding them; how one envied the infant Jesus in his bright yellow Babygro!

BILL TYDEMAN　　　　　　　**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NORTH WALES**

COVENTRY PLAYS **4th–22nd AUGUST 1981**

These myracle pleyeris and the fawtours of hem ben verre apostas, bothe for thei putten God bihynde and ther owne lustis biforn, as thei han mynde of God onely for sake of ther pley, and also for thei deliten hem more in the pley than in the myraclis silf. I recalled these words of the *Tretise*-author as I sweltered in the afternoon sun on 5th August at the Belgrade Theatre's production of *The Coventry Mystery Plays*, a composite text, in the ruins of the cathedral (see *METh* 1:1 (1979) 44 for a review of a previous production of this now annual event).

Audience-involvement and contemporary reference were the evident aims of this production, as indeed of a medieval performance. As in previous Coventry productions, the audience was encompassed by an action which drove through their midst or jumped from location to location around them. Its exciting and disorientating effect was established at the start when three Old Testament plays started up simultaneously and, as the bewildered audience spread among them, yielded to a theatre in the round with the audience suddenly surrounded by actors on the pillars bombarding them with an explanation of the Incarnation which followed.

The introduction of modern dress was bold, and often effective. It was signalled from the start by the besuited, bowler-hatted devil wandering into Eden with his two 'Teds' as companions. Gabriel, in 'Red Baron' flying outfit, visited Mary to the sound of piston-engined aircraft. Modern-dress ambassadors brought gifts. Herod, the former devil, appeared as the modern underworld boss of a gang of uniformed thugs, wearing shades, toting guns, and accompanied by mini-skirted jazz-loving molls. They departed to the roar of motorbike engines and executed the Innocents to the sound of gunfire. On a lighter note, the 'Doctors' proved to be an amusing satire on contemporary clerical stereotypes.

Faced with the inevitable tensions between the historical action and the modern context, the director uncompromisingly confronted them. Jesus faced high priests and Pilate in period costume, then went on to meet a pink-coiffeur called Herod. A Roman soldier in a toga directed thugs in jeans and 'Black Sabbath' jackets at the Crucifixion. Not all worked out. What I took to be Jeeves in a dusty suit, striding forward with stately tread to promise I'd be like him one day, turned out to be Lazarus. But overall, the production seemed inspired by the same dramatic concerns as the medieval cycle.

What, then, was wrong with it as religious drama? First, in all this, the central figures were lost. Mary, a focus for our response, oozed mawkish sentiment and overacted her lament at the Cross so grossly that Christ's dismissal of her sounded comically peremptory. Jesus himself was a nervously hesistant youth, forced at moments into intense recognition of His divine mission. It was hard to see why anyone took Him seriously. Indeed, I hardly noticed Him in the Trials, and was not involved enough to care at the Crucifixion. The dramatic focus lay elsewhere.

Secondly, the play lacked overall structure. Hell went unharrowed. There was no developed resurrection, only an unexpected reappearance by Christ. Dramatically and theologically central episodes were neglected. What, then, had it all been for? At Doomsday, the cast, in their various guises of devils, torturers, priests, apostles, etc., went in singing procession to the scaffold from which a divine disc-jockey told us we could all get there if only we'd be nice to one another. The final effect was one of anticlimax.

Drama, comic and terrifying in parts! Moving too – I liked the way Gabriel fixed all his attention on the infant Christ, rocking the cradle, and never looking at Mary as he told her to take Jesus to the Temple. I liked his constant sense of involve urgency throughout the production. But this was drama too far removed from the informing spiritual theme and hence lacking the structural coherence of the play-cycles. Is it possible to regard religious drama as a genre, or even a sub-genre in its own right? Or is religious material there only to allow directors *to putten ther owne lustis biforn*?

DAVID MILLS   **UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL**

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