MEDIEVAL ENGLISH THEATRE

EDITORIAL

In what may become known as the Year of the Axe, drama looks as though it will suffer more than just a *nirt in þe nek*. All the more reason for emphasising yet again the necessity of maintaining the practical alongside the literary study of plays. The third meeting of *Medieval English Theatre*, held at Westfield College in March this year, was concerned with what manuscripts could tell us about theatre through *Stage Directions*. We attempted to cover all the cycle plays as well as the major moralities and saint's plays, and also to cast a look at the way stage directions and similar instructions were managed in service books, manuscript and printed versions of classical plays, vernacular poems, and some later printed English plays. We are most grateful to Marie Collins for a splendidly organised day. The voluminous duplicated material will take some time to assimilate fully but we hope to produce a separate book on stage directions based on work arising from the meeting. Meanwhile David Mills' contribution on *Chester* is included in this issue.

Also in this issue is the first part of Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter's extensive treatment of *Masks* developed from last year's talk at the *Props and Costumes* meeting, and a further study of Bale's plays by Peter Happé.

Last year we were lucky enough to be able to see a full production of the *Towneley Cycle* and various adaptations of other cycle plays; this year has been no less rewarding, with productions of *The Castle of Perseverance* (Philip Cook) at Manchester, *Wisdom* (John Marshall) at Winchester, an adaptation of *N-Town* (Keith Ramsay) at Lincoln, and a visit from the *Poculi Ludique Societas* from Toronto. Reports on several of these are included in this issue and there will be more in the next (including, we hope, a review of the *N-Town Passion* plays at Toronto).

We are pleased to report that, thanks to the kindness of Mrs. Audrey Browne, the late E. Martin Browne's valuable collection of material relating to his productions of medieval plays has been placed with *METh*. His autobiography, *Two in One*, is by the way now available from the Cambridge University Press.

We reported last year that *METh* had been affiliated to the International Society for the Study of Medieval Theatre (ISMT/SITM). We print below the very brief and open aims of the society, with a few explanatory notes.

The next meeting of *Medieval English Theatre* will be held on 27th March 1982 in Liverpool, hosted by David Mills, and the topic for discussion will be *Place and Scaffold Staging*. More information and application forms will be included in the next issue, but in the meantime anyone (apart from the UGC) with an axe to grind or a view to air on the subject should get in touch with either of the Editors.

Once again we would like to thank all those who have responded promptly to requests for subscriptions, and to give those who haven't a gentle nudge.

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STATUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF MEDIEVAL THEATRE

1. The purpose of the International Society for the Study of Medieval Theatre (the ISMT) is to stimulate the study of medieval theatre.
2. The ISMT a) spreads information on the academic activities of the members of the Society; b) stimulates contacts between all those involved in research or teaching in the field of medieval drama; c) organises an international colloquium every three years.
3. Membership of the ISMT is open to any person interested in the study of medieval theatre.
4. One becomes a member of the ISMT by participating in the activities of one of the existing sections (i.e. subscribing to *REED*, *Trétaux* or *METh*) or by sending a written request to the Secretary of the Bureau of the ISMT (Professor A.F. Johnston, Toronto University).
5. The Bureau of the ISMT consists of from 5 to 9 members of the Society elected at the general meeting of participants at the Triennial Colloquium (names obtainable from the Editors on request).
6. The purpose of the Bureau is to encourage and facilitate the achievement of the aims of the ISMT.

COVENTRY MYSTERY PLAYS

Are being performed again this year in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral by the Belgrade Theatre Company from 4th–22nd August. The *Cycle* is a composite one (see *METh* 1:1 44). Tickets available from the Belgrade Theatre Box Office, Corporation Street, Coventry CV1 1GS (Tel. 0203 20205). Performances Mon–Sat 8.30pm, Wed and Sat 3pm.

SEDITION IN *KING JOHAN*: BALE'S DEVELOPMENT OF A 'VICE'

Bale's extensive revisions to the manuscript of *King Johan* have occasioned comment by a number of scholars and editors.[1] The manuscript is indeed of rare interest because of its complexity. It presents as its first layer a version of the play written out by a professional scribe, usually known as Scribe A. This version, from the reference to the image called Darfel Gadarn at l.1229, is taken to date from after 22 May 1538. Bale's lost original may have been composed up to two years earlier, and there are indications in Scribe A's part of the manuscript that he was copying from a lost exemplar. Bale was probably himself associated with a performance of the play in January 1539. Later, perhaps during his exile of 1540–7 in the Low Countries, he began to revise the text. As he altered many spellings in this revision he seems to have been aiming at having the play printed, perhaps in association with the printing of his other extant plays by Dirik van der Straten at Wesel in 1547–8.

Bale's autograph revisions show themselves in two ways. Up to l.1803 the original pages written by Scribe A survive, with interpolations of various kinds by Bale in his own hand. Sometimes he wrote passages for insertion vertically in the margin, and four times he introduced new sheets which contain additional material (MS pages 23, 26, 39 and 40). After l.1803, however, he abandoned A's text and copied out the rest of the play in his new version. Fortunately two sheets (four pages) survive from the cancelled A-text, usually known as pages *1 to *4. These are invaluable since they show that Bale kept virtually everything in the A-text, but he continued to interpolate and expand. Thus we can follow the continuous process of revision running from the first significant amendment to A's text at l.252 through the point where the overlap of pages *1 to *4 with the B-text runs out of l.2161. After this we have no real evidence to suggest how the surviving differs from the A-text.

As I have said, Bale's earliest work on this play probably dates from 1536. The new sheets after l.2157 have a watermark, incorporating the date 1558,[2] and the comment about Queen Elizabeth's suppression of the Anabaptists at ll.1680–1 suggests that Bale was in fact revising the last part of the play after 22 September 1560. Thus Bale probably worked on the text at various times for at least 24 years, from c.1536 to 1560, and possibly slightly longer if Collier's suggestion that the final recension was made in anticipation of Elizabeth's visit to Ipswich is correct.[3]

The purpose of Bale's changes vary somewhat. At l.252 he merely adds a lost line. At ll.447–58 he elaborates the list of religious orders which through Clergy he is holding up to ridicule. This function of sharpening his satire on the Roman Church also

shows itself in Dissimulation's description of the power of the Pope, ll. 991–1011, and on the subject of Purgatory, ll.2036–41. Some of the additional material occurs in Act II where Bale seems to have become more interested in the historical material derived from the chronicles, particularly the Brut.[4] This accounts for ll.2026–7, 2068–87 (details of the international attack upon John), 2102–3 (which add the name of Simon the poisoner, not in the A-text), and 2128–37 (Dissimulation's comic apotheosis, some of which derives from the chronicles). Bale was concerned to stress how blameless John was, and he adds material which puts him in a good light at ll.1534–44, 1773–6, 1877–82, and 2143–57. He also wished to divide A's unbroken text into two Acts and for this purpose wrote the Interpreter's stanzas, ll.1085–1120, a part possibly played by himself.

My main intention, however, is to suggest that enlargements of Sedition's part were of considerable importance in Bale's revision policy, and that these occurred at a time when the Vice's role in general was undergoing a significant phase of development. Historically I think the Vice came into prominence as the leading role in groups of professional players about the middle of the sixteenth century. Heywood's Vices are too early to be typical (1528 and 1533); and by the time of Bale's final revision, Envy, Hypocrisy, Iniquity, Politic Persuasion, and Idleness had all arrived, and the decade 1560–70 is rich in further examples.[5] Some caution is necessary because the limited number of surviving plays may not allow us to detail his development too precisely, but it is clear that the enlargement of Sedition between 1536 and 1560 coincides closely with the presumed development of the Vice as a professional role.

Though Sedition does appear in the First Act, and his function is to concentrate the opposition to John found among Clergy, Nobility, and Civil Order, it is noteworthy that the expansions to his part were all made in Act II. Since, as we have seen, the division into two acts was made later by Bale, it looks as though this re-arrangement was related to the expansion of Sedition. The probability is high that this expansion was done to give the play greater stage appeal by having a fashionable Vice among its attractions – though Bale would not overlook the polemical advantages as well.

Let us now look *seriatim* at the expansions concerned with the Vice; all Bale's other additions of any size have been mentioned above.

1. ll.1221–6. Sedition enlarges his list of ridiculous relics.

2. ll. 1378–81. Sedition is offstage. Bale writes a stage direction *Extra locum* and gives us Sedition what can only be described as an unholy din which is meant to suggest rebellion. It is notable that if Sedition is offstage and he is to be recognised by the audience, the noise must be entirely characteristic of him.

3. ll.1639–49, 1666–1724, 1755–8. Bale works in an extra appearance for Sedition. This is a *tour de force* since he manages it without spoiling the doubling plan.

At first Sedition proclaims a *Jubyle Of cleane remyssyon* to all who attack John. He tries to persuade the latter to give up the crown. When John goes off to talk to Nobility, Clergy, and Civil Order, Sedition stays on stage and rejoices in the language of the Vice –

> Is not thys a sport …   1682

He presents the uncontrollable laughter of the Vice –

> Holde me, or else for laughynge I must burste   1694
> Ha, ha, ha! Laugh, quoth he! Yea, laugh and laugh agayne!
> We had never cause to laugh more free, I am playne   1700–1

On the King's return, Sedition insults England, and John gives up the crown. There is no comment by Sedition on this in the A-text, but Bale now allows him another line of abuse before he (presumably) leaves (l.1757).

(We now reach the point at which Bale started systematic recopying, and the following items derive from a comparison between the revised text and the pages *1 to *4.)

4. ll.1805–6, 1809–70, 1877–82, 1887–1907. Bale greatly enlarges the incident with Treason, which is based upon the story in the chronicles concerning a priest who counterfeited the King's money and had to receive the royal pardon because of his cloth. Most of the additional material is given to Treason, but Sedition is used as a frame for the incident, perhaps carrying out the role of prompter of villainy in others. Many of his speeches are interjections: one is proverbial –

> Hem! Not to bolde yet; for a mowse the catte whyll gape[6]   1816

He tries to make sure Treason will not give away the truth about his deception.

5. ll.1914–39, 1945–8, 1959–66. Again 'historical' or chronicle material is introduced, this time concerning an attempt to impoverish John by forcing payment to his brother Richard's widow. Bale follows the Brut in calling her Julyane rather than the historical Berengaria.[7] Sedition proposes the plan in the first passage, continues his abuse of England, and when Julyane is reported dead angrily regrets the loss of income as the claim fails.[8]

6. ll.1975–81. Sedition elaborates the celebration of the lifting of the Interdict by superstitious reference to saints.

7. ll.1986–99, 2002–4. Sedition laughs again envisaging the power he now has over John to further the interests of the Papacy, and he foresees the destruction of John, a prophetic role characteristic of the Vice.

8. ll.2044–5. Most of the conspiracy between Dissimulation and Sedition appears in the A-text. However Sedition is used in revision to give the name Simon to Dissimulation for the poisoning episode. In the A-text this particular identification was not made even though it derives from the chronicle sources.

9. ll.2128–37. Here Dissimulation's expectations about his apotheosis with 'Enoch and Heli' are promoted by Sedition who sees him receiving petitions from the afflicted like the saints.

From this evidence it seems reasonably to conclude that in the majority of the expansions Bale was clearly conscious of the need to expand the Vice's part. It is also true that the additions he makes are entirely within the convention; indeed they show some considerable awareness of the way the Vice made his mark – and this is surprising because Bale was in exile in the years 1540–7 and 1553–8.

The end of Sedition, which begins with his singing entry at l.2456 (s.d.), offers us no evidence as to how much of the material dates from the 1530s. All one can say is that the attempt to keep deceiving others to the last moment, the means of informing the audience of his wickedness, and his general showmanship are entirely characteristic of the mature Vice.

NOTES

1. The chief editions are J.H. Pafford and W.W. Greg *King Johan by John Bale* Malone Society Reprints (1931); B.B. Adams *John Bale's King Johan* (San Marino 1969) line references to this edition, which correspond to mine in *Four Morality Plays* (Penguin 1979); and the facsimile by W. Bang in *Materialien* 25 (Louvain 1909).

2. Pafford and Greg xi.

3. J.P. Collier *A History of English Dramatic Poetry* (second edition 1879) II 163.

4. *The Brut or the Chronicle of England* edited by F. Brie EETS OS 131, 136 (1906 & 1908) chapters 146–155, pages 154–70.

5. For an outline history of the Vice, see my 'The Vice: a Checklist and an Annotated Bibliography' *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 22 (1979) 17–35.

6. M.P. Tilley *A Dictionary of the Proverbs of England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor 1950) C 128.

7. *The Brut* 166.

8. Lines 1959–60 may possibly be a Vice's false lament for Juliana: cf. Ambidexter's for the Queen, *Cambises* lines 1126 ff.

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MASKS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH THEATRE: THE MYSTERY PLAYS

Introduction

Everybody has always known that certain characters in the mystery plays wore masks: but no-one seems to have stopped to consider what the actual effects of masking in these plays were likely to be. When we offered to do a paper on this for last year's meeting, we thought we were choosing a nice, tidily-circumscribed topic. Instead, when we started to work on it, we discovered two things. First, there was more material than we had thought. In the later Middle Ages, people seemed to be masking all over the place, in both theatrical and non-theatrical contexts: and though each type of masking had different circumstances and conventions, they nevertheless overlapped with and affected each other. Secondly, what seemed to be the effects of masking in the plays were very much more far-reaching than we had expected. What we found out has caused us to re-think our assumptions about the visual style of the plays, and indeed radically alters the accepted view of the nature of their appeal to the emotions.

Because there seemed to be so many different traditions, we decided to confine ourselves to those things which throw light on the use of masks in the mystery plays: although it is clear that there were also very vital traditions of the use of masks in both popular and courtly disguisings, and of course in the moralities, both of which exploited the potentials of masking in quite different ways. We hope to discuss these in a later paper.

The evidence for the use of masks in the mystery plays first of all comes from scattered references in Guild records. But like most of the evidence for props and costumes, this is selective: or rather, it has been selected for us by chance. Many of the Cycle plays which have come down to us may have used masks, but we have only a handful of accounts and inventories from the Guilds which produced these plays: and there are no accounts which we can confidently match with the existing scripts. As for the records themselves, here the process of random selection goes on: for unless we are lucky enough to have an inventory of all existing props and costumes in a play (and even those which look at first to be complete turn out to have strange gaps), we only hear of things when they are being mended, or in some cases replaced. So we can see from the Coventry Smiths' accounts that *the devils hede* and *herodes heed* must have taken quite a beating each year, as they turn up fairly regularly for repairs:[1] the same applies to *the devells facys* of the Coventry Drapers' *Doomsday* pageant:[2] but if God in that play also wore a mask, as seems possible by analogy with the York Mercers' *Doomsday* inventory,[3]

he must, being fairly static, have kept it immaculate, as it never turns up in the accounts at all.

Again, since they are purely accounts of expenditure, and tend to pay only for making and mending, they do not describe the masks, and very rarely say what they are made of. However, we can fill in some of these gaps from the accounts of the Court Revels, which not only bought and accounted for materials wholesale, but, at least from the beginning of the reign of Edward VI, took a general inventory of stock at the accession of each monarch. They also describe what they are working on much more fully, presumably to help the auditors check up that each item is going to its proper destined end, but also, one feels, in a very recognisable tone of amused disbelief at what they are doing: so we get details like the masque of *covetus men with longe noses* in 1552/3,[4] which tells us things about characterisation and stylisation in masks that we do not find in the mystery play accounts.

It gets more difficult when you try to work out the effects of masking in the plays. We can speculate from the scripts, which is necessary, but fraught with complications and uncertainties. Indeed we doubt, if it were not for the records, that you would notice from the plays themselves that masks were being worn. Then, we have no contemporary criticism about this sort of theatrical masking. However, we can look at what is said about other kinds of masking, particularly in carnivals and disguisings, and see if that throws any light on the possible effects of masking in plays: though we always have to remember that most of this material comes from polemic against masking. In the last analysis, after assimilating and sifting all the various pieces of information on the subject, you are bound to be thrown back on your own imaginative feel of what is going on, which in its turn is bound to be conditioned by your own response to masking in theatre. Fortunately over the last year or so we have been able to see quite a number of performances of medieval plays which have used masks (some of them are reviewed in this issue). But we have to a very large extent had to work out our own theories about this, as very little that is relevant seems to have been written on the subject.

We have divided our discussion into sections, to help signpost the reader. The first is on terminology. This started off as an exercise in defining terms: but we found that even the ambiguities revealed quite a lot about both the construction of the mask itself, and about the assumptions on its nature and use; we found ourselves considering stage make-u; and the attempt to define the word *larva* produced a history of medieval masking in little. Secondly, we speculate on the purpose and effect of masking in mystery plays. Third is a detailed consideration of who wore masks in the plays, and what effects each of these was likely to have. We have split this up into three groups: devils; wicked human characters; and God and the angels. Each of these seemed on investigation to belong to a rather different tradition. Lastly, using the Revels records, we look at what masks were made of, and what they looked like. We add an appendix

on scholarly knowledge of the traditions of classical masking, which seems to be part of the general picture, but is not specifically related to masking in mystery plays.

1. Terminology

One word that is not used until the very end of the period is *mask* itself. The earliest citation in the *NED* in this use is from 1534, but the word does not seem to have been generally used for the object until the 1580s. In the Revels accounts, *mask* means 'masque'; except in two instances, where it appears in a doublet phrase *as vezars or maskes*.[1] Normally, however, the *mask* is the entertainment; so when we find, for example, in 1546/7 John Holt, the Yeoman of the Office, being paid *for carrying maskes to & fro the Cowrte at v˨ the nyght*, he is taking the entire production, costumes, props, scenery and all.[2] Similarly, therefore, *maske heddes* and *headpeces for maskes* are 'headdresses for masques';[3] they are only 'masks' when they are described as *Maske faces*.[4]

We should here explain our own terminology. We use *mask* for the object and *masking* for the wearing of masks: *masque* for the entertainment, even though this is unhistorical, and masquing for the taking-part in such an entertainment.

The least ambiguous term is *viser*, which the *NED* cites in this meaning from the early fourteenth century. (The *Medieval Latin Wordlist* cites it, as *viserium*, from 1239: Ducange, as *viseria*, from 1298.) Other spellings include *visar*, *vesern*, and *wesseren*: *vizard* is a later, sixteenth century spelling. A *viser* is, as the name suggests, something that goes over your *vis* or face: *vis*, a French loanword, was also current in English in the early fourteenth century, but seems to have gone out of fashion later.

The only other use of the word *viser* (later our *visor*) is of course for that part of a helmet that goes over the face: but the only place in the dramatic records where that might be ambiguous is with entries like the Chester Coopers' 1574 *for the mendinge of arrates vysar*.[5] It is conceivable that Herod wore a helmet: the Coventry Smiths' accounts refer to the *mending of Arrodes Crast*,[6] and *crests* in the *MED* seem to be largely associated with helms. But the Coventry Smiths' Herod also had a face that was painted.[7] It would, however, be perfectly possible for a *viser* to be part of a helmet and yet at the same time a mask, as we hope to show later: but usually, if an actor is wearing a *viser*, he is wearing a mask.

In 1573, Sherborne paid *for veaysages for the players* in a play of *Lot and Sodom*.[8] Usually, however, the word *visage* means 'face, appearance, expression', unless it is qualified with the adjective *false*, when it translate the French *faulx visaige* or 'mask'.[9]

The word *face*, which is also used to mean 'mask', is however much more complicated, and brings us to our first real set of unexpected assumptions. In the

Norwich Grocers' 1565 *A face and heare for the Father*,[10] it clearly means 'mask, as it does in the 1568 Coventry Drapers' *payd for making the ij devells facys x^s*.[11] In 1556 the same Drapers *payd for a demons face ij^s*,[12] which sounds like a mask: but in the same accounts they also *payd for blakyng the sollys fassys*,[13] which sounds much more like make-up.

There are a number of references to the painting of faces, both at Coventry and Chester, and we have to look at each one individually to see whether it is more likely to refer to masks or make-up. For example, in 1477 the Coventry Smiths paid 10d *to a peynter for peyntyng the ffauchon & herods face*,[14] and the face that both the falchion and the face are mentioned in the same item suggests that they are both props (compare the 1516 entry *Item payd to a peynter for peyntyng & mending of herodes heed*, and the 1547 *payd to John Croo for mending of Herrods hede and a myter*[15]): but what are we to make of the 1498 *Item paid to the peynter ffor peyntyng of ther fasses viij^d*[16]? This sounds, again, much more like make-up.

Where items for painting faces turn up regularly year after year, as with the Chester Smiths' *for guildinge of little Gods face*, which costs a regular 12d from 1545 to 1569,[17] it must refer to make-up. The same applies presumably to the Chester Shoemakers' *ffor geyldeng of godes ffase & ffor peyntyng of the geylers ffases* in 1549.[18] But the 1574 Sherborne *for gilting of a face for the playe*[19] sounds more like a mask again – purely because of the use of *a face* instead of *X's face*. Again, the Chester Painters' 1571 *paintes to bone the pleares*[20] may have been used as stage make-up, or they may just have been used to touch up items of clothing and props: we have no way of knowing, though it sounds like make-up.

One reason for this ambiguity is, we think, that the wearing of masks and the painting of faces are thought of as being very much the same sort of thing, and so much the same formula is used for both. They are alternatives. To take the case of God: in York He wears a gilded mask, as in (presumably) Norwich, Sherborne, and probably Beverley.[21] In Chester the gilding is applied direct to His face. In the York Doomsday the *euell saules* had masks;[22] in Coventry their faces were blacked.

The world of masquerade, *mommerie*, charivari, and disguising seems to show the same interchangeability of mask and face-paint. An often-quoted London decree of 1418 proclaims

> that no manere persone, of what astate, degree or condicioun that euer he be, during this holy tyme of Christemes be so hardy in eny wyse to walk by nyght in any manere mommyng, pleyes, enterludes, or eny other disgisynges, with eny feynyd berdis, peyntid visers, diffourmyd or colourid visages in eny wyse …[23]

Here false beards, painted masks, and misshapen or coloured faces are all grouped together, because they all produce the same effect: they disguise the person wearing them, that is, they render him unrecognisable. The decree is concerned that under this cover, burglary, assault, and other misdemeanours may be committed: in the same way, Alan Brody reports that the R.U.C. were held to be partly responsible for the dying-out of the Mummers' Play along the Irish Border, as 'Passes weren't given to troupes of mummers wanting to traipse back and forth over the Border, and gangs of disguised men roaming around at night were not popular with the Royal Ulster Constabulary'.[24] Writing in 1969, Brody found this 'delightfully comic': we would not find the situation so delightful nowadays.

The 'disguising' effect of a coloured face, or possibly a false nose (which seems the easiest way to *diffourme* a visage) may not be so complete as that of a mask, but if you think of it more in terms of a circus clown's make-up than of a naturalistic stage make-up, it can be as effective in wiping out the identity of the wearer. The folk-play usually 'disguises' faces by blacking them out, with soot, lampblack, or charcoal.[25] These are also some of the easiest materials to come by, and clearly always have been. Strutt, on mummings and masquerades, says

> The mummeries practised by the lower classes of people usually took place in the Christmas holidays; and such persons as could not procure masks rubbed their faces over with soot, or painted them; hence Sebastian Brandt, in his Ship of Fools, alluding to this custom, says
>
> *The one hath a visor ugley set on his face,*
> *Another hath on a vile counterfaite vesture,*
> *Or painteth his visage with fume in such case*
> *That what he is, himself is scantily sure.*[26]

Here again we have the mask and the blackened face as alternatives: both are disguises. In Brandt's original Latin, the title of this passage is *De laruatis fatuis* and in Alexander Barclay's 1508 translation *Of folys disgysyd with vysers and other counterfayte apparayle*, which includes wigs, fool's garb, *straunge londes gyse*, *defiled* faces, and *Some counterfayte theyr tethe in a straynge wyse*; or, as Brandt says, they have *dentes emptos*, 'bought teeth'. Under this counterfeit guise they enter houses and seduce young women:

> *Sepe tuas larua contecta subintrat in edes*
> *Que tibi gallinas vulpes iniqua voret*[27]

Godefroy quotes a French prohibition from Lille in 1395 which is very similar to the English one quoted above: *Defense de mommer de nuit a tout faulx visage ou le visage couvert par mascarure ou autrment*. He translates *mascarure* as 'masque', but it seems much more likely that it means 'blackening', as the verb *maschurer* means '*tacher*, *salir*, *barbouiller*, *noircir*': *Son viaire … de carbon mascura* 'He blackened his face with charcoal'.

The verb also appears as *masquier* and *masquillier*, the ancestor of MdFr *maquiller*.[28] (The 'black' motif has come back into English with the fairly recent adoption of *mascara*.[29]) The connection and ambiguity between mask and blackened face could not be clearer: another quotation in Godefroy suggests that the seventeenth century theorists on masking were trying to rationalise and give it a respectable classical ancestry:

Les Coribantes avoient este inventeurs des masques et mummeries, qu'ils s'embarbouilloient le visage avec du noir, d'ou est descendu ce nom maschure (1616)[30]

The word *grime* seems to have followed the same path in the Germanic languages, but in reverse: it comes back into English, possibly from Scandinavian, possibly from Dutch, in the fifteenth century, meaning 'black dirt, soot': but in Old English, and in those Germanic languages where it appeared, it means 'face-mask'. The modern sense presumably comes from a Flemish-German custom of black-faced masking.[31]

The opposite of blackening your face is whitening it, and the obvious material for that is flour: Martial d'Auvergne in the sixteenth century writes about revellers going *en momon … barbouillés de farine ou de charbon, faulx visaiges de papier*.[32] We can see the effect of this kind of disguising in Brueghel's *Battle of Carnival and Lent* (Fig. 1). Carnival is followed by figures who are variously masked and disguised: a figure dressed in what looks like a blanket, wearing a false face painted like a human face, but with an exaggerated chin and nose, and eyeholes which are clearly those of a mask. After him comes a child in a half-mask with false nose and spectacles, remarkably like those of Pantaleone (or in FIG 3, Coviello) in the *commedia dell'arte*. On the fringe are the

Couielo

FIG 3

blackened and whitened faces. Down in the bottom left-hand corner is a figure wearing a sort of sugarloaf felt cap pulled down right over his head to his shoulders, with eyeholes, and flaps cut for nose and mouth, which blacks him out completely. Two other figures in Carnival's entourage have completely whitened, apparently featureless moon-faces: they wear what look like cushion-covers on their heads. Behind them another person with a whitened face is carrying a collecting-box for the play of *The Dirty Bride* which is going on behind him: another white-faced person in the same surplice, but wearing a Chinese-coolie hat stands behind the tent: what can be seen of his face is also whitened. In the far left background of the picture (Fig.2) yet another white-faced person in the same hat is taking part in the play of *Valentine and Orson*. The Emperor in that play also seems to be masked: Orson is of course in full woodwose attire.[33]

The interesting thing about this picture is the way in which carnival disguising blends into what is possibly professional play-disguising. We again know virtually nothing about professional entertainers, and how their costumes and conventions may have

FIG 1: Brueghel *The Entourage of Carnival* from *The Battle between Carnival and Lent* (1559).
Copyright Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

affected the mystery plays: but one of the few things that we are told is that they masked or painted themselves, and the little that we are told of this suggests that the painting was similarly non-naturalistic. Among the many invectives and decretals aimed at the *mimi* and *histriones*, Chambers quotes one from Luitprad (tenth century), which says that they *ut risum facile turbas illiciant, variis sese depingunt coloribus* ('In order to coax easy laughter from the populace, paint themselves different colours'): the comic effect and the various colours suggest something like a clown make-up.[34] Etienne de Bourbon, the thirteenth century Dominican preacher, talks about the *ioculatores qui ferunt facies depictas que dicuntur artificial gallice, cum quibus ludunt et hominess deludunt* ('entertainers … who wear painted faces which are called *artifices* in French, with which they play, and deceive men'): his use of *facies depictae*, 'painted faces', is deliberately ambiguous, since he is inveighing *contra illas que, cum sint vetule, quasi ydola se pingunt et ornant, ut videantur esse larvate* ('against those women who, when they are old, paint and deck themselves out like idols, so that they seem to be masked').[35] The anti-feminist lobby, thundering against the use of cosmetics, is rather fond of this simile, and provides us with a certain amount of incidental information, and a certain attitude to the use of masks and face-paint which seems relevant: once again, disguise and deception are the keynotes.

We have been looking at very basic materials, soot, flour, (and one can add ruddle). We are accustomed to thinking of stage make-up as something rather different from this: something that every actor wears, and which at its most basic is not meant as a disguise, but to enhance the natural features. (The usual justification for this is 'because of the stage lighting'. But seeing infant-school children being carefully 'made-u' for their parts in a Nativity Play in the classroom that whatever the original practicalities of this may have been, it has become more of a ritual than a necessity.) Is it possible that medieval actors wore 'natural' make-up?

We need to be careful here not to allow our own assumptions about what is or is not 'natural' to influence us. For example, there are no English accounts which tell us precisely what was used for mystery play make-up, but contemporary French accounts suggest that the paints used by the painter *to bone the plaeres* (if that is what it means) were exactly the same as the paints he used to paint the scenery. A very well-known stage direction from the Mons *Passion* of 1501 reads *Nota d'ycy advertir ung painter de aller en Paradis pour poindre rouge la face de Raphael*, and a bit later *et devera Rap(h)ael avoir le face toute rouge de painture que ung painter luy fera*.[36] It is clear from the instruction that Raphael's face was reddened all over. Among the paints the painter could have used, as they appear in the accounts, were *vermillion* (probably red mercuric sulphide), *terre rouge*, and *bresil*.[37] The English Revels accounts of some fifty years later list a stock of paint which includes *vermylyon* and *redd leade*; also *Sanguis draconis* and *red on paper*.[38]

However, the fact that the painter was asked here to produce a strikingly artificial effect does not mean that all face-painting need necessarily have been artificial in intention. It should be pointed out that all those reds were also used as rouge in ordinary cosmetics for women: as was *ceruse* ('white lead'), which was not only used as a pigment for painting scenery, props, and of course pictures, but also as a common foundation cream, though it apparently melted and dripped off if the lady went out in the sun. So was *Spanish white*, powdered chalk, though there the lady was warned not to go out in the rain, for fear her colour should be washed away. Lampblack and soot were used as mascara.[39]

To us this sounds distinctly artificial: and we seem to have backing from the satirists and preachers, who compare the effect, as we have seen, to a mask. Most of their comments suggest that these cosmetics are being used thickly to disguise wrinkles and blemishes which, with the amount of lead in their constituents, they then also cause. But one generation's naturalism is another's artificiality, and we do not know what effect the women themselves intended.

This seems to have got us no nearer to solving the problem of naturalistic make-up for actors. As far as the 'women' of medieval drama are concerned, the question does not arise, of course, as they were played by men. Mrs. Noah and Dame Percula seem to belong to the same tradition as the shemales of the New Year carnival, and were probably made up in the same heavily rouged way. Magdalen in the *Carmina Burana Passion Play* buys rouge to make herself up: does she do so on stage?[40] On the Blessed Virgin we have no information. But female make-up here falls into the category of 'disguise'.

It is interesting that the sixteenth century Italian discussion on stage make-up, reported by Stella Mary Newton in her book on *Renaissance Theatre Costume*,[41] which seems to have an attitude very similar to the modern one, also vehemently repudiates the use of masks and false beards, those two mainstays of the English mystery play wardrobe, as impeding the actor: it seems that these views are part of the new and revolutionary movement towards naturalism in acting. The conclusions Newton comes to elsewhere in her book about earlier practises echo our general impression: 'The changing of the character of the face by the use of make-up *as an alternative to the mask* seems to have been normal in stage productions of the fifteenth century' (our italics).[42] Certainly, as we discuss later, the characters who regularly either wear masks or have their faces painted are either grotesque or supernatural: there is only the slightest hint that 'ordinary people' were made up.

It seems likely, given the amount of metallic, and coloured foils in the Revels accounts of roughly the same period, that *litle Gods face* was gilded with gold leaf, or possibly with party gold, an alloy of gold with silver or other metals. There is no mention of gold paint in the accounts, and painters' manuals suggest that this was rare,

and only really used for lettering.[43] Experience has also shown that painting faces with gold or silver greasepaint is not very effective, as it does not reflect the light in the same way as foils do (though we discovered that a coat of Vaseline under the greasepaint made a considerable difference). Only too often the 'gold' or 'silver' merely made the actors look khaki or grey. The modern equivalent is to spray the actors with glitter: though that tends to be patchy.

It is difficult trying to work out from the accounts if this is likely to have been so, as we do not know how large the sheets of foil were. The Chester painter asked 12d from 1545–69 for the gilding; a dozen sheets of gold foil cost the Revels 6d in 152 (*party gold* were 18d a hundred); but again, we do not know how much the Chester painter also charged for his labour. Whatever it was, it cost the Chester Shoemakers 2d less in 1561 to gild their grown-up Christ than the Smiths paid for gilding their child Christ.[44]

Nor is it stated how the foil was to be made to stick to the face: but it has been pointed out to us that skin is the same substance as parchment, more or less, and that foil might be persuaded to adhere to the base of chalk and size or white of egg that was used for gilding on parchment. (Egg-white was also used as a 'glaze' in women's make-up.) Honey is also mentioned as a glue, as is sugar-candy.[45] But it still does not explain how, once having been gilded, *litle God* was then able to talk.

The next word is *head*. This can sometimes mean 'mask', as presumably in the 1498 Coventry Smiths' *peynttyng of the demones hede*:[46] *Paid for a pound of hemp to mend the angels heads, iiij*[d].[47] Thus the Coventry Smiths' 1494 *paid to Wattis for dressyng of the devells hede viij*[d] probably refers to a wig, and *dressyng* is, by extension, as in 'hair-dressing'. If head does not mean 'wig', then the entire case of the Coventry Cappers' *Harrowing and Resurrection* in 1566 were wearing masks,[48] including Pilate, the three Maries, the Spirit of God (Christ harrowing Hell), God himself (presumably Christ in his human form – whereby hangs another tale which we will discuss later), the *dymon* and three Souls: from what we know of other plays, this seems unlikely, though it is perfectly possible they were all wearing wigs, or what the Smiths and Drapers also called *cheverels*. (The York scribes called them *cheuelers* or *cheuerons*: in Chester they were called *faxes*.[49])

One might incidentally wonder why there were so many wigs. Besides the symbolic *cheuelers*, such as the gilt ones for Christ and Peter, these appear to be one of the main items of costume: even the Norwich Serpent had *a with* (white) *heare*.[50] Women characters, being played by men, somehow had to provide flowing locks: but it also seems to be a recognised stage convention (as also in art) for showing the difference between contemporary and (good) Biblical characters. The Apostles in the York *Creed Play* all have *cheualerz*:[51] Durandus explains, rationalisingly, that *Apostoli … pinguntur criniti, quasi Nazarei, id est sancti* ('The Apostles are painted with long hair,

17

like Nazarites, that is, holy'; i.e. like Samson[52]). Angels too have long locks, very probably, as in *Dives and Pauper*, *crul* 'in tokene þat here thoughtys and here loue beth set alwey in ryght ordre and turnyn alwey vp a₃en to God'.[53] From 1410 to about 1460, the fashion for pudding-basin haircuts shaved to top-of-the-ear length would leave most men unequipped to play either Apostles or Angels: and though hair was worn rather longer later, the flowing wigs were by then presumably traditional. The same applies in the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century to beards: only elderly men wore them until the 1530s. Henry VIII was unconventional in wearing a beard, which he grew in imitation of Francis I of France.[54]

There are still many ambiguous uses of the word *head*: for example, the 1516 Coventry Smiths' *Item to a peynter for peyntyng & mendyng of herodes heed iiij*ᴶ.[55] The ambiguity – does *head* mean 'mask' or 'wig'? – can sometimes be resolved when one realises that wigs and other headgear are often attached to masks and the whole thing thought of as a unit: thus the wig part can be *mended* with hemp or flax, and the face part *painted*. The York *Creed Play* inventories provide a good example of how this headgear can be itemised yet classed together. In 1449 they list, among other items, *xiij dyademz cum vna larua aurata cum cheualerz* ('13 diadems with a gilt mask with wigs': *diadems* here probably means 'haloes', though not necessarily: we have removed a whole discussion of haloes, crowns, and diadems from this piece for later consideration). The gilt mask is for Christ, apparently supplied also with diadem and wig: the other twelve diadems and wigs are for the Apostles. It is then referred to as *xiij diademz cum les cheualerz* ('13 diadems with the wigs'). By 1464 they seem to have lost three headdresses: they list *x diademata pro christo & apostolis cum vna larua & alijs nouem cheuerons* ('10 diadems for Christ and the Apostles with one mask and nine other wigs'). Here it is taken for granted that the term 'mask' also subsumes 'wig', just as in the 1449 'wig' also included 'mask'. The assumption is that they were attached in some way, so as to make a composite headpiece.[56]

It also seems likely that the Norwich Grocers' *face and heare for the Father*[57] were attached to each other, though there is of course no proof of this. So may the York Mercers' 1433 *Array for ij euell saules … ij vesenes & ij Chauelers Array for ij gode saules … ij veserns & ij Cheuelers*: but after that follows a bewildering permutation of diadems, *chevalers*, and *veserns* for eleven (apparently) Apostles and Christ: Christ had *a diademe With a veserne gilted* but no *cheueler*, which seems odd when one considers his *Creed Play* costume – unless the *veserne* included the *cheueler*; three Apostles had diadems and *veserns* but no *cheuelers* either, while four had diadems and *Cheuelers of ₃alow* but no *veserns*, and the remaining four had no headgear at all. But then they did have four albs, whereas the seven Apostles with the headgear apparently had no clothes at all, which is a demonstration of the folly of assuming that even a formal legal inventory will provide a complete costume and props list for a play.[58]

As for another form of mask and wig, the chief character in *Wisdom who is Christ* wears *wpon hys hede a cheweler wyth browys*, presumably a half-mask with wig attached. Anima, who comes in next, wears *a cheueler lyke to Wysdom*, therefore presumably also *wyth browys*. It may be that the Five Inner Sense, who enter next also *wyth cheuelers*, were likewise masked: they sing *Nigra sum sed formosa*, but one cannot be sure from the dialogue whether they are referring to themselves or Anima. If they are referring to themselves, then they are making use of a familiar masquing convention, that of the black faced blackamore or *morisco*.[59] The whole play, which is more like a masque than the usual morality, is constructed round the concept of the soul as the image of God, and its potential disfigurement, and masks play a central part in it: but it is too complex to be treated here.

Wisdom wears *a berde of golde of sypres curlyed*.[60] *Visers* often also bore beards: these were particularly a feature of masquings and disguisings, as they helped to conceal the face, and therefore the identity of the wearer, more completely. At the famous Greenwich masquing of 1527 to entertain the French Ambassadors, there

> *sodenly entred sixe personages, appareled in cloth of siluer and blacke tinsell satin, and whodes on their heddes with tippetes of cloth of gold, there garmentes were long after the fashion of Iseland, and these persones had visers with syluer berdes, so that they were not knowne … (They danced with the ladies, and then the King and seven others came in) in masking apparel of cloth of gold and purple tinsell sattin, greate, lo**n**g, & large, after the Venecians fashio**n** & ouer them great robes, & there faces were visard with beardes of golde …*[61]

The hoods, which are described as *masking whoodes* and *meskelyng hoodes*, not only conceal more of the person, but also hide the strings which tie on the *visers* and beards.[62]

The use of *visers* with beards goes back at least as far as Edward III's Christmas masquing at Guildford in 1347, where *xiiij. similitudines facierum hominum cum barbis*[63] figure among the other *viseres* provided: and the Revels accounts speak frequently of such items as *j dozen of viserdes with shorte berdes yellowe and blacke haulfe a dozen of the one and half A dozen of the other at xx^d the pece*[64]. Bevington points out that beards by themselves were one of the most convenient ways of changing character in plays that called for doubling, and Bottom the Weaver seems to expect a repertoire of variously coloured beards to be part of any good amateur wardrobe.[65]

It may well be, returning to the distinction between *viser/face* and *head*, that the *viser* only covered the actor's face, whereas the *head* sat over the whole head, and might even rest of the shoulders, as a helmet would. The famous *Bodley Alexander* mummers[66] wear
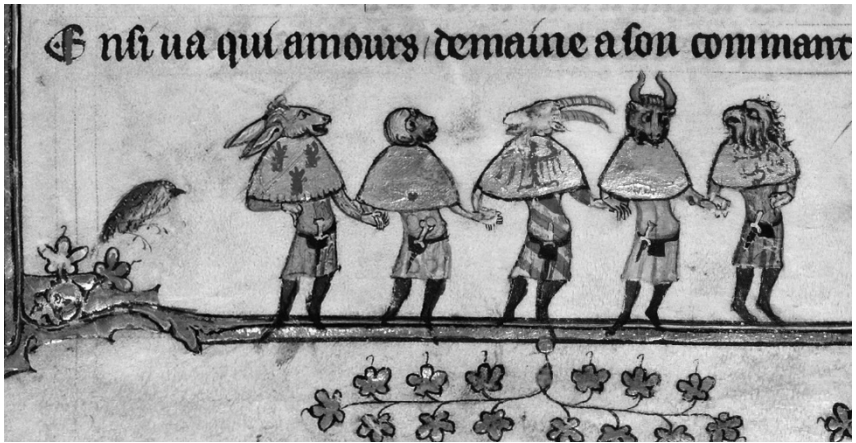
FIG. 4: Animal-headed mummers, Flemish c.1340 [MS Bodley 264]. Photo: Bodleian Library.

FIG. 5: Lion parade helmet, Aragonese, 1460s. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

this sort of complete headpiece, with the join at the neck concealed by a shoulder cape (Fig. 4). Animal heads are more realistic if the entire shape of the head, with horns, ears, and possibly mane, is taken into account. It is noticeable that in the mystery play accounts, the word *head* is mostly used of devil costumes.[67] Devils are more like animals in that the whole shape of the head, horns and all, contributes to the effect, and they would be more likely to have a full head rather than a mask-visor. When the Chester Innkeepers hired a devil costume from the Weavers in 1594, they paid *for the dye mans coyte and heade pese*:[68] two items distinct enough to be described separately. It is possible that there is an international distinction between the *ij dewell heddes* of the York Mercers' 1526 inventory and its *wesserons*, which are facemasks only, for the human characters.[69]

The Latin words for a *face* and *head* are *facies* and *caput*, and they seem to be used in the same sort of way as their English counterparts: loosely. The Wardrobe accounts of 1347 for Edward III's Christmas festivities at Guildford[70] seem at first to be making some kind of distinction between *viseres* and *capita*: they speak of *.xlij. viseres diuersorum similitudinum* ('42 *viseres* of various types'), and class them separately from *.xiiij. capita draconum … xiiij. capita pauonum cum alias … xiiij. capita cignorum cum alis …* ('14 dragons' heads … 14 peacocks' heads with wings … 14 swans' heads wth wings …'). The *viseres*, which are then bracketed together, are listed as

> .xiiij. similitudines facierum mulierum
> .xiiij. similitudines facierum hominum cum barbis   but then
> .xiiij. similitudines capitum angelorum de argento.

Were the silver angels' *heads* any different from the *faces* of the women and bearded men? And was there a distinction between the *viseres* and the *capita* of dragons, swans, and peacocks? The only obvious one is that the *viseres* are humanoid, and the *capita* are animals and birds and would therefore involve a more complete headpiece, especially since the birds also had wings. However, the next year at the Christmas *ludos* at Otteford *xij. Capita hominum et tot capita elephantum .xij. capita hominum cum alis vespertilionum . xij. capita de wodewose* and *xvij. capita virginum* ('12 heads of men and an equal number of heads of elephants; 12 heads of men with bats' wings; 12 *woodwose* heads; 17 maidens' heads') are all classed as *viseres*.[71] At Twelfth Night that year, at Merton, the Wardrobe provided *xiiij. viseres cum capitibus draconum et .xiij. viseres cum capitibus hominum habentibus dyademata* ('13 *viseres* with dragons' heads and 13 *viseres* with heads of men with diadems').[72] Here *viseres* and *capita* denote the same objects: are they qualified as *viseres* to show that they are headpieces to fit over head and face and used as masks, not just crests to sit on top of helmets?

The mention of helmets is apposite. How close is the connection between the *viser* which is a mask, and the *viser* which is the face-piece of a helmet? From the fourteenth century onwards, there seems to have been a connection between masquing and the

joust. Chambers notes how Edward III rode to the jousts at Cheap in 1331 in a company disguised as Tartars:[73] and two of the Wardrobe accounts which specify *viseres*, at Lichfield and at Canterbury in 1346, say that they are *pro hastiludiis*, or *pro tempore hastiludorum*. It then says that they are *pro ducibus dominabus et domicellis eis* and *pro Rege Comitibus Baronibus militibus et dominabus* ('For the dukes, ladies and their damsels' and 'for the King, Counts, Barons, Knights, and ladies').[74] It would seem therefore that the ladies as well as the knights are involved in the masquing, and that the *viseres* are not necessarily anything to do with the jousts themselves, but perhaps part of the processional entry to the jousts. However, just to confuse matters further, and Guildford and Otteford Christmas revels in 1347 and 1348 include *crestes* among the *capita* and *viseres ad faciendum ludos domini Regis ad festum Natalis domini* ('for the entertainment (?sports ?revels) of the Lord King at the feast of the Birth of Our Lord'), and the subject of the crests, legs shoed and upside-down, and mountains with rabbits, are the type of thing we see in the *Livre de Tournois* of René d'Anjou, a century later, surmounting tilting helms.[75]

Glynne Wickham has already pointed out the theatrical qualities of the tourney and its connection with masquing: 'costume designed to disguise the identity of the performer from the spectator'.[76] His brief suggestions need to be taken up and investigated further. Not only does the tilting helm produce something of the same effect as a full 'head' mask, its construction and decoration would have involved very much the same skills and materials as those we see in later maskmaking in the Revels. The description of the materials used in the funeral achievements crest of the Black Prince, leather, linen, gesso, gold-leaf, and the methods employed by the craftsmen who reproduced them in 1956 are identical with those used to make masks and property beasts both in the festivities of the 1340s and in the early sixteenth century.[77]

It should also be pointed out that when the Revels Office was first set up, its Master was made responsible *Aswell of all and singular masking garments with all thear furnyture, as allso of all bards for horsis, covering of bards and bassis of all kynds …* In other words, He was in charge of producing the 'costumes' for tourneys as well as for masquings and disguisings. This was true even before the official setting up of the Office in 1544/5.[78] The fifteenth century Burgundian fashion of turning every tourney into a chivalric pageant was adopted in England,[79] and sometimes it is difficult to tell when Hall, for example, is describing a disguising and when a tourney. In one example, which is clearly a tourney, the King and the Duke of Suffolk perform what is in essence a disguising before the jousting starts:

> *In the moneth of Maye the kynge and the newe Duke of Suffolke were defenders at*
> *the Tilt against al commers, the kynge was in a scopelary mantel and hat of clothe*
> *of syluer and like a whyte armite, and the duke appareilled like a blacke armite*

This image has been removed
for copyright reasons

FIG 6: Mummers with birds' heads: French, c.1540.
Copyright Ashmolean Museum Oxford.

all of blacke veluet,both ther Berdes were of Damaske syluer, and when they had ridden about the Tilt and shewed them selfes to the quene, then they threwe off their apparell …[80]

This kind of disguising is transferred into armour itself, and sometimes the parade helmet, and the grotesque helmet, which we shall look at briefly later, are halfway between armour and masquing apparel.

For example, one of the designs for the Otteford *viseres* was *.xij. capita lionum et hominum*.[81] We do not know where the two heads were to go: but one possibility is provided by the Revels *Maske of greekeworthies* some two hundred years later, in 1553. The property-maker John Carowe made *viij hedpeces … of paste and Cement mowlded lyke Lyons heddes the Mowthe devowringe the mannes hed helmetwise*.[82] Some idea of the effect can be gained from the splendid parade helmet, possibly Aragonese, and dating back to the 1460s, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Fig. 5).[83] A more homely version of the head devouring the man can be seen in a French drawing of mummers at a feast (possibly a dental students' rag) dated about 1540, in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Fig. 6).[84] Here the animals are domestic fowl, and the mummers' faces peer out through their beaks. Baltruiśaitis, in *Le Moyen Age Fantastique*, illustrates a sketch of a helmet with bats' wings (*cum alis vespertilionem*) and a face drawn on a visor, dated c.1510.[85]

By far the most common medieval and ecclesiastical Latin term for a mask is *larva*. The history of the meaning of the word, however, is going to take us necessarily in to the subject of medieval attitudes to masking, particularly in the context of folk ceremonies, carnivals, and disguisings, and hence probably to the reaction to the medieval devil-mask.

A classical *larva* is not a stage mask: the word for that is *persona*.[*6] It was originally a ghost, a spook: it operates on the folk-lore level. The *Larvae*, like the *Lemures*, seem to be associated with the spirits of the dead, and have to be got rid of with incantations involving beans and so forth.[87] Human beings can be frightened out of their wits or possessed by them, and are then called *larvatus*, 'bewitched'.[88] Isidore of Seville's definition of *larva* is

Larvas ex hominibus factos daemones aiunt, qui meriti mali fuerint. Quaram natura esse dicitur terrere parvulos et in angulis garrire tenebrosis.
('They say that *larvae* are evil spirits made from men, so deservedly evil were they. Their nature is said to be that they terrify small children, and twitter in dark corners.')[89]

It sounds as if they were used by nurses to terrify small children ('The *larva* will get you if you don't watch out'?). From this they became masks, but of the spooky Halloween

kind: deathsheads, witch-faces, the sort of thing you put on to make people jump. You could impolitely refer to someone whose face was a 'fright' as a *larva*.[90]

The word *masca*, as Enid Welsford points out in her lengthy etymological study,[91] seems to have had very much the same sort of history, except that the *masca* (more rarely the *mascus*) seems to have been rather a female Germanic spectre[92] than a (? Male) Latin one. Her earlier quotations, even the useful one from Aldhelm, which links both *larva* and *masca*, can be read as referring purely to nasty spirits:

> *Nam tremulos terret nocturnis larba latebris*
> *Quae solet in furvis semper garrire tenebris;*
> *Sic quoque mascarum facies cristata facessit,*
> *Cum larbam et mascam miles non horreat audax*

> ('For the *larva* which jibbers in murky shadows and hiding-places of the night frightens timid people; so too the crested face of the *mascae* causes (terror): however, the courageous warrior will not fear the *larva* or the *masca*.')[93]

However, both the *larva* and the *masca* here seem to be nasty spirits whose chief *raison d'être* is to frighten by making horrible faces: perhaps they are *just* horrible faces, producing a sort of Ghost Train effect? The *masca* seems to have a crest. It seems as if we are back to the Halloween face again. *Larva* and *masca* are both translated in the Old English glossaries by a variation on the word *grima*, which as readers of *Beowulf* know, means 'a face-mask, especially one on a helmet', intended, at least ritually, to terrify the enemy. The diminutive of *larva*, *larbula* (is it affectionate or propitiatory?) is glossed by *egisgrima* 'terror-?mask' and translated in the *Exeter Riddles* as *grima*.[94]

So far, then, the *larvae* are *daemones*, and they seem to have mask-like qualities. We do not, however, find the word *larva* being used where we would expect to find it, in the early Decretals against New Year celebrations. There is clearly masking of a kind: men are said to be putting on *capita bestiarum* ('heads of animals'), dressing, and presumably making-up as women (with their beards still showing), or daubing their faces with charcoal or dung or other unmentionable substances.[95] These are pagan practices, and so are naturally classified as works of the Devil,[96]or, more usually, referred to the service of the *daemones*, the evil spirits, who seem a much more local and superstitious company. But these *daemones* are not called *larvae*, nor is it suggested that the maskers are actually dressing up as *daemones*.

This is curious, because the next semantic stage shows that the *larva*, the mask, and the *daemon* have all been conflated: and slightly though not much later, the *daemon* begins to be translatable as 'devil'; more the lesser or attendant devil, but a devil all

the same. We mention this now, because it is relevant to our discussion of devil-masks later. It would however be misleading to suggest that in this context and at the beginning of the semantic stage, a *daemon* is always a devil: it is much more likely to be still one of the 'evil spirits' of folk-superstition.

By the eleventh century, then, there seems to have been a two-fold development. The word *larva* is now used to mean 'mask', and it seems taken for granted, at least by the Church, that anyone putting on such a mask, at least in this context, is actually dressing up as an evil spirit. Burchard of Worms, whose collection of decretals against, among other things, folk-festivals, was used by almost all subsequent writers on the subject, speaks of *larvas daemonum, quas vulgo Talamascas dicunt* ('masks of evil spirits, which they call Talamascas in the vernacular'). Ducange adds *apud Kilianum, Talmasche, est larva, ut Talamaschen, larvam induere* ('*Talamasche* is a mask: thus *Talmaschen*, to put on a mask').[97] The twelfth century glossator Hugutio, who provides definitions for most subsequent medieval glossaries (but who does not, unfortunately, appear in a modern edition), defines *larva* as *Simulacrum quod terret, quod vulgo dicitur Mascarel, quod apponitur faciei ad terrendos parvulos* ('A terrifying likeness, which is called *Mascarel* in the vernacular, which is put on the face to frighten small children').[98] Here the idea of *larva* as mask has been strangely combined with Isidore's definition of the *larva* as spook to suggest that one puts on a mask *in order to* frighten small children – was this a well known Christmas custom, or is the implication that only children would be frightened by such a transparent device?

The sense that a *larva* is essentially frightening carries on in the glossaries. It is interesting in this connection that Hugutio apparently also glosses *larva* as 'scaregrow', a definition which is preserved in the later medieval English-Latin glossaries: *skerele, larva*.[99] There is even a verse tag which encapsulates the three main meanings: *Larva fugat volucres, faciem tegit, est quoque demon* ('The *larva* scares away birds, covers the face, is also a demon').[100]

About the same time, we begin to find the decretals, which up to now have been concerned purely with superstitious folk-masking, being turned against the clergy themselves, who have invented their own version of Carnival:

> *ludi fiunt in eisdem ecclesiis theatrales, at non solum ad ludibriorum spectacula introducuntur in eis monstra larvarum, verum etiam in aliquibus anni festivitatibus, quæ continue natalem Christi sequuntur, diaconi, presbyteri ac subdiaconi vicissim insaniæ suæ ludibria exercere præsumunt, per gesticulationem suarum debacchationes obscænas in conspectu populi decus faciunt clericale vilescere …*

('They act stage-plays in the very churches themselves, and not only introduce into them monstrosities in the shape of masks, in order to make a public circus of an even more ridiculous kind, but also, in certain festivals of the year which follow immediately upon Christmas, the deacons, priests, and subdeacons take it upon themselves to practise yet again their wanton insanities, and with the obscene bacchanalia of their posturings, they cheapen the honour of the clergy in the sight of the people.')[101]

This letter of Pope Innocent III, repeated in the *Decretals* of Gregory IX (1227–41), was echoed with slight variations on through to the end of the Middle Ages.[102] It was particularly concerned with the Feast of Fools, and though in this decretal it is hard to see whether the *monstra larvarum* belong to this festivity or another, they reappear as an important feature of it in later pronouncements. It is emphasised that they are *monstrous vultus*, 'grotesque' or 'weird' faces, and Chambers suggests that they are still the beast-masks of the earlier carnivals.[103] However, we also find *larvae* appearing in a 1404 charivari, where they are described as *larvis in figura daemonum* ('*larvae* in the shape of demons');[104] and, reappearing for the first time after some centuries, as the masks worn by professional entertainers: Thomas of Cobham (thirteenth century) talks of the *histriones* who *transformant et transfigurant corpora sua … induendo horribiles larvas* ('change the shape and nature of their bodies … putting on terrifying masks').[105]

These uses of the word are all qualified by some adjective or phrase that makes it clear that they are grotesque: however, the next semantic change seems to be from *larva* as 'a frightening mask' to the neutral 'a mask, not necessarily frightening' that we see in some mystery play accounts, and occasionally in the more respectable disguisings, though there the word more commonly used, as we have seen, is *viser*.[106] Unfortunately the two possible significant quotations could be interpreted either way: the Beverley records of a *larvatorum … repræsentatio* ('a representation in masks') of the *Resurrection*,[107] and Bromyard's likening of fashionable ladies to the devil's masks:

> *laruis enim utuntur duo hominum genera, uidelicet ludentes, & spoliantes. Ludentes enim in ludo, qui vulgariter dicitur miraculos, laruis utuntur, sub quibus personæ non apparent, quæ ludunt. Sic dæmones quorum ludus est animas perdere, & peccato decipere, in quo ludo laruis, id est curiose ornatis, & choreizantibus utuntur, quorum pedes ad malum currunt. Prouerb. I. Latrones etiam spoliantes laruis utuntur, ne cognoscantur …*
>
> ('For those two types of men use masks, that is, those who play, and those who steal. For players in the play that is called *miracles* in the vernacular make use of masks, beneath which the persons who are playing

are not visible. So do the devils, whose game is to damn souls and lead them astray with sin: in which game they make use of masks, that is, the fashionably dressed, and those who dance in caroles, 'whose feet run to evil' (*Proverbs* 1:16). Burglars too use masks, so as not to be recognised …')[108]

The mention of devils suggests something horrific: but Bromyard's image is much more in the line of the common sermon comparison of the heavily made-up woman as wearing a mask, and surely the logic here is that the beautiful mask is hiding an ugly face?

It may be that originally professional entertainers wore only grotesque masks, but that with the coming of *miracles* the range of characters was naturally extended to the good and beautiful as well, and so the word *larva* extended its semantic field. It may also have something to do with learned usage in commentaries on the classical theatre, who had by now to use *larva* for the tragic mask, because *persona* by now meant 'character', 'individual', or 'hypostasis'. So Hugutio, despite his gloss on *larva*, refers to *personae larvati*, 'masked characters';[109] though since he is talking of the tragic theatre, the sense of 'horrifying' may still linger in *larvatus*. It is noticeable that Lydgate's elaboration of Hugutio's definition talks of

> men *gastful of her cheris*
> *Disfigurid* her facis with viseris[110]

Does *gastful* here still have the sense of 'uncanny, awe-inspiring' that its connection with *ghost* would suggest? The quotations illustrating *gastful* in *MED* seem mostly concerned with the terror inspired by the Day of Judgement.

By the fifteenth century, the word *larva* is glossed in the dictionaries as *visere* and by the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is being related to masques. A small collection of definitions throws an interesting light on the semantic field:

Skerele: *larua, -ue.*
 Vysere: *larua, -ue.*   *Promptorium Parvulorum* (1440)

Larua ue. est simulacrum quod terret: q*uod* vulgo solet dici mascara quia apponitur faciei ad terrendu*m* pueros. Item dicitur maleficus incantator et vmbra demonu*m*.
Larua dicitur imago qua*m* quis portat ante vultu*m*. a*n*gli*c*e vyser.
Larua fugat volucrem: faciem tegit est quoque demon.
                                                        Ortus Vocabulorum (c.1450)

Hec larva,   a visere.
        a dewylle
        a selerelle (*skerele*, scarecrow)

Larva fugit volucres, faciem tegit, est quoque demon

Pictorial Vocabulary of the Fifteenth Century

Larua, a spyrite, whiche apperethe in the nyght time. Some do call it a hegge, some a goblyn. Also a masker, or he that weareth a visour, it is somtyme taken for the same visour.

Laruatus, he that is feared with a spirite, & is become madde. It sommetimes signyfieth a masker.

Thomas Elyot *Dictionary* (1538)

Maske or maske player. *Larua æ. Laruatus*, *ti. Personatus et Laruatus*, *a*, *um*, he that is feared with Maskes, or maskynge.[111]

Richard Huloet *Abecedarium Anglico Latinum* (1552

If there is one attitude running through these definitions, it is that *larvae* are uncanny and frightening: even to the extent of the very curious definition of *larvatus* in Huloet! We can see that this would be so with the *daemones*: probably also with Herod and his kind: but what about the gold *larva* of God and his Apostles in glory? Can we extrapolate from the dictionary definition of *larva* to suggest that they too appear uncanny, or at least awe-inspiring?

2. Purposes and effects of masking

We now come to the question of why masks were used in the cycle plays. Can we tell what the purpose of these masks was, and what were the assumptions behind their use? There are various kinds of evidence about attitudes to masks and masking in the late Middle Ages which may help to clarify the background, but they throw rather little light on the mysteries themselves since they are all concerned with different, and often more learned use of masks. (We look at these in an *Appendix* to this article.) What does seem to emerge is that there are several different masking traditions active during the period. While there must be a certain amount of overlap between them, both from the point of view of the maskers and of the audiences, we cannot safely treat them as a unified tradition assuming that they had the same purposes and effects. Masks were used for very different reasons. They might be used simply to indicate a physical fact as in the Cornish saint's play *Mariasek*: when the Emperor Constantine is stricken with leprosy, a stage direction indicates *a vysour aredy apon Constantyn ys face*, and when the leprosy is cured, another stage direction reads *yevysour away*.[1] In the morality plays, on the other hand, masks are used as moral emblems. A mask will provide a physical symbol for a spiritual state, usually a change of state, and must be read symbolically. So the King in *The Cradle of Security* has a pig's mask put on his face when he falls asleep in the arms of Pride, Covetousness, and Luxury;[2] Wit in *Wit and Science* has his face painted

with spots by Idleness; [3] and Natural Law in Bale's *Three Laws* is painted leprously to signify his corruption by Idolatry and Sodomy.[4]

In the tradition of masquing the masks seem to serve a different function again. There the masks are exotic, indicating the strange, mysterious, and foreign. Possibly more important, the mask is also used as a disguise. In 'informal' masquing, forbidden by the decretals, the mask is specifically worn to conceal, and so protect, the wearer's identity. In more 'formal' court masquing, the audience are tacitly invited to penetrate the disguise. Although the convention is that the maskers are unknown strangers, they are usually in face well-known to the audience, and the masque itself often leads up to the unmasking of the performers, as in Henry VIII's masque at Greenwich in 1527:

> and when they had daunsed there fill, then the quene plucked of the kynges visar, & so did the Ladies the visars of the other Lordes, & then all were knowe*n*[5]

The tantalising relationship between the unknown mask and the concealed face behind it is clearly an important element in masquing.

These uses of masks are clearly quite different from each other, relying on different assumptions. When considering the masks in the mysteries we need to try to evaluate what particular kinds of attitudes were being activated. This is, of course, fairly difficult since there is very little external evidence which would give us an idea of the assumptions involved. We have to depend almost solely on the play texts themselves, perhaps taking into account any analogous theatrical traditions.

The one reference we do have to the actual size of masks in the mysteries, which is almost contemporary with the cycles themselves, is the well-known stanza of the 'post-Reformation' Chester *Banns* recorded by Rogers in 1609. This stanza discusses the use of the gold God-mask. It might appear to be a most seductive piece of evidence since it does, apparently for the first time, talk about the purpose and effect of putting God into a mask. What the *Banns* actually say is slightly confusing in detail, although the general drift is fairly clear. The audience are warned not to expect the sophisticated techniques of the contemporary theatre. For then, we are told

> shoulde all those p*er*sones that as godes doe playe
> In Clowdes come downe w*i*th voyce and not be seene
> ffor noe man can p*ro*portion that godhead I saye
> To the shape of man face. nose and eyne
> But sethence the face gilte doth disfigure the man y*at* deme
> A Clowdy coueringe of the man, a Voyce onlye to heare
> And not god in shape or person to appeare[6]

The terms of this passage are, in themselves, not very easy to follow. The exact significance and stress of *proportion*, *shape of man*, *disfigure*, and so on, are difficult to determine. The last three lines of the extract are perhaps the most potentially

ambiguous. One thing to point out is that *disfigure* at this period appears to mean no more than 'disguise'. It does not convey the later connotations of our *deform*, but seems to have a neutral sense nearer to our 'un-figure' or 'alter the shape of'. Difficulties with punctuation also make the last three lines hard to assess. What they seem to be saying, is , 'since the golden face conceals the identity of the actor, think of that golden face as if it were a cloud machine concealing the whole man, so that we only hear the voice of God coming from this cloud cover (or mask), and do not see God himself supposedly appearing physically on stage'.

Even having sorted out the verbal difficulties of the passage, it is still fairly hard to follow its implications. It is wrong, it suggests, for any man to try to 'act' or imitate God, because no human being can *proportion* the Divinity. But, it tells us, we can get round this problem if we think of the mask or gilded face as an equivalent to the modern cloud-machine which completely hides the actor, allowing a 'voice of God' to speak. This comparison urges that the mask, like the cloud-machine, must be thought of as completely abolishing the man, the actor himself. We do not see him representing or pretending to *be* God, but only hear the voice speaking God's words. The argument then goes on a further stage. Even the mask itself is not representing God mimetically, as an actor might. It is an emblem or sign, like the cloud-machine, which stands for God without actually imitating Him. That is why we do not see God 'in *shape* or person to appear'.

Interesting as this stanza is, though, it offers a view of the God-mask, and perhaps even of masked acting in general, which may be only partially helpful in illuminating the practice of the cycle plays. Firstly it shows an uneasiness about the appearance of God on the stage that seems foreign to the mysteries, and in face to almost all medieval drama. The sense of impropriety in human actors playing God seems to be largely a post-Reformation, even a post-Renaissance development. During the Middle Ages generally, there is hardly any argument against it (except from the Lollards[7]), and the portrayal of God on stage seems to have excited no more, if no less, controversy than the portrayal of God in pictures. This is true not only of the mystery cycles, but also of the early moralities like *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Everyman*. Nor does it seem specifically a Roman Catholic attitude, for it continues well into the sixteenth century, after the Reformation. John Bale's plays, though violently anti-Catholic, introduce *Pater Coelestis*, *Deus Pater*, and Christ as characters without any apparent qualms, Christ also being ready to address the audience invoking their devotion to himself.[8] The fragments of the Protestant play *Christ's Resurrection* dramatise Christ, even inventing for him a non-biblical scene which is only alluded to in the Gospels, and thus going further than most of the cycles in the portrayal of God on stage.[9] And even as late as (probably) the 1580s, the 'part of God in a playe' known as the *Processus Satanae* was copied.[10] The play concerns an investigation into the Redemption prompted by Satan and carried out

by the Four Daughters of God. So the copying of the actor's part seems to imply performance of a play, perhaps in the 1580s, which is not a cycle play, and therefore traditional, but nevertheless portrays God as a character without any noticeable hesitation. The Chester *Banns* therefore suggest a *religious* uncertainty behind the use of masks in this case which does not appear to have been operative in medieval performances.

This leads on to a more general aspect of the *Banns*' argument. The sense of unease over the propriety of a human actor impersonating God, and the way in which the mask is justified, suggests a self-consciousness about masking itself. This is seen in the clear distinction that is made between the man who is the actor and the mask that is to conceal him. The words of the *Banns*, explaining the 'proper' reaction to the mask, imply that the audience are in face likely to be aware of looking behind the mask and what it represents to the face beneath, and are aware of a tension between the two.

Although this is an attitude which does exist in the Middle Ages in relation to masques and disguisings, it does not seem to have applied to the use of masks in the mystery plays. There is plenty of evidence for such a response to other forms of masking. The decretals condemning disguising, and the descriptions of court masquing, all reveal an interest in the concealing properties of masks. The audience are aware that the mask is a 'false' face hiding the 'true' face beneath. (In folk masking, however, the maskers seem to have used the mask as a cue to abandon their normal selves.) The terms *disguise* and *disfigure* themselves suggest a recognition of the presence of the usual *guise* or *figure* beneath the mask. This interest in mask as concealment or disguise has persisted in the post-Renaissance European theatre, right through until the twentieth century. The interest seems to be most often in the relationship between the mask and the face behind it. This tends to encourage the audience to look behind the mask to try to discover the man beneath. Alternatively the interest may be in the sense of trapping stasis that the mask imposes on the character. By its very nature the use of a mask implies lack of character development. While this is quite natural to, for example, the allegorical personifications of the morality drama, or the traditionally fixed biblical or moral roles of the characters of the cycles, it is something that the twentieth century tends to find worrying, both dramatically and psychologically. The early twentieth century interest in masks, and their use in plays by playwrights like Pirandello, Yeats, and O'Neill, concentrates on the face of masking itself, as did the masques of the medieval and Tudor period.

But, as we said, the use of masks in the cycle plays does not really seem to belong to this tradition. Partly because of their popular, 'native' element, and partly because of their religious material, they come much closer to ancient traditions of masking such as we see in Greek, Roman, Oriental, Asian, and African popular religious theatre.[11] These traditions do not seem to encourage their audiences to look behind the mask, or

recognise a tension between it and the actor. The concentration is on the character, often a god, mythical hero, or evil spirit, who is represented by the mask, not on its relationship to the wearer. Once the mask is on, the actor as an individual man simply disappears behind or into it: only the character is left. This can be seen from the texts and performances of these dramas, as one who has seen the demonstrative masks of Kabuki theatre, Javanese dance drama, or perhaps even reconstructions of masked classical Greek plays will know. As John Jones has remarked of the ancient Greek theatre, the masks are used to reveal, and not to conceal the face: 'They did not owe their interest to the further realities lying behind them, because they declared the whole man. They stated: they did not hint or hide'.[12] This seems much closer to the mask tradition of the mystery cycles. The texts of the plays suggest no self-consciousness about the masks at all. They demonstrate a character, or an idea: they do not conceal or disguise anything.

All this seems to be congruent with the whole medieval interest in emblem, sign, and figure. In the drama, as in painting, visual details are rarely simply decorative, but almost always semantically expressive, designed to explain ideas and reveal meanings. Obviously this is particularly clear in the moralities' use of 'emblem' masks, or the sometimes allegorical masks of court shows, both specifically designed to express moral ideas: so Discord may wear a head with snakes, or Dissimulation may wear a double-faced mask. But this use of visual symbols clearly carries over into such things as the use of attributes for saints and apostles, which express ideas more than naturalistic facts. The visual conventions associated with the biblical figures of the mystery cycles appear to have the same kind of explanatory function. When Pauper explains the significance of the image of the Virgin in *Dives and Pauper* he interprets all the conventional iconographic features as emblematically expressive:

> þe ymage of oure lady is peynt wyt a child in here lefght arm in in tokene
> þat she is modyr of God, and wyt a lylye or ellys a rose in here ryght hond
> in tokene þat she is maydyn wytouten ende and flour of all wymmen[13]

Presumably this, too, is the function of the masks. They are used to express an idea rather than an actuality. And it is an idea about the character that is portrayed, not about the actor and his relationship to the mask. When the angels wear haloes, when God, Christ, and the exalted Apostles wear masks, these presumably have the same effect as the finery of the saints in church paintings. And *Dives and Pauper* makes it clear that this purpose is the symbolic expression of ideas. When Dives asks Pauper about the Apostles' haloes, 'Quhat betokennyn þe rounde thynggys þat been peyntyd on here hedes or abouten here hedys?', Pauper replies, 'þey betokenyn þe blisse þat þey han wytouten ende, for as þat rounde þyng is endeles, so is here blisse endeles'.[14]

Sometimes Pauper will offer different significations for the same visual conventions, as with the splendid robes of the saints. When Dives objects, 'þey weryn non so gay in clothyng as þey been peyntyd', he replies, 'þat is soth. þe ryche peynture betokeny₃t þe blysse þat þey been now inne, nought þe aray þat þey haddyn vpon erthe'.[15] Yet later he puts forward a different interpretation, one that makes particularly clear that the aim of this splendour is not naturalistic authenticity:

> DIVES: I suppose þat þey seyntys in herthe weryn nought arayid so gay, wyt shoon of syluer and clothys of gold of baudekyn, or velvet, ful of brochis and rynggys and precious stonys … for þey shuldyn an had mechil cold on here feet and sone a been robbyd of here clothis.

> PAUPER: Soth it is þat þet wentyn nought in sueche aray. Neuereles, al þis may be doon for deuocion þat meen han to þe seyntys and to shewyn mannys deuocioun.[16]

Perhaps all this goes some way towards suggesting the general purposes behind the use of masks in the mystery cycles. But how far is it possible to gauge the effects, both on the overall dramatic spectacle and on the meaning of particular plays? Again, lack of direct evidence is a problem. But there are some fairly obvious suggestions that we might make from working with masks on stage. When an actor wears a mask, his face is not available to convey expression. This is a banal but important factor, since nowadays, and especially since the development of films and television, we are all conditioned to acting with our faces. When the face is hidden all expression has to come from the body, the stance and movement of the actor, and the way he tilts the mask. This clearly will tend to slow actors down. All movements become significant, so it is hard to make trivial or unnecessary gestures. The actor's gestures therefore become more emphatic, and larger. He uses the positioning of his whole body more deliberately. Another important consideration for the actor is that there is less sense of personal exposure. His own personality is less directly engaged with the audience, and indeed even with the character he plays. Even more than an unmasked actor he needs to concentrate on what the audience sees, rather than on what he himself feels, because his own feelings will not be transparently reflected in his face. Because of this the whole acting process seems to move slightly nearer towards being a dance that has been learned, or a demonstration. There is a formal quality to masked acting, and a certain necessary stylisation.

This is not to say that masks are inexpressive: while a mask can express stasis very powerfully, a good mask can also, if required, be astonishingly expressive and moving. Slight movements and tilts of the head alter the light on the mask, and consequently its expression, quite profoundly. No is it to suggest that masked actors are not emotionally involved in their acting. There are useful contemporary remarks on the masked actors

of Ancient Greece and Rome that make this clear. In Plato's *Ion* an actor himself states, 'At the tale of pity my eyes are filled with tears, and when I speak of horrors, my hair stands on end, and my heart throbs'. He also shows how emotionally affecting such acting can be, for he goes on to describe the response of the audience. 'I look down on them from the stage and behold the various emotions of pity, wonder, sternness, stamped upon their countenances when I am speaking'.[17] Cicero also remarks on the actor's emotional commitment to the part he plays in the *De Oratore: tamen in hoc genere saepe ipse vidi, ut ex persona mihi ardere oculi hominis histrionis viderentur spondalli dicentes* ('On the stage I myself have often observed the eyes of the actor through his mask appear inflamed with fury when he was speaking these verses').[18] As this confirms, masked acting can be just as expressive, and just as emotional, as unmasked acting: but the emotion itself tends to be formalised, stylised, and externalised. It becomes, as it were, a public and shared statement rather than a personal feeling of the actor.

The use of masks therefore appears to dictate a particular kind of stylisation. But what is especially interesting in the cycle plays is that the masked actors are moving among unmasked figures. While we know too little about medieval conventions of acting to know what difference this would make, it seems quite possible that the formality of masked acting combined and interacted with a more naturalistic mode. This probability is confirmed by various other evidence. We can tell from the Guild records that a good part of the visual effect of the mystery plays was non-naturalistic: the Virgin, even in the most ordinary activities, may appear in a crown;[19] the Tree of Paradise is hung with figs, almonds, dates, raisins, and prunes as well as apples;[20] Peter and Christ may wear gilded wigs; and Christ himself at the Resurrection may appear in a leather suit under his red cloak, a suit which signifies nakedness rather than simply using the actor's own body.[21] As with the masks, these visual details are expressive rather than gratuitously ornamental, signifying various spiritual ideas. Yet this overall stylisation contains details which can themselves be domestic, homely, and familiar: the real baby paid for by the Coventry Weavers, the domestic gifts given by the Shepherds to the infant Christ, or the ropes, hammers, and tools used by the soldiers at the Crucifixion. Stylisation ranges from the most formal and exotic, to the most ordinary and familiar.

Similarly the texts of the plays themselves seem to call for varying styles of acting. We can move from the stately oratory of God to the virulent colloquial abuse of Cain, from the moving seriousness of the Annunciation to the earthy comedy of Joseph's Doubts, from the down-to-earth violence of the Soldiers to the highly formalised laments of the Maries, without any sense of discontinuity. Even within the same character the Shepherds can move from naturalistic grumbling to learned exposition, Mrs. Noah from vulgar irresponsibility to docile humility, without any apparent unease. All this supports the evidence of the masks – that ornate stylisation deliberately coexists

with naturalism to form a composite style. This appears to be a characteristic of most 'folk' theatre, and it may well be that the cycle plays with their popular, communal, and seasonal elements, do in some ways come closer to the dramatic traditions of the folk theatre than to more learned forms. A recent essay on the folk theatre has pointed out, 'In the folk theatre the simultaneous use of the most diverse styles in the same play is a widespread phenomenon, a special theatrical device of form'.[22] This is clearly equally true of the mysteries, and the use of masks seems to be a significant element in this assured exploitation of diverse theatrical styles.

<div align="center">(CONTINUED)</div>

ABBREVIATIONS

Plays

Chester Plays: R.M. Lumiansky & David Mills *The Chester Mystery Cycle* EETS SS 3 (1974).

Coventry Plays: Hardin Craig *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays* EETS ES 87 (second edition 1957).

Digby Plays: F.J. Furnivall *The Digby Plays* EETS ES 70 (1896).

Ludus Coventrie: K.S. Block *Ludus Coventriæ* EETS ES 120 (1922).

Macro Plays: Mark Eccles *The Macro Plays: The Castle of Perseverance, Wisdom, Mankind* EETS 262 (1969).

Non-Cycle Plays: Norman Davis *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments* EETS SS 1 (1970).

Towneley Plays: George England *The Towneley Plays* EETS ES 71 (1897).

York Plays: Lucy Toulmin Smith *York Plays* (New York, Russell & Russell, 1963, reprint of 1885).

Records and Accounts

Brewer: *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509–47* edited by J. Brewer, J. Gairdner, & R. Brodie (London 1862–1910) 21 volumes.

Feuillerat Elizabeth: *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels, in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* edited by A Feuillerat (*Materialen zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas* edited W. Bang, 21: Louvain 1908, reprint Kraus, Liechtenstein, 1968).

Feuillerat Losely: *Documents relating to the Revels at Court in the time of King Edward VI, and Queen Mary, from the Losely Manuscripts* edited by A. Feuillerat (*Materialien* etc. 44: Louvain 1914, reprint Kraus 1968).

Hall: Edward Hall: *Hall's Chronicle: containing the History of England during the Reign of King Henry the Fourth, and the Succeeding Monarchs, to the end of the reign of King Henry the Eighth* (London 1809, reprint AMS Press, New York, 1965).

Ingram: R.W. Ingram '"To find the players and all that longeth therto": Notes on the Production of Medieval Drama at Coventry' *The Elizabethan Theatre* 5 edited by G.R. Hibbard (1975) 17–44.

Nicholas: Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas 'Observations on the Institutions of the Order of the Garter' *Archaeologia* 31 (1846).

REED Chester: *Records of Early English Drama: Chester* edited by Lawrence M. Clopper (University of Toronto Press, 1979).

REED York: *Records of Early English Drama: York* edited by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (University of Toronto Press, 1979) 2 volumes.

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Axton: Richard Axton *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (London, Hutchinson UL, 1974).

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Chambers Folk Play: E.K. Chambers *The English Folk Play* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1933).

Cohen: Gustave Cohen *Le Livre de Conduite du Régisseur … pour le Mystère de la Passion joué à Mons en 1501* (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg 23, Strasbourg, 1925).

Craik: T.W. Craik *The Tudor Interludes* (Leicester UP, 1967).

Newton: Stella Mary Newton *Renaissance Theatre Costume and the Sense of the Historic Past* (London, Andre Deutsch, 1975).

Nicoll: Allardyce Nicoll *Masks, Mime and Miracles* (London, Harrap, 1931).

Welsford: Enid Welsford *The Court Masque* (New York, Russell & Russell, 1962: reprint of 1927 edition).

Woolf: Rosemary Woolf *The English Mystery Plays* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

Young: Karl Young *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1933) 2 volumes.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. *Sharp* 28, 31 (dates 1477, 1490, 1494, 1498, 1516, 1547); *Coventry Plays* 86 (1544).

2. *Sharp* 69, 70 (1537, 1540, 1556, 1568); see also Cappers, *Ingram* 36–7.

3. *REED York* 55.   4. *Feuillerat Losely* 116.

NOTES TO 'TERMINOLOGY'

1. *Feuillerat Losely* 14, 31. For *masks* as 'masques': Sir Thomas Cawarden, the first Master of the Revels, is described in his patent as *Magister … iocorum reuelorum et mascorum omnium et singulorum nostrorum vulgariter nuncupatorum reuelles and Maskes*: *Feuillerat Elizabeth* 53 (11th March 1544/5).

2. *Feuillerat Losely* 5.   3. *Feuillerat Losely* 73, 200; 110.

4. *Feuillerat Losely* 66.   5. *REED Chester* 109.

6. *Sharp* 29.

7. *Sharp* 28: *to a peynter for peyntyng the ffauchon & herods face x^d*.

8. A.D. Mills 'A Corpus Christi Play and other Dramatic Activities in Sixteenth Century Sherborne, Dorset' *Malone Society Collections* 9 (1976) 12. See *Anderson* 27 for the gift of Canynge to the Easter Sepulchre of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, in 1470, *Item, the Fadre, the Crowne and Visage …* She concludes that the visage was gilded.

9. E.g. Lydgate's translation of Deguileville's *Pelerinage de la Vie Humaine*, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* edited by F.J. Furnivall and K.B. Locock EETS ES 77, 83, 92 (1899, 1901, 1904): his *Old Venus* carries in her hand *a ffals vysage … fful brood and large To-fforn hyr Eyen, lyk Atarge* (lines 13092–4; see also line 13365). This mask is *In ffrench ycallys 'Farderye' … And in ynglysshe … poppyng* (lines 13371–3). The comparison between cosmetics and masks is a stock one in anti-feminist literature; see page 17.

For examples of the use of *faulx visage*, see *Ducange* sv *Visagium falsum*, *Godefroy* sv *visage*. Beside *faulx visage*, it was also called *fol visage*.

10. *Non-Cycle Plays* xxxv.   11. *Sharp* 69.

12. *Sharp* 69.   13. *Sharp* 70.

14. *Sharp* 28.   15. *Sharp* 28 and *Coventry Plays* 86.

16. *Sharp* 35: see also *Coventry Plays* 90: 1502 *item paid for pyntyng off ther fasus ij^d*; 1548 *payd to the paynter for payntyng the players facys iiij^d*.

17. *REED Chester* 53, 67, 70, 73, 75, 78, 86, 88, 91. For the dating of the account on 53, dated by Clopper 1553/4, 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.

18. *REED Chester* 50.   19. Mills (see note 8) 12.

20. *REED Chester* 92: for painting costumes and props, see 107, 109 etc.

21. *REED York* 55, 78, 98; *Non-Cycle Plays* xxxv; Mills *Sherborne* 12; Diana Wyatt 'The Pageant Waggon, Beverley' *METh* 1:2 56–7 – the *ij visers* may be for God and the angel.

22. *REED York* 55 (1433 inventory).   23. *Chambers* 1 394 note 3.

24. Alan Brody *The English Mummers and their Plays* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) 17 note D.

25. The references are almost too numerous to mention. See e.g. *Chambers Folk Play* 85, 127, 164, 200; A.R. Wright & T.E. Lones *British Calendar Customs* (Kraus Reprint, 1968) volume 2 238–9; R.J.E. Tiddy *The Mummers' Play* (OUP 1923, reprint Chicheley, Minet, 1972) 75–6, 113, 180, 189, black mask 224, mask and *red* face 248; Christina Hole *English Custom and Usage* (London, Batsford, 1941–2) 29–30; Roy Judge *The Jack in the Green* (Brewer for the Folklore Society Mistletoe Series, 1979) on the chimney sweeps' May Day: faces either

naturally black or 'marked with chalk' 10, or when playing the girl, 'with a great profusion of brick-dust by way of paint' 11; John Harland and T.T. Wilkinson *Lancashire Folk-Lore* (London, Frederick Warne, 1867) 229–31.

26. Joseph Strutt *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (third edition, London, Thomas Tegg, 1841) 251. The quotation, not very accurately transcribed, is from Alexander Barclay's translation of Brandt's *Navis Stultorum*, printed, with Latin text and English translation, by Richard Pynson in 1509, fol. Ccxlv^r. The Latin reads

> *Induit hic laruam; turpes hic sumit amictus;*
> *Ille linit faciem: contaminatque fuco.*

Barclay translates *linit* 'he besmears, bedaubs' and *fuco* 'with paint, rouge' as 'he paints the face with soot'. He may have misread *fucus* as *fumus* or *fuscus*, which suggests both that he was used to blackened carnival faces, and that the strong 'masking is the work of the devil' theme of the passage has also suggested black faces to him: *They ar more fowle / than the blacke Deuyll of hell*.

27. Barclay fol. ccxliiii^r.

28. *Godefroy* scc *mascarure*, *maschurer*, *masquier*, *masquillier*. *Welsford* 92 note 2 rejects the connection between OE *mæscre* 'spot', OF *maschurer*, and *mascara* 'mask', but they were certainly connected by the people who used them.

29. *NED Supplement* sv *mascara*: used as stage make-up, 1890; of cinematic make-up, 1922; or ordinary cosmetics, 1927.

30. *Godefroy* sv *maschurer*: Du Verdier, 1616.

31. See W.W. Skeat *Etymological Dictionary* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1888) sv *grime*. He thinks 'the peculiar sense is Scandinavian': but Jan De Vries *Nederlands Etymologisch Woordenboek* (Brill, 1971) sv *grijm* suggests a native (Dutch) development: 'The sense "masker" has developed from "daubing the face in order to make oneself unrecognisable" (as is often the case in folk-customs), so that we can start from a base-meaning "besmear, bedaub"' (*De bet. 'masker' is ontstaan uit de van een 'besmering van het gezicht om sich onherkenbaar te maken' (zoals vaak in volksgebruiken het gevaal is), zodat wij moeten uitgaan van een grondbet. 'besmeren'*). The *MED* gives the earliest English instance of *grime* as ?1475, the *Catholicon Anglicum* dated by its *EETS* editor as 1483 – see note 111).

   For a comprehensive collection of black faced maskers, see M.J. Rudwin *The Origin of the German Carnival Comedy* (New York, Stechert, 1920) 34–6.

32. Quoted by *Welsford* 40 (line 1395).

33. The two play-scenes are both reproduced in black and white: *The Play of Valentine and Orson* as a woodcut, *The Dirty Bride* as an engraving: see H. Arthur Klein *Graphic Worlds of Pieter Bruegel the Elder* (New York, Dover, 1963) PL 25 & 26. Both are reversed and slightly adapted. The Emperor figure in *Orson* wears either a very loose mail coif or a false beard; Orson is wearing a scaly costume and pounds of hair; the white-faced figure has become black-faced. In *The Dirty Bride*, the originally white-faced figures have hatched black faces which suggest stocking masks; the 'musician' on the far right has a false nose. The drawing for *The Dirty Bride* (also known as *Mopsus and Nysa*) is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and reproduced in Ludwig Munz *The Drawings of Bruegel* (London, Phaidon, 1961) 150, dated about or after 1566.

   The Coviello mask is taken from F. Bertelli *Il Carnevale italiano mascherato* (Venice, 1642), reproduced in Pierre Duchartre *The Italian Comedy* (New York, Dover, 1966) 44.

34. *Chambers* 1 82 note 4.

35. A.Le Coy de la Marche *Anecdotes Historiques Légendes et Apologues tirés de recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon, Dominicain du XIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1877) 231, *De vano ornatu*. De Bourbon died c.

1260. For *artefice* as a word for 'mask', see Tobler-Lommatzch sv *artefice* and *Roman de la Rose* 8940, which compares painted women to *artefices*. *Ducange* glosses this 'oeuvre d'art'.

36. *Cohen* 411.　　　　　　37. Lists of pigments: *Cohen* xliii, 495, 517, 521, 532, and *passim*.

38. *Feuillerat Loseley* 71, 109, 137, 219. For the various pigments listed, see *NED*; Pliny *Natural History* translated by H. Rackham (Loeb, London, Heinemann, 1961) volume 9, Book 33, chapter 36–40 (reds), 56 (ochre), 57 (dark blue); Book 34, chapter 5 (white lead or *cerussa*); Book 35, chapter 11–31 (pigments used in painting). Pliny's work is digested in encyclopaedias, such as Isidore *Etymologiae* edited by W.M. Lindsay (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911) Book 19, section 17 *De coloribus*; Bartholomeus Anglicus *De rerum proprietatibus* (English translation by John of Trevisa, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975) Book 19, chapter 1–37. For late medieval treatises on the art of painting and making pigments, together with a useful glossary on the names of the various pigments, see Mary P. Merrifield *Original Treatises on the Arts of Painting* (New York, Dover, 1967, reprint of 1849 edition) 2 volumes.

39. For an excellent account of Elizabethan cosmetics and the attitudes towards their use, see Carroll Camden *The Elizabethan Woman* (London, Cleaver-Hume Press, 1952).

　　　It is hard to find out what medieval women used as cosmetics, as moralists tend to show a becoming ignorance, and just use general terms: but since both classical writers like Martial, Plautus, Juvenal, Horace and of course Ovid *De medicamine faciei* and the Elizabethan authorities quoted by Camden speak of the same things, one can assume a continuity. In fact, the dreadful choice between *ceruse* or Spanish chalk (depending on the weather forecast) goes back to Martial *Epigrams* 2 41:

　　　quam cretata timet Fabula nimbum
　　　cerussata timet Sabella solem[12]

For soot as eyeblack, see Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 3 203 *Nec pudor est oculos tenui signare favilla*. For these materials bought as pigments, see *Feuillerat Loseley* 109: *Seryws iiij^b at viij^d lb ... Spanishe white xxxvj^{lb} at j^d lb* and our notes 37 and 38.

40. *Young* 1 520–1.　　　　　　41. *Newton* 213–4.

42. *Newton* 151–2.　　　　　　43. Merrifield *Treatise* 190, 302, 470–2.

44. *Feuillerat Loseley* 109: *goulde foile and grene foyle ij dozen xij^d. Tynne foyle iiij xvj^d ... horsedewe* (arsedine, tinsel) *iiij^{lb} xiij^s iiij^d Siluer ij^c ij^s viij^d partie goulde j^c di iij^s*. Coloured paper (red, green, gold, silver, flock) costs 2s a dozen. We thus get:

Gold foil and green foil	6d a dozen
Tin foil	4d a dozen
Silver foil	12d a hundred
Party foil	18d a hundred
Coloured paper	24d a dozen
Tinsel	40d a pound

These are wholesale prices (*in the greate*) but additional small purchases seem to have been made at the same rate. For the Chester records, see our notes 17 and 18.

45. Methods of gilding on parchment: Merrifield *Treatises* (see note 38) 238 on a base of parchment-glue size, whipped egg white, and ochre; 258–68 on parchment, paper, linen cloth or *sindon*, on a base of white chalk and saffron with leather-glue size; 460–76 various mordants, mostly of parchment-glue and gesso; though also with white of egg and honey – earwax is another ingredient! This also tells you how to gild ostrich feathers.

46. *Sharp* 31.　　　　　　47. *Chambers* 2 376.

48. *Ingram* 36–7.

49. Coventry Smiths' and Drapers' *cheverels*: *Sharp* 17, 26, 32, 35, 72; York *cheuelers* and *cheuerons* *REED York* 55, 78, 80, 98; Chester *faxes REED Chester* 66, 78, 105 (all Smith's). The Cordwainers' 1550 *chauernes* are probably also wigs 50.

50. *Non-Cycle Plays* xxxv.   51. *REED York* 78, 80, 81.

52. Durandus *Racionale Divinorum Officiorum* (Naples, 1859) 25 (chapter 3, 10). He quotes *Numbers* 6:7.

53. *Dives and Pauper* edited by Priscilla Barnum EETS 275 (1976) 95.

54. J.B. Trapp & H.S. Herbruggen *The King's Good Servant: Sir Thomas More 1477/8–1535* (London, National Portrait Gallery, 1977) 103 (No. 202), 22 (No. 6).

55. *Sharp* 28.   56. *REED York* 78, 80, 98.

57. *Non-Cycle Plays* xxxv.   58. *REED York* 55. The Revels inventory for 1547 three times lists *headpeces* with *perukes* hanging from them: *Feuillerat Loseley* 15, 16.

59. *Macro Plays* 114, 119. We discuss the *morisco* in a later part of this article.

60. *Macro Plays* 114. *Gold of Cypres* is finely woven gold cloth. See our note 58 on *'Materials'*.

61. *Hall* 723–4.

62. *Brewer* 3:1 35 (1519) *viij myskellyng hodys for lords*; *maskyng whodes Hall* 595.

63. *Nicolas* 37.   64. *Feuillerat Elizabethan* 95.

65. *Bevington* 92–3; see also 19.

66. Bodleian Library MS Bodley 264 fol. 181ᵛ: Flemish, illuminated by Jehan de Grise, 1339–44.

67. *REED Chester* 176, 179 (Coopers); *Sharp* 31 (Smiths), 69 (Drapers); *Ingram* 36–7 (Cappers); *REED York* 241 (Mercers).

68. *REED Chester* 179 (and 176?)   69. *REED York* 241–2.

70. *Nicolas* 37–8.   71. *Nicolas* 43.

72. *Nicolas* 43.   73. *Chambers* 1 392 note 2, Note the 'exotic motif'.

74. *Nicolas* 29, 30.

75. René d'Anjou *Traitié de la Forme et Devis d'un Tournoi* (Paris, Revue Verve, 1946) 60–61. Unfortunately René does not say anything about the construction of the *timbre*, only that it is attached to a piece of *cuir bouillé* on the crown of the helm.

76. *Early English Stages* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, second edition, 1980) 45–9. Jurgis Baltrušaitis *Le Moyen Âge Fantastique* (Paris, Colin, 1955) 38–42 and Figs. 18 and 20 discusses helmets and crests, and illustrates some which suggest the masking parallel very strongly. See also our note 85.

77. Claude Blair *European Armour* (London, Batsford, 1968) 74 says that this crest is made 'of moulded leather covered with paint and gilded gesso'. See also 48 for similar German crests. Sir James Mann *The Times of Edward the Black Prince: Replicas of his Achievements* (Canterbury, Friends of Canterbury Cathedral, 1956) publishes a very interesting description of the making of the replica leopard, copying the original patterns and materials. For a coloured illustration of the original, see Mann revised A.R. Dufty *Arms and Armour in England* (London, HMSO, 1969) 21.

78. E.K. Chambers *Notes on the History of the Revels Office under the Tudors* (London, Bullen, 1906) 12. See also *Feuillerat Elizabeth* 70 etc.; the Yeoman of the Revels is specifically said to be in charge *of the apparell and Trappers of all and singuler* (the King's) *horses*. The Office of the Revels was originally combined with that of the Keeper of the Tents, Pavilions, and Banqueting Houses, and was only separated by Elizabeth (*Feuillerat Elizabeth* 6).

79. Gordon Kipling *The Triumph of Honour* (Leiden UP, 1977) chapter 6.

80. *Hall* 568. It is difficult to tell whether the *Berdes* are beards or bards: but the odds seem to be on beards. See e.g. *Brewer* 3:2 1605 (1527).

81. *Nicolas* 43.   82. *Feuillerat Loseley* 133.

83. Illustrated in colour on the *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 32 (1973/4) no. 4 (no pagination).

84. We first saw this in *Newton* Fig. 79.   85. Baltrušaitis fig. 72a, page 156.

86. See *Lewis & Short* and *OLD* svv. *larva, persona*. The one quotation which seems to make *larva* a mask for acting in fact refers to a mock-contest between a pair of professional fools, and the sense is 'You don't need to put on a false face to frighten people, your own is horrible enough already' (Horace *Satires* 1, 5, 64). The word belongs to low or at least popular life: it is noticeable that the bulk of the illustrative quotations comes from Petronius, Apuleius, and Plautus.

87. See Ovid *Fasti*, translated by J.G. Fraser (Loeb, London, Heinemann, 1931) Book 5 421ff and pages 424–5. The *Larvae* seem to be malignant or unhappy spirits of the dead, possibly unlike the *Lemures*, which are only potentially harmful, and can be propitiated. The larva seems to be distinguished by its skeletal, ghastly pallor; Petronius also uses the word of a model skeleton.

88. In Apuleius, a witch sends the ghost of a suicide to, apparently, frighten her victim into suicide (*Metamorphoses* 9, 31). He then returns from the dead *larvatus* to tell the story. The *Epitoma Festi* of Paulus Diaconus glosses *larvati* as *furiosi et mente moti, quasi larvis exterriti* (*OLD* sv *larvatus*). The adjective later acquires a verb *larvare*, meaning 'to bewitch', and a noun *larvatio*, which is glossed in Anglo-Saxon *bræccoþu, fylleseoc*, and given the synonyms *Epilepsia, uel caduca*. The *larvae* would seem to be related to the *ylfe* of the *Charms*. T. Wright *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, second edition and collated by R.P. Wülcker (Darmstadt, 1968) col. 112, 126.

89. Isidore Book 8, 101 (see note 38).   90. Plautus *Mercator* Act 5, Scene 4, line 20.

91. *Welsford* 94–7.

92. It is equated with *striga*, 'witch' by the Lombard Laws (c.800) and by Hugutio (twelfth century), and with the *lamiae* by Gervase of Tilbury (thirteenth century): see *Ducange* sv *masca*. In the *Corpus Glossary*, it appears as *masca* and *mascus*: both are glossed *grima* (Wright-Wülcker col. 31, also 442): see also *Ducange* sv *Talamasca*.

93. Quoted *Welsford* 95 note 1. Her translation is slightly biased towards the *masca* as 'mask', whereas it can equally well (indeed better) be read as referring purely to spectres.

94. Wright-Wülcker col. 29, 31; 431, 442; 446 *mascam, griming*. For the Old English meanings of *grima*, see Bosworth Toller and *Supplement*. There seems to be a connection between the words *grima* 'mask', *gram* 'fierce', *grama* 'the fierce one, the devil', and *grimme* 'frightening'. For its suggested development to MdE *grime*, see above note 31. The *Exeter Riddle* 40, a translation of a riddle by Aldhelm, unfortunately does not provide a sufficiently illuminating context for the translation *larbula = grima*.

95. Collected conveniently in *Chambers* 2: 290-306. Despite a span of some six centuries and several European countries, they show a remarkable consistency of material. Obviously they copy from one another, but it seems unlikely that a sermon on superstitions would make much impact on a congregation which did not practise any of them.   96. *Chambers* 296 (fifth century).

97. *Ducange* sv *Talamasca*.   98. *Ducange* sv *Mascha*. Both quoted by *Welsford* 95–6.

99. *Promptorium Parvulorum* (see below note 111) 413: cites *vgucio* and '*campus florum*' as authorities. *Campus florum* is a mid-fourteenth century work: *Promptorium* c. 1440.

100. This appears to come from the *Vgucio versificatus* cited in the preface to the *Promptorium* (col. 1). It is repeated in the *Catholicon Anglicum* (321), the *Pictorial Vocabulary*, and the *Ortus Vocabulorum* (see below note 111).   101.   *Young* 2: 416.

102. *Chambers* 1: 300 note 1; 313 note 1; 321 note 4; 327. Also *Young* 418–9 (Decree of the Provincial Council of Sens, 1460: the clergy are allowed to play the Nativity or Resurrection *absque … larvatione et sordidatione faciei*).

103. *Chambers* 1: 327. See also *Ducange* sv *Kalendae*.

104. *Chambers* 1: 403 note 2. See also Sebastian Brandt's *Navis Stultorum* (above, note 26) where the word *larva* is used of carnival masks.   105.   *Chambers* 2: 262.

106. *REED York* 78, 98: see also *Ducange* sv *larvatus*; *Chambers* 1: 361 note 1 (choirboys at the Abbey of Hyde in 1490), 392 note 4 (Edward III and courtiers riding to a tourney in 1331), 92 note 2 (Oxford students at their May-games); and the dictionaries cited below note 111.

107. *Young* 2: 539.

108. John Bromyard *Summa Praedicantium* (Venice, Nicolini, 1586) 1: fol. 152. Reference from G.R. Owst *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1961) 395.

109. Mary H. Marshall 'Theatre in the Middle Ages: Evidence from Dictionaries and Glosses' *Symposium* 4 (1950) 25: *Scene id … est … locus adumbratus in theatro et cortinis coopertus … In illo umbraculo latebant persone larvate, que ad vocem recitantis exibant ad gestos faciendos*. From this definition the word *larvatus* descends into later dictionary definitions of *scena* and *theatrum*.

   In the *Promptorium Parvulorum persona* glosses *Person (of a man)* (333). The *Ortus Vocabulorum* makes three main definitions: *Persona … est rationabilis creature indiuidua essentia. Etian persona est histrio representator comediarum. Persona etiam dicitur in ecclesia qui quaedem (?) dignitatem habet pre ceteris. Anglice styll shyperde a persone*. Thomas Elyot's 1538 *Dictionary* has *Persona, a vysour lyke to a mans face, also person or personage … sometyme the qualitie of a man*. See also *NED* sv *person*: the nearest use is translating the Vulgate *facies*, but the sense of 'mask' does not appear in English. In Latin it remains learned. (See below note 111.)

110. Lydgate *Troy Book* edited by H. Bergen EETS ES 97 (1907) lines 901–2.

111. *Promptorium Parvulorum* edited by A.L. Mayhew EETS ES 102 (1908) col. 413, 507. The *Promptorium* is an English-Latin dictionary, written in 1440 by Geoffrey, a monk of Lynn in Norfolk.

   Ortus Vocabulorum, said to be by the same Geoffrey, is quoted from the edition of 1500, a facsimile edited by R.C. Alston (London, Scolar, 1968) *English Linguistics Series* 123. A Latin-Latin dictionary with fuller definitions.

   The *Pictorial Vocabulary of the fifteenth century* is edited in Wright-Wülcker (see above note 88). *Larva* definition 783.

   Catholicon Anglicum (1483) edited by S.J. Herrtage EETS OS 75 (1881) glosses *a Vyserne: larva to Vyserne: larvare* 402; *a Scarle or viserne: larua; versus: Larua fugat volucrem, sic larua sit quoque demon* 321.

   Thomas Elyot *Dictionary* 1538 (facsimile Scolar 1970) *Eng. Ling.* 221 is a Latin-English dictionary with fairly full definitions, and English synonyms.

   Richard Huloet *Abecedarium Anglico-Latinum* 1552 (facsimile Scolar 1970) *Eng. Ling.* 208: he also glosses *maske or maskynge Personatus, us*; *Maskynge apparell Personatæ uestes Maskyng vysoure Larua, æ, laruale, is*.

NOTES TO 'PURPOSES AND EFFECTS OF MASKING'

1. Whitley Stokes *Beunans Meriasek* (London, Trübner, 1872) 76, 104.

2. Ralph Willis *Mount Tabor* (London, 1639) 113. (Most of his account is quoted in F.P. Wilson *The English Drama 1485–1585* (Oxford, 1969) 76–7.)

3. John Redford *Wit and Science* in *Tudor Interludes* edited by Peter Happé (Penguin, 1972) lines 431–2, 763–821.

4. John Bale *The Three Laws of Nature, Moses and Christ* in *The Dramatic Works of John Bale* edited by J.S. Farmer, Early English Drama Society (London, 1907) 25ff.

5. *Hall* 724.   6.   *REED Chester* 247.

7. The implication of the argument in the *Tretise of miraclis pleyinge* constantly touches on the impropriety of impersonating Christ and God; *for whoeuere so doþ, he erriþ in þe byleue, reuersiþ Christ and scornyþ God*: *English Wycliffite Writing* edited by Anne Hudson (Cambridge, 1978) 97. See also the satirical lyric against the Friars and their plays, 'On the Minorite Friars' *Political Poems and Songs* edited by Thomas Wright (London, 1859) volume 1: 268–70.

8. See John Bale *The Chief Promises of God unto Men*, *The Three Laws*, *The Temptation of Our Lord*, all in Farmer (see note 4).

9. *The Resurrection of Our Lord* edited by J. Dover Wilson and Bertram Dobell *Malone Society Reprints* (Oxford, 1912): *Christ's Resurrection* seems to be the alternative title.

10. *Processus Satanae* in *Malone Society Collections* Volume 2, part 3 (Oxford, 1931) 239–50.

11. On the use of masks in various cultures, see Andreas Lommel *Masks* (Elek, 1972).

12. John Jones *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London, 1962) 45.

13. *Dives and Pauper* 91 (see '*Terminology*' note 53).   14. *Dives and Pauper* 94.

15. *Dives and Pauper* 94.   16. *Dives and Pauper* 100.

17. Plato 'Ion' in *The Dialogues* translated by B. Jowett (London, OUP, 1892) Volume 1: 494–504. The dialogue actually concerns the rhapsode, or public reciter, but the actor's skill is bracketed with and spoken of as equivalent to that of the rhapsode throughout the dialogue.

18. Cicero *De Oratore* edited by A.S. Wilkins (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1881) Book 2, 46, 193.

19. *Sharp* 55–6 (Cappers' *Harrowing and Resurrection*) *for mendyng our ladys crowne*, *for skowryng of maryes crowns*: *REED Chester* 67, 78 (Smiths' *Presentation and Doctors*) *Crowne for Mary*, *for mending the Crowne & diadem*. The question of crowns, haloes, and diadems is too complicated to be treated here.

20. *Non-Cycle Plays* xxxii, xxxiv, xxxv.

21. We discuss this at length in the second part of this article.

22. Peter Bogatyrev 'Semiotics in the Folk Theater' *Semiotics of Art* edited by Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik (Mass. Institute of Technology, 1976) 40. We would like to thank whoever it was at the *Props and Costumes* meeting who put us on to this article: many of its conclusions seem interestingly relevant to the mystery plays.

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THE STAGE DIRECTIONS IN THE MANUSCRIPTS
OF THE CHESTER MYSTERY CYCLE

1. The Manuscripts of the Chester Cycle

The Chester Cycle is unique among the English cycles in the number of extant manuscripts of its text. There are five manuscripts containing versions of the full cycle: viz. Huntington 2 (Hm) by Edward Gregorie in 1591; Additional 10305 (A) by George Bellin in 1592; Harley 2013 (R) by George Bellin in 1600; Bodley 175 (B) by William Bedford in 1604; and Harley 2124 (H) by James Miller and two others in 1607. There are also three manuscripts of single plays; viz. Manchester (M), an anonymous fragment of perhaps the fifteenth century; Peniarth 399 (P), also anonymous, of ?1500; and the Chester Coopers (C) by George Bellin in 1599. Almost all our evidence for the text is therefore later than the last recorded performance of the cycle in Chester, which was at Midsummer, 1575, and none of our texts can be shown to have been a producer's copy of a 'Reginall', a civic master-copy. The source, status, and value of their stage directions are consequently matters of some importance.

The relationship between the Chester manuscripts is the subject of one of the essays in a forthcoming collection, *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents*, by R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills (with an essay on the music of the Cycle by Richard Rastall), to be published by the University of North Carolina Press. I am therefore mercifully relieved of the obligation to discuss difficult textual problems in detail here. Suffice it to say that the five cyclic manuscripts were copied from a common original which we may reasonably identify with a civic master- copy. Differences among the manuscripts are the result of three factors;

1) the inevitable consequences of copying – misreadings, errors, alterations, and insertions or omissions.

2) the condition of the exemplar. The exemplar had evidently been revised, 'modernised', annotated, and otherwise altered so that readings were obscured, alternative versions of material were included in the text, and various scraps of information of unspecified status stood in the margins. The scribes' problems was to make sense of what they found.

3) the purpose of each scribe. All scribes tried to make a fair and well-organised copy, but they approached the exemplar with different ideas about what 'The Chester Cycle' was, and what purpose their copies were to serve. Gregorie was a thoughtfully conservative scribe. Bellin was a well-intentioned penman, a poor Latinist, given also to careless errors, thoughtless local 'improvements', and careless or deliberate omissions. Bedford seems to have wanted a copy for his own use, and wrote in a hurried

scrawl with little concern for the niceties of presentation or the selection of material; what he cannot decipher quickly, he reconstructs. But Bedford alone does not seek to make his text fit a preconceived format. Miller, who in 1607 finished a text written by two other scribes, evidently tried to produce a complete and coherent cycle, and therefore proceeded by careful and intelligent selection and emendation, rationalising and standardising divergent scribal practices – in effect, editing the text. His pages were pre-ruled, and sometimes miscalculations about the position of rulings affected the position of material on the page.

2. The Stage Directions

The manuscripts generally share features of format which may have been present in the exemplar, and which allow us to make a provisional assessment of what may be stage directions. The verse-text is divided by rulings into quatrains (except in B), the speakers' names are centred (except in H); play-divisions are clearly marked, usually by beginning on a new page, and the number, Guild-ascription, and prefatory title are readily identified; the 'finis' is centred. Within this format we can isolate two kinds of information. The first begins at the left-hand margin and runs across the page to the right-hand margin; it is often also distinguished by upper and lower rulings and by rubrication. The second is in the margins beside the verse-text, usually to the left, except in H, where the speakers' names are in the left-hand margin and other marginal material is usually to the right. A less clearly distinguishable kind of information is occasionally attached to the speakers' names. I believe that this positional distribution may derive from the exemplar. Material running from left to right across the full page was part of the official text and was so regarded by the scribes, while material in the margins, having been added later, was of less certain status, and was treated differently by the different scribes, who felt a freedom to omit or re-locate the marginal material which they did not feel with the 'textual' material. Miller alone seems to have been conscious of some functional distinction between the two types of information, and transferred material from the centre to the margins freely, changing it in the process.

It is generally true to say that the 'textual' material is in Latin and the 'marginal' material in English. There are two qualifications to be made to this claim. First, up to Play 4 the textual material is in English and thereafter in Latin. Second, Miller uses Latin for all such material, textual or in the margins. That Miller was translating seems clear from Herod's cry:

> Have done and fill the wine in hye;
> I dye but I have drinke   8/416–7

The address is to a boy whose entry is signalled at a margin note at 381: *The boye and pigge* ('pitcher') *when they kinges are gonne*, which He renders *Puer et nefrens* ('a pig') *cum reges discescerunt*.

3. The Textual Material

The 'textual' material is of two kinds. First, there are Latin quotations which are translated in the accompanying vernacular speeches and lend authority to the text. Their function was to authenticate the text, both for the reader and for the audience. Many did not have to be spoken, and may not have been, but when the devil says:

> for speake Latten well I can,
>   and that thou shall soone see   24/563–4

he clearly delivers the following Biblical quotation. It is therefore somewhat artificial to distinguish these quotations absolutely from the demands for liturgical pieces which constitute music-cues, since both belong to an insistent 'Church-voice' in the Cycle. And they probably also demand a certain manner of delivery which the devil can parody – partly indicated at 5/319: *Tunc Balaham vertit se ad orientalem in plagam montis, et respiciens coelum spiritu prophetico dicit: 'Orietur stella …'* ('Then Balaham turns to the east on the side of the mountain, and regarding heaven says in a spirit of prophecy: *Orietur stella* …'). Yet a textual note of a different king, at 22/260, reminds us that the writer was aware that censorious readers might also check his text: *Signa quindecim magna quae, secundum opiniones doctorum, extremum precedent judicium, ab antiquis Hebroerum codicibus selecta a doctore huius paginae reticenda* ('Fifteen great signs which, according to the opinions of divines (*doctorum*) will precede the Last Judgement, selected from ancient codices of the Hebrews for recital in this pageant by a divine'). That does not seem intended for oral delivery. Instead, it justifies a passage in the text which lacks Biblical authority.

The second kind of textual material, the stage directions, may seem quite different from the first, but I believe that both derive from the same concern for authentication. I will use as illustration the stage direction in the *Last Judgement*, 24/356: *Finitis lamentationisbus mortuorum, (descendet) Jesus quasi in nube, si fieri poterit, quia, secundum doctoris opiniones, in aere prope terram judicabit Filius Dei … Stabunt angeli cum cruce, corona spinea, lancea, et instrumentis aliis; ipsa demonstrant* ('When the laments of the dead have finished, let Jesus descend as if in cloud, if it can be done, because according to the opinions of a divine (*doctoris*), the Son of God will give judgement in the air near the earth … Angels shall stand with cross, thorny crown, lance, and other instruments; let them display them').

Authentication here takes several forms. First, the creation of a particular illusion is justified for the director and the critical onlooker by reference to accepted interpretation of accounts of the Second Coming. Secondly, authentication also lies in

the hand-props displayed, the Instruments of the Passion which become the tokens of Christ's authority, as God promises at 24/17–20: *Shewe you my crosse appertlye here, / crowne of thorne, sponge and speare*; one might compare other 'tokens', such as the bread and wine of Melchisedeck in Play 4, figuring the Eucharist, or the star whose appearances are carefully specified through Plays 6–8, the Nativity series. But, thirdly, there is what might be called a dramatic authentication in that the image of the descending Christ recalls that of the ascending Christ of Play 20, itself very carefully charted by stage directions, while the Instruments themselves recall the previous day's Passion play. It is often impossible to separate visual sign from structurally integrated visual echoes, and probably unhelpful to attempt it. When at 22/428 *Tunc emittet sanguinem de latere eius* ('Then He shall emit blood from His side'), the image both picks up the allusion to Christ's fresh blood to be displayed at Judgement in Play 20, and also is the sign of Judgement, 'Christ's blood streaming in the firmament', in its own right. But when at the start of the *Last Supper* (15/80), the text says: *Tunc accumbet Jesus ac Johannis in gremio dormit* ('Then let Jesus recline and John sleeps on His bosom'), we wait until Play 22/173–6, on the next day, for explanation:

> I, John, Christes own darlinge,
> as I laye in greate longinge
> upon my masters brest sleepinge,
> wonders sawe I manye one.

The stage directions in Chester thus specify on many occasions actions of thematic and structural importance. In a text which uses demonstration, visual demonstration is an integral part of the total method, and the directions attest the playwright's concern with visual effect.

The specified action, moreover, has other functions. It must occur at the appropriate moment, and it is frequently both a structural divider, and also the trigger for an ensuing dialogue. Here all these features are clear. *Finitis lamentationibus mortuorum* ('When the laments of the dead are finished'): technically, these words are not needed, but the emphasise, for director and for winchman, that the lament-prelude must be completed without the audience being distracted and only then shall there be movement. It is an emphasis frequently found. For example, 11/118: *Tunc Simeon sedebit expectansconsolationem: de alio loco (procul) a templo (Mary speaks to Joseph)* ('Then Simeon shall sit looking for consolation; from another place far from the temple (Mary speaks)'). Simeon's action decisively ends the 'book-miracle'; his hopeful gaze directs the audience's expectation; dramatically it is then answered by movement and dialogue elsewhere. Like so many Chester directions, this gives information on action, attitude, set, and entry – but all are incidental to the essential concern with the timing of action. *Hic* or *Tunc* are usually the opening words of a Chester direction, and I believe that they have the force of 'It must be at *this* point …'.

These considerations explain and qualify the incidence and more obvious functions of the stage directions. It is not so much that the playwright specifies stage business of entry/exit and movements from place to place narrowly — the producer has considerable discretion and much of the information lies in the verse, not the directions. Rather, he specifies significant action and significant properties as part of his demonstrative concern, and movements at important points as part of his concern with timing and effect. The directions have a mandatory force, but also show concern with theatrical effect. In the *Ascension* Jesus begins *stans in loco ubi assendit* ('standing in the place where He ascends') by quoting scripture and then translating it. He ascends, and sings in Latin (20/104); then, as the angels wonder who He is, *Jesus autem pausans eodem loco dicat* ('Jesus pausing in the same place shall say') (112). He then completes His ascent with the angels' singing, and finally the angels descend, singing in Latin, to address the disciples. It is a carefully controlled and specified action which combines visual spectacle, liturgical music, Latin quotation which combines visual spectacle, liturgical music, Latin quotation, and vernacular address. It demonstrates the playwright's awareness of the total resources of his drama and his confidence in the ability of the performers to exploit them effectively.

In his concern for theatrical effect, the playwright made some difficult demands upon the 'producer' but also suggested some telling devices. As an example of his demands, I would instance 5/223: *Tunc percutiet Balaham asinam suam. Et hic oportet aliquis transformiari in speciem asinae: et quando Balaham percutit, dicat asina* ('Then Balaham shall strike his ass. And here it is necessary for someone to be transformed into a form of ass (*aliquis transformiari in speciem asinae*); and when Balaham strikes, the ass shall say'). It is only at this point (*hic oportet*) that the transformation becomes important, but how was it to be effected? Are we to assume that somehow at this point a 'real' ass is to be replaced by *speciem asinae*? Or did Balaham ride a pantomime ass from the start? The Banns indicate that the speaking ass was an effective moment which had to be staged well, so it seems probably that the playwright was describing or proposing a piece of practical stagecraft. As an example of a telling device, I would instance the start of Play 3: *And first in some high place — or in the clowdes, if it may bee — God speaketh unto Noe standinge without the arke with all his familye*. The stage direction indicates several important things — God's location; the presence of the Ark (for whose subsequent construction mimic action is later specified); the location of Noah with his family — important because all the family hear God's word and help Noah build the Ark. But, additionally, at the end of the play, where no stage direction is included, the text makes it clear that the opening tableau is repeated — God addresses Noah and his family after the Flood standing outside the Ark. The echoed visual image gives the play a visual completeness.

4. The Marginal Material

The material in the margin is rather different from that in the body of the text, and also unevenly distributed. Most is in Plays 4, 5, and 8, followed at a distance by Plays 2 and 7 – in effect, plays performed on the first day. The entries are short, usually in English, and are generally cues. Frequent among them are cues for musicians – *minstrelles playe* for the entries of God after 2/112, 280, and at the expulsion from Eden, 2/384. One-word references to handprops punctuate Herod's angry speech, 8/161–212 – *staffe*, *sword*, *staffe, and another gowne* – together with a terse *cast up*. Not only are these different in form from the textual directions; they also do not specify essential action, but rather the kind of practical information a producer might note down in a margin to remind himself and his actors of important features of performance. I believe that two possibilities exist – either that someone decided to distinguish such information from that in the textual directions and therefore formally separated the two in the text; or that the exemplar had, at certain points, producer's notes in the margins. Miller seems to have decided on the former, and on transferring some seventy directions from text to margin, he also reduced them to conform with the kind of terse information found in margin notes. But I favour the latter, which might mean that the exemplar incorporated practical working texts and was perhaps a compilation, not a fair copy.

In arguing that the margin-directions are different in kind from the textual ones and could, indeed, be readily described within the more practical categories we were asked to comment on for the meeting (e.g. entrance/exit, stage settings, effects, props), I would make two reservations. The first concerns Play 4, which has more margin directions than any other play, and where the English margin-directions stand beside, gloss, and occasionally amplify Latin directions on many occasions. The directions here seem to be translations made for a non-Latinate reader/director. Characteristically, faced with this material, Miller usually omits the margin-material; Bellin puts it into the text with the Latin; Gregorie and Bedford usually keep the two separate. Because the material is in the margin, it is sometimes hard to see where it properly relates, and at 4/88 the margin-direction names the wrong speaker, and causes the scribe great agonies. It must be emphasised that not all the margin-directions of Play 4 are of this kind, but even where there is no Latin direction, the direction in the margin is often very full and is really an instruction from producer to actor: *Here Abraham answereth very meekly to God and saith* (4/217–9; B only).

My second qualification can also be illustrated from Play 4. It opens *et dicat Abraham* ('and let Abraham say'); but he doesn't, for the next speech opens *Preco dicat* ('Let Preco say'), and after Preco has said, at 16: *Abraham, having restored his brother Loth into his owne place, doth firste of all begine the play and sayth.* Bedford writes in the margin beside the Preco speech-heading *Here beginneth the Preface.* This, and the note at 16 in the margin, are indicators of a chance in the text, even though 16 does also indicate a mimetic

action. The margin-note here is to guide the reader through the messy exemplar. But I suspect that some other margin-directions, which have the appearance of stage directions, really serve the same function. In Play 5/335: *Here Balaham speaketh to Balaack: 'Abyde a while'*, and, sure enough, the next speech is Balaam's and begins 'O, Balaack kinge, abyde a whyle'. The note is unnecessary unless we recall that in 1607 the text, lacking this note, goes on with the Expositor's brief conclusion instead of the episode of the seduction of the Israelites by the Moabites.

5. Conclusion

Drawing up lists of casts, sets, and properties for the plays, I was impressed by how much information about production we gain from the cycle. Not all is in stage directions – which are unevenly distributed through the cycle. But there is, I believe, more information in the directions for Chester than in the Yorkshire cycles; indeed, only sections of *N-Town* seem comparable, and their specified actions serve a different range of functions from those of Chester. Although the margin-directions perhaps suggest only one set of possibilities, the textual directions are integral, the product of a practical and intelligent playwright. What worries me is that no producer has yet had the confidence to do exactly what the playwright told him to do and see what happens.

<u>Wisdom</u> at Winchester: Dance of the Company of Maintenance

The <u>PLS</u> at Lancaster: <u>Robin Hood and the Friar</u>
Photo: Lancashire Evening Post

REPORTS ON PRODUCTIONS

WISDOM AT WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL   21ST–23RD MAY 1981
(King Alfred's College Drama Department)

John Marshall's production made one wonder why the last five hundred years have apparently seen no other performance of this shapely and powerful play. It has taken a Christian College of Higher Education to be undaunted by *Wisdom*'s high philosophical and theological content and long didactic speeches. The production's success shows what can be done by allowing the text to speak for itself, and by resisting the temptation either to cut medieval complexities or to gild with modern gimmicks.

The main acting area was the two bays of the nave west of the wooden screen. This rich setting required no props or staging except for a westward extension of the already split-level acting area. Full use was made of access through the bays to the aisles, through the central door of the screen, along the nave gangway and north nave aisle. Lighting was simple, static, and entirely sufficient. The text was uncut and unmodernised (except in pronunciation and therefore to some inevitable extent in rhythm). Stage directions were followed in costume, dance and song. Grouping, movement, and gesture were strong and simple, with the result that one could concentrate on the words, which carry more weight than is common in the morality plays.

Live and splendid polyphony and plainsong were the mainspring of the whole, varying from the complicated vault-searching opening bars which established the spiritual dimensions of the play, to a simpler, secular introduction, followed by the liturgical resonances of songs such as *Nigra sum sed formosa* and *Tota pulchra es* (both traditionally applied to the Virgin), all contrasting with the racy round put into the mouths of Mind, Will, and Understanding (when they become Maintenance, Perjury, and Lechery) on the text's hint *Et cantent*. Balancing all these were the three long dances by the minions of the three Properties of the Soul: what could easily have become mere diversions wholly succeeded as balletic expressions of the aggressive force of wealth, the inexorable advance of two-faced legal processes perverting justice, the violent and yet enervated activities of lust. It is right to give time to each Property's 'dompe deuys', for like the dumb-show in *Hamlet* they enact for us the root of the play, perhaps even more effectively than the speaking *personae* – and the dances end by enraging the once-rational elements of the soul until it is at war with its very self.

Costume was complicated only when necessary. Most memorable was that of the sin-transformed Anima. She had first appeared in bridal purity, humbly mantled in the black of her humanity, the Bride of Christ-Wisdom (as in the *Cantina Canticorum*, so on

one level signifying not only the soul but also the Virgin and the Church). Now she advanced from behind the audience, her black cloak bloated and heaving behind her so that she suggested a queen termite pulsating with eggs. The cloak rose in a series of projections formed by the heads of the children under it, so that (to vary the simile) the whole unit resembled a spineplated dinosaur, or a huge articulated insect. When eventually she turned her blacked and deformed face to the audience she stood an appalling image of the corrupted soul pregnant with evil. Unfortunately the 'seven small boys' who emerged as devils from her momentarily broke this morally central effect: the stage direction does not require them to be charming – and to be horrible they have only to crawl and twitch rather than leap and squeal, drawing stock-response laughter. However, the appropriate mood survived the interruption, and Anima, repentant but still deformed until confessed, walked unhurriedly through the audience and away, her lovely voice rising in the Passion Week lament *Magna velud mare contricio*.

It seems ungenerous to point to any weaknesses in a production so bold and moving, so carefully paced and thoughtfully spoken (how good to hear Wisdom's nine 'dedys of charyte' so convincingly delivered while Anima is restored off-stage, for these are necessary practicalities in an otherwise rarefied atmosphere largely concerned with the contemplative life). But precisely because of the high standard, some peas were perceptible through the mattresses. It was probably an error in tactics to allow *only* the voice of Wisdom to deviate markedly from R.P. Convention all but forbids a regional accent in isolation to be employed by the Second Person of the Trinity, the Bridegroom of the Soul. (Pace *MED*, does the stage direction really require him to sport exaggerated eyebrows – surely the browes refer to the appropriate tall forehead beneath the wig?) It is hard enough to give Wisdom the requisite combination of sensual appeal and authority.

Indeed, one missed the innocent eroticism of Christian interpretation of the Canticle *sponsus* and *sponsa*: it is there in the text, and is set against the bawdy of Will-become-Lechery (which was unnecessarily low in key too). Adoption of some of the courtship gestures illustrated in the popular contemporary blockbook *Canticum Canticorum* might be sufficient. This sensuality is necessary to the play's balance: as Leclercq observes the Canticle 'does not teach morality, prescribe good works to perform, or precepts to observe; nor even purvey exhortation to wisdom. But with its ardent language and its dialogue of praise, it was more attuned … to loving, disinterested contemplation' (*The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, 108).

Changes of posture might have helped to clarify the text: when Wisdom as obeyed Anima's request to 'speke of love', she asks a series of questions (77–134) which underpin the subsequent structure no less than the Dreamer's initial questions in *Piers Plowman*: they need visual punctuation. They need it particularly in the acoustics of a

building which solemnises the sung word but scrambles the spoken one. Similarly Wisdom (who is indeed costumed as Christ the King) might suggest his simultaneous role as Christ Crucified by spreading his arms during the appeal based on the Good Friday *Reproaches from the Cross* (913–24), so clarifying the liturgical movement of the play. (The same effect might be achieved at the mention of the death from which 'spronge the sacramentys sevyn' (124).)

The sacramental implications of the text were underplayed elsewhere too. Anima's final entry, after her restoration, was indeed to the Eucharist Psalm which names the chalice of salvation, but this reference to the love-feast of the Mass is surely intended to be set visibly against the anti-feast ('Now go we to the wyne!') of Maintenance, Perjury, and Lechery. The planning and execution of this anti-feast frames the nasty little plot against the hapless husband of Janet, a plot which acts as foil for the loving relationship between Wisdom and Anima. Also, the anti-feast is interrupted by Wisdom's reminder of death, so it is the irrational soul's last act of evil, as Anima's moving to communion is the crowning act of her virtue.

But these are details in comparison with the memorable and literally moral effect of the production, in which the stately qualities of both the Christian soul and body were celebrated as the image of God, desired by Him. The audience regrettably included no punks, whose reaction to this thesis would have been interesting, but it was otherwise varied, containing many children and some clergymen (who had a hard time from Lucifer). Its members were first rapt and then thoughtful, no doubt because they had been treated as intelligent Christian adults.

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THE CASTLE OF PERSEVERANCE AT MANCHESTER: 29th APRIL–2nd MAY 1981

To someone for whom 'arena-staging' always suggests space, the confines of the Stephen Joseph Studio in Manchester University's Department of Drama seemed an unlikely setting for a production of *The Castle*. The small rectangular room, with permanent balconied screen and inner stage at one end, compelled Philip Cook to reduce the five perimeter scaffolds of the famous staging-diagram to four, producing a sort of 'theatre in the square', and to fragment the audience into small groups squatting on the floor cushions between the scaffolds on the edge of the action. A solid tubular-steel centrepiece loomed high in the small space, and cut sight-lines awkwardly.

Yet, to compensate for these limitations, the production was able to drawn on the resources of modern indoor theatre and stagecraft. A spectacular hell-mouth, glowing light and emitting smoke, faced the dark and lonely scaffold of Covetousness through the grill of the castle-structure, constituting a dramatic line of force. The central scene

of the siege of the castle was skilfully choreographed and exuberantly performed with sound- and light-effects, the din effectively yielding to the thinly-chanted liturgy of the Virtues. An almost symbolic darkness fell upon the periphery as the action focussed down on Mankind in his last moments. And, as a climactic surprise effect, the upper stage above hell-mouth opened, to reveal a tableau of God in glory with the Virtues and Good Angel, to which Mankind was appropriately to ascend.

With so much of the action dominated by the hell-mouth set, it was difficult to accept the justice of the final scene, despite its dramatic effectiveness. Mankind's choice between a sweetly insipid Good Angel with a 'Lady Diana' hairstyle and a Bad Angel whose unceasing shriek begged for volume control could not have been easy in dramatic terms. Visually attractive as the Four Daughters of God were, they did seem irresistibly like the Daughters of the Republic; if one of them did not say 'Put that soul down' to the Devil, she plausibly could have done. But these first-year students provided some memorable performances. The spotty, cringing, shambling Covetousness (George Usill) had just the right note of petty viciousness. Less obvious, but central to the effect of the production, was the wide-eyed innocence and sustained neutrality of Mankind (Mark Sproston), an intelligently controlled performance. The Sins, strikingly costumed, were individually conceived vignettes, with the team of the Flesh – a disgustingly obese Gluttony (Jevon O'Neill) and a constantly writhing Lechery (Denise Evans) – particularly strong. The Sins' cooperation with *Humanum Genus'* first mimetic copulation was one of the many inventive details which reinforced the symbolism of the action. The three Kings of sin seemed to have less stage presence than their servants, and the 'punishment' scenes lacked some comic energy.

The text, shortened and modernised by Philip Cook, was an intelligent compromise, retaining the rhythms of the original and communicating efficiently at the expense of occasional and probably inevitable stylistic incongruities.

In this production the audience were observers rather than participants in the accepted medieval manner. Swamped by CO_2 whenever Hell opened, necks painfully twisted to look up at scaffolds or to peer round the castle (why did the Good Angel stand in the best place of all?), we had rather less sense of involvement in the total dramatic experience than might ideally have been desired. But this was an actor's production, an inventive student experiment which turned limitations to advantage and created a fast-moving, lively, and impressive dramatic action.

DAVID MILLS   **UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL**

***CROWN OF THORNS* – COMPILED FROM THE ENGLISH MYSTERY PLAYS**

VICTORIA THEATRE, STOKE-ON-TRENT   MARCH–APRIL 1981

If not recollected in tranquillity, this review is compiled at a sufficient distance in time from the event to render detailed remembrance a somewhat hazardous undertaking. However, one's main impression remains clear.

This professional production, compiled and directed by Nigel Bryant, was garnered from various plays of the York, Chester, N-Town, and Wakefield cycles, with the addition of the *Annunciation* from Coventry, and ran with but a fifteen-minute interval for some three and a half hours. It did not seem that long. The actual number of lines used from each of the selected plays ranged from 3 to 450. It was a miracle of compression. Concentrating mainly on the *Passion*, it managed, however, to sketch in beforehand the *Creation*, *Adam and Eve*, the *Fall*, *Noah's Flood*, and the *Parliament of Heaven* (N-Town), plus a sizeable chunk (the 450 lines mentioned above) of the Wakefield *Second Shepherd's Play*. It was performed by a cast of only sixteen players – with the aid of some energetic doubling and trebling. Traditional dances were a feature of the production – it both opened and closed with some fine foot-tapping measures accompanied by two musicians on pipe and tabor. Unlike the dances introduced into the recent National Theatre production of the cycle-plays, there was no audience participation and they were much more successfully integrated, and served to start, link, or end sequences. (There was a particularly fine dance with palm branches at the *Entry into Jerusalem*.) At times, however, I felt the dances could have been curtailed; in endeavouring to compress within an evening the impression of an entire cycle, the time allowed the dances was over-generous.

To understand the nature of this production one must appreciate the stage for which it was designed. The Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, operates permanently as a theatre-in-the-round; that is to say, the stage (which is rectangular and at floor level) has banked rows of seats on all its four sides. The actors' entrances are through vomitoria (which also admit the audience) or from high up at the top of the four corner staircases which give access to the seating. Scenery of the conventional kind is almost impossible in theatre-in-the-round; this production dispensed with it absolutely, playing for the most part on a completely bare stage. Simple free-standing items were occasionally introduced – a single tree plus apple for the Garden of Eden, a crib and spinning wheel for Mak and Gil's cottage. Generally, the 'settings' were achieved by subtle lighting effects, and simply but effective costumes of a homespun hairy medieval nature, enlivened by ecclesiastics and upper ranks sporting a flash of rich colour, and with God and His angels in unadorned white. These all worked extremely well, giving an acceptable 'medieval' feeling, though I confess I disliked the angels' headgear – a sort

of space-age helmet-mask in silver − which may have helped solve the doubling-up problems, but made the celestial beings look slightly sinister. Some quite riveting set pieces (in more ways than one) were contrived by the designer and the theatre carpenter − a large Ark for *Noah's Flood* (Chester), a tomb for the *Resurrection* (Wakefield) and a portable set piece for the *Crucifixion* (York). Heaven was conveyed simply by a back-lit actor at the top of the auditorium stairs; Hell was a vomitory flooded with red light. This was a simple intimate production in that it offered no medieval scenic splendours. The splendour came from the performances (in the main) and the taut direction. Accustomed to seeing the Cycle plays performed by amateurs of variable and sometimes questionable competence, it was refreshing to see professionals tackling the lines and surprising themselves and us in revealing hidden strengths. The text used was close to the original Middle English with the more obscure words and passages modernised. It worked well.

Particularly successful were the construction of the Ark and the 'boarding' of the animals, the *Woman Taken in Adultery* (N-Town), and the *Crucifixion* and *Deposition* (York). It was a most successful venture, and particularly praiseworthy for a professional repertory theatre.

PHILIP S. COOK   **UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER**

THE *POCULI LUDIQUE SOCIETAS* OF TORONTO IN ENGLAND

MANKIND AT YORK   4TH MAY 1981

According to one of the cast of *Mankind*, in their English tour the chief achievement of the *PLS* has been that they can now move into any given space and 'make theatre'. At York, the space in question was the medieval cellars at King's Manor, a stone vault some twelve feet high, seating about ninety people. In the playing space they constructed a portable booth stage which concealed one entrance. In addition there was a side door and an entrance through the audience from the back of the cellar.

In so confined a space, intimacy with the audience was clearly unavoidable. The company exploited that to the full, choosing one attractive female student to victimise as the 'comyn tapster of Bury', and appealing to everyone to join in their 'audience song'. The ostensibly fun-loving Vices exploited the intimacy brought about by the use of this familiar pantomime device to induce menace. No spectator, however inhibited, was spared.

The fine balance between the risible and the overtly menacing was superbly controlled throughout the performance, and the audience was drawn from laughter, through unease, to something approaching fear as the play progressed. The production

proved beyond question that *Mankind* must not be viewed as a play which merely entertains, but as one which employs entertainments to a serious end.

In this production crescendo was achieved with the entry of Titivillus. David Parry opted for the possibility that Titivillus and Mercy can be doubled. He demonstrated a medieval actor's versatility as well as an uncompromising scholarly approach to the function of the two roles in the play. To be imposing, this Titivillus had no need to raise his voice. The threat was largely realised through a complicity with the audience to keep silence and a memorably rasping whisper. Despite a codpiece which gave rise to ill-suppressed laughter, Parry showed us clearly the strength of Titivillus is his ability to mesmerise. The ominous hand-gestures, combined with his elevation on a dais so as to hover under the vault, made plain the gnomic quality of a demon who can choose to appear with his 'leggys wnder' him.

Mercy was also sensitively understated. Parry chose not to present Mercy as a two-dimensional abstraction, instead picking up the references to the character as a Dominican friar, and homing in on the emotional aspects of the speeches. Our audience was visibly moved.

The unscripted appearance of Mischief to ape Mercy in his first speech sacrificed Mercy's initial opportunity to gain the audience's confidence; it solved the problem, however, of effecting Mischief's first entry smoothly, and allowed the amusing aspects of the character to emerge untainted by his later potential for evil. At the end of the play, Mercy's emotional energy salvaged those last potentially tedious speeches. As he walked through the audience, his cry 'Mankind, *ubi es*?' fittingly dispelled any residual allegiance to the mockery of the Vices.

Mankind, the pawn in this game, was evidently intended to conform to the commonplace of the post-lapsarian agricultural labourer. In this production Mankind was, to a British audience, the all-Canadian boy, at times obtrusively so. This, in some ways, detracted from the complexity of his dilemmas; but this was compensated for to some extent by the achievement of a consistency in the character before and after he succumbs to temptation.

Plainly, the most problematic part of any production of *Mankind* is how to cope with the missing leaf. In this production any lapse in continuity was carefully disguised by sustaining the dynamic of Mischief's entry by the ingeniously appropriate introduction of a bear-baiting scene to motivate the three Vices' entry. In practical terms, the closing 'movement' of the play could also present problems. Cunning use was made of the booth curtain to provide an 'off' that was 'on', allowing Nought to do his 'nedyngys'.

Specialist and non-specialist alike were pleased by this production's policy of modernising pronunciation whilst retaining the vocabulary of the original text. In a play

such as *Mankind* this is a matter of no small importance, since the comments on idiolect would be lost had any other method been followed.

Whilst critics have argued long and hard about the credibility of Mercy and the extraneous nature of the 'mumming' elements, in practical terms this production proved that both can be accommodated and interpreted to enhance the central issues of the play, its moral dilemmas, and its attempts at resolution.

PAMELA KING   CENTRE FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES
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THE *PLS* IN LEEDS   **3rd MAY 1981**

Those of use who were fortunate enough to see this company last year in Dublin during their first European tour knew that we could expect a high level of performance and presentation in all their repertory. We were not disappointed.

For their visit to Leeds we had chosen two programmes: an outdoor performance of Hans Sachs' farce *The Stolen Shrovetide Cock*, and *Robin Hood and the Friar* in the afternoon, and in the evening the medieval Wakefield *Murder of Abel*, performed in the University Church, followed by the Renaissance musical of *Tom Tyler* in the adjoining narthex.

Although the snow had cleared, the weather was cold and wet with heavy rain on the Sunday and the afternoon performance, scheduled for the lawn of Tetley Hall of Residence, had to be moved into the JCR, which though spacious had a rather low ceiling. The spectators, about 150 of them, had an age range of a few months to over 80, and were drawn from a fairly wide variety of backgrounds, thus providing something approximating to a medieval type of audience. They were seated all round the playing area.

The farce was very simply staged, with an all-male cast. Good use was made of an existent door which involved the actors passing right through the audience; the only furniture was a stool. The play turns on a quarrel between neighbours and especially the two wives, one of whom at 6'6" was a formidable figure. The pitfalls of transvestite acting were all avoided. There was no vulgarity and no attempt at a cheap laugh. The play did not need them, having plenty of its own humour, and fact of the contrast in build between the husbands and wives was used to create some splendid stage pictures.

Pictures of another kind were provided in the *Robin Hood* play which, like all the repertory, was very well dressed and simply staged. The outstanding features here were the beautifully choreographed fights; wrestling, quarterstaff bouts and sword play. The rather cramped space and low ceiling enhanced the reality of the experience for the

audience and also encouraged one improvisation: 'Have at you, friar, and mind the lightshades!'

The audience's appreciation of these lively and polished performances was manifest in the number of people who also turned up for the evening programme. The *Murder of Abel* was played in front of the centrally positioned altar in the church, with the gold-masked God enthroned behind and above it. The plough beasts were not zoomorphic, and the entry of the plough with two peasants pulling it and a whip-cracking Cain raised interesting echoes of *Waiting for Godot*. The smoke for the sacrifices was ingeniously contrived: we were glad to be moving out of church for the second play. Inevitably much of the dialogue was lost for those of use who cannot follow Middle English, but the gestures and acting created nevertheless an impressive theatrical experience and some fine stage pictures, especially the final exit of Cain and his boy with the plough on which Abel's body was huddled like a prefiguration of the Crucifixion.

The final play, *Tom Tiler*, was an excellent contrast: a cheerful, noisy musical farce. This little-known play is a sort of pre-Shakespearean *Kiss Me Kate* in which the Shrew is not finally Tamed but subdued unwillingly by the moralising of Patience and Destiny. The music here and in all the plays was of a very high standard of performance.

LYNETTE MUIR   **UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

TOM TILER AND HIS WIFE AT BEDFORD COLLEGE, LONDON   7th MAY 1981

The taming of Shakespeare's Shrew transcends tradition by its avoidance of physical violence. Its archetype, or that of Christopher Sly on his determination to try the Petruchio treatment on his wife, is a widely disseminated folktale one of whose variants survives in and English farce, ostensibly Tudor, and known to Shakespeare's generation, though printed only in 1661. As almost the only extant Tudor farce outside the works of John Heywood, *Tom Tiler and His Wife* is a pudding deserving the test of performance.

For a play whose essential action consists of three fights interspersed with songs, a cast of players sound in wind and limb is a prerequisite. The members of the *PLS* were quite equal to the exertion, and survived to play again the following evening. Not all the actors, however, need to be in fighting form: the prelude is a dialogue between Destiny and Desire, both of whom disclaim responsibility for Tom Tiler's troubles with his wife, Strife. Then Tom appears, expressing his complaints in a song whose refrain is the proverb which the previous speakers had aimed to contradict, that 'wedding and hanging is Destiny'. Rather than attention to detail here would have helped to 'fix'

Tom's role. His clothes should have been identifiable as working clothes, and they should have been shabbier (his contention that his wife grabs all the money he earns was borne out by her costume and not by his).

Tom then goes off to work, and the next scene demonstrates how his wife drinks away the profits in the tavern with her gossips. Strong playing by the gossips and good contrast between them carried this scene along well. Tom, calling in for a drink to cool off in the middle of the day, is kicked out by his wife for idling away the time (the first fight).

The second fight is Tom's revenge, undertaken on his behalf by Tom Tailor, who changes clothes with him, and provokes a quarrel at the end of which Strife retires to bed to bind up her head. In performance this scene was an anticlimax because the disguising was quite implausible. It need not have been. The text indicates that the audience are not required to believe the impossible. The clue to the subterfuge is given in Tom Tailor's reporting of the incident: 'She looked arsie versie at her first coming in … But then behide me, and she never spide me'.

A second conversation between the two gossips anticipates some reprisal. But Strife seems temporarily out of action. Or has she resorted to a non-combative strategy? In terms suspiciously like those of her literary godmother, the Wife of Bath, she accuses her husband of lack of forbearance: 'Alas what than, you being a man / Should bear with my folly'. Still grizzling over her bruises she declares self-righteously that 'curstness provokes / Kind hearts to dissever', and refuses to make up (another leaf out of the Archwife's book?). But Tom, for a man given to quoting proverbs, is curiously forgetful of the one which links weeping in women with deceit, and in an earnest attempt to exonerate himself he yields up his whole advantage by revealing that it was not he who had beaten her, but his master, Tom Tailor. Without another thought for her bruises Strife launches into the third fight, her victory in which is celebrated in a song by the two gossips, returned to the scene from a trip to the town. In performance this scene between the husband and wife preceding the final fight was by far the most interesting so far, mainly because both actors showed an awareness of nuance and a sense of comic timing which had been lacking in their earlier exchanges. It may be fair to say that earlier passages had not provided equivalent opportunities, but elsewhere some sense of mistrust of the text emerged from an acting style which too often substituted general rumbustiousness for the endeavour to find precise meaning in the (admittedly slack and repetitive) dialogue.

The third fight ended, the plot still seems far from any resolution, until Destiny reappears. It turns out that what his doctrine of individual responsibility amounts to, when individually interpreted in the case of Tom, is: 'If you take it not ill, but with a good will, It shall never grieve you'. Some of the antagonism is deflected onto Tom

Tailor, and then Patience appears, prevails on the company to accept her counsel, and leads them into the final dance. The performance of Patience demonstrated that with a good presence, a good voice, and a confident straight style of acting, the dramatic victory of virtue over vice can be easily assured. But more should have been done stylistically to show the balance and association between Patience and Destiny, the two 'sage persons' who open and close the play. Patience was played as a dignified matron, Destiny as an infinitely disagreeable figure whose performance was obscured, rather than defined, by a mildly grotesque mask.

The playing area was a rectangular space with audience seated along two sides. Although the action of most scenes extended over the whole playing area, exits and entrances marked one end as Tom's house, the other as the tavern (where the hard-working musicians sat and played without benefit of ale, from the inappropriately long and solemn prelude to the rousing finale). A curtain at the house end and the hall doors at the other provided for exits, the assumption of bandages, and the costume changes of the two gossips (doubling Desire and Patience). The staging showed that this is a play which could lend itself easily to performance in a variety of situations.

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Publications: 'Tyrants and Villains: Characterisation in the Passion Sequences of the English Cycle Plays' *Modern Language Quarterly* 41 (1980) 3–20.

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Working on: An edition of John Heywood's *Four PP* (Malone Society, OUP – at press).

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Publications: 'Liturgia e Iconografia na Interpretação de Auto da Alma' Lisboa 1962 (1966).

'Tomás Moro e o Teatro' *Brotéria* (Lisboa 1968).

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'A reappraisal of the *Merchant of Venice*' *Revista da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa* (1976–7).

'Thomas More in Drama' *Revista da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa* (1978).

'*Misericordia* na tradição dramática medieval e renascentista' *Biblos* (Coimbra – forthcoming).

Working on: with research group of the Centro de Estudos Anglísticos, devoting particular attention to relations between drama and iconography, and between drama and liturgy, on a comparative level.

Preparing a book on Gil Vicente seen against the dramatic production of Western Europe of his time, for *Biblioteca Breve*, a series published by the Instituto de Cultural e Língua Portuguesa.

Preparing editions of plays by Portuguese contemporaries of Gil Vicent.