# DWARFS AND DEFORMITIES IN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENTS

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Eleanor H. Leinaweaver

1965

THESIS

3 1293 10130 4909

LIBRARY
Michigan State
University

024

W 039

FEB 0 9 2006

ABSTRACT

DWARFS AND DEFORMITIES IN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENTS

by Eleanor H. Leinaweaver

Dwarfs and deformities comprised an integral part of the dramatic entertainments of the Medieval and Renaissance civilization in Europe. The present investigation has attempted to present a comprehensive and consolidated picture of the existence, presence, utilization, and significance of such grotesqueries in the dramatic life of the times; of the roles which they played; and of the influence on the evolving form of the drama which they exerted.

It is contended that in order satisfactorily to grasp the full implications of the utilization and significance of such creatures within dramatic entertainments, it is necessary to examine the societal customs, attitudes, and beliefs which gave rise to such usage and significance, as well as to the origins of such elements.

In connection with the investigation of such societal factors and origins, the dwarfs and deformities which abounded in ancient civilizations have been explored. Three basic motifs governing the utilization and signi-

ficance of such grotesqueries have emerged: the dwarf-god identity; the dwarf-king relationship; and the dwarf-wiseman equation.

These three motifs have been demonstrated as also governing the utilization and significance of grotesqueries within the Medieval and Renaissance society and in the dramatic entertainments. In establishing the origin of such Medieval and Renaissance usage, a continuous line of influence has been shown to exist linking the ancient civilizations to Medieval and Renaissance times.

A methodology essentially anthropological in nature has been employed in the presentation of evidence concerning the ancient civilizations, societal aspects of the Medieval and Renaissance civilization, and the establishment of the origins of factors governing the dramatic use and significance of grotesqueries.

Dwarfs and deformities performed a multiplicity of roles within the Medieval and Renaissance society. These roles and the significance attached to them have been examined and it has been shown that such usage and significance extended into the utilization of such creatures in tournaments, pageants, royal entries, and court satires. The dramatic conventions which grew up around the usage of grotesqueries in such entertainments have been analysed, as have the significant aspects attached to the dramatic utilization of grotesqueries in the religious and secular drama of the period.

The hypothesis is advanced that the significance, functions, and utilizations of grotesqueries in the everyday life of the times is relected in the art forms of the period. Extensive use has therefore been made of literature, sculpture, painting, and church imagery in determining and illustrating points of usage and aspects of significance.

# [illegible]

by

[illegible]

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF [illegible]

Department of [illegible]

[illegible]

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance given him by his major professor, Derek B. Ashbridge, whose original topic suggestion provided the impetus for this study; and whose help and encouragement contributed materially to its completion. Thanks are also due Mr. Ashbridge for the photographic representations which appear within this thesis.

Special thanks also to Dr. James H. Hunter for his advice and assistance in regards to Tavernier theoretical range of geomagnetism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . . iii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . . v

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

PART I. BACKGROUND FOR THE MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE USAGE OF CHORIAMBICS

Section

I. MODES AND MEANINGS OF INCIDENCE . . . . . 16

II. TRADITIONS FOR INCIDENCE AND USAGE OF DIMETERS . . . . . 38

III. PROBLEMS FOR THE DEFINITION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF DIMETERS. . . . . 46

IV. THE MEDIEVAL DEFINITION. . . . . 57

PART II. MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DIMETERS AND TETRAMETERS

V. CHORIAMBIC FORMS AND FIGURES IN DIMETERS . 68

VI. THE DIMETERS AND DETRIMETERS OF THE MORAL AND ANTICLOIANTIC HOMILIES: METRIC PRESENCE, USAGE, AND SIGNIFICANCE. . . . . 79

VII. DIMETERS AND DETRIMETERS IN DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENTS . . . . . 100

The Tournament
Pageants and Royal Entries
Dramatic Satires
Religious and Secular Drama

PART III. CONCLUSIONS

VIII. CONCLUSIONS . . . . . 149

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 154

## LIST OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS


| Figure | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dolicoma and Microcephalus . . . . . | 2 |
| 2 | Two engravings of the dwarf Gobbi. . . . . | 2 |
| 3 | Pygmies executing a triumphal procession; from a mural scene found in Pompeii. . . . | 35 |
| 4 | Pre-Columbian humpheads. . . . . | 35 |
| 5 | Mexico acrobats, dwarfs, and humpheads . . | 39 |
| 6 | The Javanese dwarf-god Semar and two grotesque left phantasy figures. . . . . | 44 |
| 7 | Allegory of Folly . . . . . | 59 |
| 8 | Two line drawings by Breughel. . . . . | 59 |
| 9 | The jester Claus von Amstadt. . . . . | 73 |
| 10 | Painting of a deformed Neapolitan boy. . . | 73 |
| 11 | Nano de Vallecas . . . . . | 73 |
| 12 | Sebastian de Morra . . . . . | 83 |
| 13 | Homily depiction of Gluttony . . . . . | 86 |
| 14 | A Grotesque Morris Dance . . . . . | 96 |
| 15 | Court fool . . . . . | 96 |
| 16 | Las Meninas. . . . . | 96 |
| 17 | El Primo . . . . . | 99 |
| 18 | Crippled Minstrel. . . . . | 99 |
| 19 | The Prodigal Son . . . . . | 99 |
| 20 | Mary Magdalene Shown the Worldly Delights. | 99 |

| Figure | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 21 | Two Kings of Spain . . . . . | 95 |
| 22 | Prince Balthasar Carlos with his dwarf. . | 95 |
| 23 | Don et Reginia de Tunis . . . . . | 97 |
| 24 | Grotesque old woman. . . . . | 97 |
| 25 | Grotesque old man . . . . . | 97 |
| 26 | Talbot the hunchback . . . . . | 109 |
| 27 | A rural dwarf. . . . . | 109 |
| 28 | Bishop of Wools. . . . . | 113 |
| 29 | Folly in monastic habit. . . . . | 113 |
| 30 | The Finding of Moses . . . . . | 134 |
| 31 | Cleopatra's Feast. . . . . | 134 |
| 32 | Hufson in the Woods. . . . . | 137 |
| 33 | Woodcut from an illustrated manuscript . | 137 |
| 34 | Adoration of the Magi . . . . . | 141 |
| 35 | Adoration of the Magi . . . . . | 141 |
| 36 | Adoration of the Christ Child. . . . . | 141 |
| 37 | Adoration of the Magi . . . . . | 142 |
| 38 | The Egyptian god Typhon. . . . . | 145 |
| 39 | Gluttony . . . . . | 145 |

# INTRODUCTION

The vivid kaleidoscope of life, art, and literature which forms the patterns of the Medieval and Renaissance periods of history has long been the subject of intensive study by historians in many and varied fields of scholastic endeavor. Theatre historians in particular have found this area richly rewarding, for it is within the confines of the Medieval era that the rebirth of the European drama occurs;[1] while the Renaissance in Europe brought with it an elaboration and development of the form which was to provide an avenue in later years for Shakespeare's feet to trod.

The various forms of dramatically oriented entertainments which comprised the theatrical life of these societies were connected (if somewhat tenuously at times) by certain commonly held characteristics. These ultimately contributed to and facilitated the emergence of a recognizable and significant dramatic form. It is one of these common characteristics of the Medieval and Renaissance dramatic entertainments with which we here concern ourselves.

There are in existence many excellent and detailed studies concerning the growth and development of the

---

[1]Arnold Wynne, The Growth of English Drama (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1920), see entire work.

Medieval - Renaissance society in general, and its diverse and increasingly dramatic entertainments in particular. Scholars, however, in their intensive research into the forms and intricacies of the theatrical elements manifest in the times, have tended for the most part to ignore the presence and significance of the many grotesque forms and figures which entwined themselves in and around almost all activities of a dramatic aspect (figure 1). It is this largely neglected segment, the dwarfs and deformities which abounded in Medieval and Renaissance dramatic entertainments, with which this study is specifically concerned.

Although, as has been mentioned above, there are in existence many investigations dealing with the dramatic entertainments of the Medieval and Renaissance times and their subsequent evolvement into a more recognizable and conventional form of drama, there exists no study which deals with the overwhelming presence and significance in such entertainments of dwarfs and other deformed types of grotesqueries. Scholars seem to become periodically aware of, and subsequently erratically to record, the existence of such creatures at widely spaced and unrelated points in their research. There has been, however, no attempt to gain a comprehensive and consolidated picture of the significance of the presence of such creatures in the dramatic life of the times; of the roles which they played; and of the influence on the evolving form of the drama which they exerted.

Figure 1.
"Bolicana and Marcolfus" from an etching by Hopfer about 1520. (Tietze-Conrat, p. 54).

Figure 2.
Two engravings of the dwarf Gobbi by Jacques Callot about 1616. (Tietze-Conrat, p. 8).

It is of the utmost importance for those engaged in meaningful work in the field of theatre to have as complete and detailed a picture as possible of the growth and development of drama in all major and minor civilizations of the world both past and present. The Medieval and Renaissance period of history forms such a major civilization. It is impossible for scholars to achieve the formation of a comprehensive picture of the emerging drama of this period without a knowledge and understanding of the totality of significant factors which contributed to the process of evolvement. The dwarfs and other deformed grotesqueries with which this study deals will be shown to comprise such a significant factor.

It is the expressed purpose of this investigation to attempt to remedy the previous oversight regarding the presence, significance, and effect of dwarfs and other deformities in studies of the Medieval and Renaissance dramatic entertainments. In so doing, it is the hope of the researcher that this investigation will in some measure prove of significance in adding to the present knowledge both of the antecedent attitudes of ancient civilizations regarding dramatic usages of grotesqueries which affected Medieval usage, and of other factors which affected and effected the development of the drama; thus assisting scholars in gaining a consolidated, comprehensive, and meaningful picture of the dramatic entertainments of the age.

The researcher will attempt to show that dwarfs and deformities existed and were extensively utilized not only in virtually every type of dramatic entertainment of the Medieval and Renaissance period, but also in the majority of other art forms then in use. The hypothesis is advanced that the significance, functions, and utilizations of such persons in the art forms of the period as a whole and in the dramatic entertainments in particular were direct reflections and extensions of their roles, significance, and utilizations in the actual life of the period.

It is further contended that in order satisfactorily to grasp the full implications of these significant aspects and utilizations it is necessary to examine the societal customs, beliefs, and attitudes from which they rose as well as the origin of such elements.

A methodology essentially anthropological in nature must be employed in the presentation of evidence concerning the origins and Medieval applications of cultural elements relating to the dramatic utilizations and significance of dwarfs and deformities.

It has long been the contention of the researcher that the field of anthropology should be more closely and admittedly allied with that of theatre in general and of theatre history in particular. In order to gain a complete and meaningful picture of theatrical activity in any given culture, and of the significance thereof, it is necessary to

examine at least to some degree the society which gave rise to the form of theatrical activity existent within it. Moreover, it is of great value to examine the particular aspects or institutions of the society in question which in any way influenced this form. Finally, such an anthropological methodology emerges as important in the extreme in the case of theatrical characteristics and aspects of significance which have been "borrowed" from one civilization and incorporated into another.

In the light of the above hypothesis, then, the researcher has deemed it necessary to deal initially with precedents to be found in certain selected and representative ancient civilizations for the presence and significance of dwarfs and other deformed types in the Medieval and Renaissance age. Egypt, Java, India, Greece, Rome, and Meso-america have been chosen as representative of the totality of the ancient civilizations.

In anticipation of what will be shown to be a direct survival or incorporation of various ancient motifs and significances regarding dwarfs and deformities in the Medieval and Renaissance civilization, evidence which establishes a thread of influence linking the civilization of the Medieval and Renaissance era to those of antiquity has been included.

The favorable factors operating within the Medieval and Renaissance society (as a result of the <u>Zeitgeist</u> engendered through common traditions, heritages, and usages)

which contributed to what will be shown was a facile acceptance of such deformities in positions of symbolic and realistic significance will also be discussed in this initial section.

Having established such a rationale for the presence and acceptance of grotesqueries in the major period of study, it then became the task of the researcher to establish such a de facto presence and acceptance; and to draw such parallels in usage and significance as are possible between Medieval and Renaissance grotesqueries and those of the ancient civilizations.

The preliminary elements of definition having thus been accomplished, the emphasis of the investigation is directed toward the establishment of the presence of such persons in the dramatic entertainments of the age and their specific significance and utilization.

Within the structure of this thesis, the following terms and meanings apply. The "dramatic entertainments" of the Medieval and Renaissance periods refer both to social recreational activities which had as their main objective that of entertainment and which included dramatic aspects within their structure, and to the religiously inspired theatrical activities which claimed first a teaching and only secondarily an entertainment-oriented purpose. That precise moment when a religious ritual ceases to be mere ritual and assumes dramatic connotations is extremely difficult to determine. The guidelines of "impersonation" as

opposed to representation are followed in this thesis to distinguish dramatic entertainments from ritual. Where the element of impersonation seems present, that ritual-drama is considered here as drama.

The terms "deformed" and "deformities" are utilized extensively throughout the study. Using a dictionary a little more contemporary to the period of study than is our modern Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary[2] we find the word "deformed" defined as "ugly or unshapely . . . of an unsaimly or ugly form; disfigured; distorted."[3] Figuratively, the word is used in the sense of being ". . . morally disfigured, debased, polluted."[4] "Deformity" is defined as ". . . a disfigurement, a distortion; an absurdity, an irregularity."[5] Taking this definition as our basis, then, the term "deformed" may encompass any distortion, disfigurement, absurdity or irregularity of face, form, or figure. A man with an exceptionally ugly face might be regarded as deformed although he is perfectly ordinary in figure.

The terms "dwarf" and "midget" must also be defined. Dwarf, interestingly enough, is defined as "an attendant on a lady or a knight; a page."[6] It is also defined as ". . . a human being much below the ordinary size of man."[7]

---

[2]Robert Hunter and Charles Morris, Universal Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, 1897), vol. II.

[3]Ibid., p. 1496. [4]Ibid. [5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 1795. [7]Ibid.

Newman Dorland in The American Illustrated Medical Dictionary goes into more detail in his definition: "Dwarf: A person who is both abnormally undersized and deformed."[8] Mr. Dorland goes on to clarify his use of the word deformed in relation to the dwarf as referring to characteristics exceeding the abnormality found in the diminutive size. He states that the true dwarf usually possesses all or a part of the following deformed qualities: a hunched back, excessively short extremities, a pot belly, large globular head, disfigured facial features, and a trunk of normal size (figure 2).[9] The midget on the other hand, while also defined as ". . . a human being much below the ordinary size of man,"[10] differs from the dwarf in that he bears no mark of deformity other than his size. He is perfectly if minutely formed in face and body.[11]

Because distinctions are often made within this study between dwarfs, midgets, and deformities in general, the term "grotesque" or "grotesquery" is utilized as a method of referring to all types of deformities---when no delineation as to specific type or form is desired.

---

[8]W. A. Newman Dorland, The American Illustrated Medical Dictionary (21st ed.; London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1947), p. 461.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 897.

[11]Ibid.

For purposes of this study small heed will be paid to national boundaries. According to Glynne Wickham,

> Until the close of the fourteenth century at least, and in many respects throughout the fifteenth century it will be seen that the methods of presenting Miracle plays, pageants in city streets to welcome royal visitors, tournaments, and disguisings, follow a common pattern . . . . Where common practice . . . can be proved to exist in the countries of northwestern Europe, it is worthwhile profiting from the fact and using the best documented accounts . . . with only small regard to locale.[12]

The dramatic entertainments to which Mr. Wickham refers are the same as those with which we will later concern ourselves and as such, we claim the same freedom of locale. M. D. Anderson also stresses the lack of importance of national boundaries in stating that "Liturgical plays performed in the great cathedrals of France or Germany can be reckoned as a fair indication of what happened in England."[13]

There has seemingly always been great difficulty involved in defining the dates that bound the Medieval and Renaissance periods of history in Europe. The majority of historians who attempt this task seem to fall generally into two categories: those who utilize the political movements and changes which took place in Europe as a basis of delineation, and those who prefer to draw the outlines of the periods according to the spirit of the

---

[12]Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages: 1300 to 1660 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), Vol. I, p. 10.

[13]M. D. Anderson, Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 33.

times---the growing diversity of man and the rise of the humanists. Since this present study deals with people, their attitudes, beliefs, and observances toward grotesqueries rather than with any political movement, the researcher chooses to ally herself with this second category in fixing the dates of these periods.

In reference to the Medieval or Middle Ages, Ferdinand Schevill states:

> While it is not uncommon to consider the whole succession of ten centuries from 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D. as a single period, called the Middle Age, it is on the whole more advisable to break the ten centuries into two unequal parts and . . . attribute the designation Middle Age to the centuries from 500 A.D. to 1300 A.D.[14]

Schevill's dating of what he loosely terms the Middle Age seems to include that period generally referred to as the "Dark Ages" which Sir C. W. Oman dates as occurring between 476 and 913 A.D.[15] T. F. Tout in <u>The Empire and the Papacy</u> would date the start of the actual Medieval period more or less in line with the first crusade, in the later part of the eleventh century;[16] while Jacob Burckhardt, in <u>The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy</u>, seems to date the end of the Medieval period, or at any rate the period of

---

[14]Ferdinand Schevill, <u>A History of Europe</u> (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1925), p. 5.

[15]C. W. Oman, <u>The Dark Ages</u> (London: Rivington, 1924), p. 1.

[16]T. F. Tout, <u>The Empire and the Papacy</u> (London: Rivington, 1924), p. 10.

transition from Medieval to Renaissance in the early 1100's. Burckhardt bases his Renaissance dates on the upsurge of humanism and diversity among men, citing the elegy of Hildebert of Mans, Bishop of Tours, as one of the most singular examples of humanistic enthusiasm for the first half of the twelfth century.[17] Dana C. Munro, on the other hand, fixes the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance in the late thirteenth century.[18]

There would seem then, to be a definite lack of agreement in respect to these periods of history which is compounded by the fact that the period loosely referred to as the "Renaissance" did not occur simultaneously throughout Europe; although in the majority of cases it seems to have overlapped from country to country to a greater or lesser degree. Because this present study transcends national boundaries, often taking what occurred in one country during it's Medieval or Renaissance period as fair indication of practice in another country during the latter's Medieval or Renaissance period, the dates herein assigned to these eras will not attempt to differentiate between countries.

---

[17]Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (New York: The New American Library, Mentor Books, 1960), p. 149.

[18]Dana C. Munro, Middle Ages: A Source Book of Roman History (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1904), p. 56.

The Medieval and Renaissance period may then, for purposes of this study, be regarded as beginning around the latter part of the eleventh and first part of the twelfth centuries and reaching its peak in the sixteenth century.[19]

The structure of the study lends itself naturally to a three part organization; each of these parts being composed of several subsidiary sections. The first of these parts deals with the presence, use and significance of dwarfs and deformities within selected, representative ancient civilizations; and to a lesser extent with the beliefs, attitudes, and customs which gave rise to such observances.

Part Two concerns itself with Medieval and Renaissance dwarfs and deformities. Section five deals with grotesqueries as they appear in literature. Section six has to do with the presence of such creatures in Medieval and Renaissance society and with the utilizations, functions, and significance concerning them which extended into their use in the dramatic entertainments of the age.

Section seven of this part deals specifically with the presence, utilization and significance of dwarfs and deformities in the dramatic entertainments of the age in question. It contains various sub-sections, each of which deals with a specific type of dramatic entertainment.

---

[19]Burckhardt, p. 303.

It is the contention of the researcher that the essentially anthropological nature of the evidence concerning dwarfs and deformities preceeding this section is essential to a full understanding of their dramatic usage and significance. However, the section is designed in such a way that the reader may turn directly to it if he so desires.

Conclusions drawn from the study as a whole comprise the content of the third and final part.

# PART I

## BACKGROUND FOR THE MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE USAGE OF GROTESQUERIES

## SECTION I

## MODES AND METHODS OF INCIDENCE

Dwarfs and myriad other types of deformities were to be found in abundance in the Medieval and Renaissance societies.[1] One need only look at the high value placed upon such persons, the license granted them in their associations with the great, and the uses to which they were put[2] to see how prominent a position in the forefront of the mind they occupied. The Medieval scene was over-run by such grotesqueries, both in fact and in fancy.[3]

It is obvious that these creatures did not leap to their actual exalted positions without some powerful need, precedent, and/or zeitgeist operating in their behalf; in the case of the presence, use and significance of the Medieval and Renaissance grotesqueries in dramatic enter-

---

[1]Alwan Schultz, Das Höfische Leben Zur Zeit du Minnesinger (Leipzig, 1889), V, p. 270, as quoted in Vernon Judson Harward, Jr., "The Dwarfs of Arthurian Romance and Celtic Tradition" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1959), p. 37; hereafter referred to as Harward, Dwarfs.

[2]See below, II, pp. 79-99.

[3]One noble lady even went so far as to literally try to breed a race of dwarfs and was much disappointed to learn that the mating of such creatures usually resulted in the birth of a perfectly normal and well-formed child (from quoted household records in Harward, Dwarfs, p. 43.

tainments, these catalytic elements were present.

As has been the case with almost every civilization known to man, the Medieval and Renaissance societies made extensive use of and incorporated into their own world view, customs established in many earlier civilizations.

> We can trace back to prehistoric times the various contributions of different races and religions to our present culture and we find that the art which surrounds us today was developed by cross-fertilization of ideas from other continents. Invisible threads of influence tie together and finally connect the remote corners of our geographical oblong.[4]

As the Greeks drew inspiration from three thousand years of cultural heritage derived from the highly artistic civilizations which had existed in Mesopotamia, China, Egypt, and the Eastern half of the Mediterranian,[5] so did the Medieval and Renaissance society draw on the self-same ancient heritages as well as on the relatively more recent Greek, Roman, and Meso-american civilizations.[6]

Medieval exposure to foreign cultures was primarily the result of the societal diffusions which naturally resulted from an ever widening commerce. "Europe carried

---

[4]Pal Molemen, Medieval American Art (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), Vol. I, p. 7.

[5]Ibid., p. 5.

[6]Bernardino de Sahagun, Florentine Codex: Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1950), trans. from the Aztec into English by Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble. Also see H. D. Disselhoff and S. Linne, The Art of Ancient America (New York: Crown Pub., 1960).

on an increasingly rich trade with the near and far East"[7] during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, thus gaining a familiar knowledge of the artistic practices and heritages of the great civilizations in those areas; together with a growing understanding of the more ancient customs on which they were founded. Indeed, an actual cross-cultural influence seems to have existed which operated both horizonally (affecting civilizations which existed in close proximity in time and space) and temporally---extending over hundreds of intervening years---to link the Medieval and Renaissance society to those of antiquity.

The existence of such a thread of influence may at first seem highly improbable when we consider the more or less generally accepted theory that the knowledge of and passion for the ancient civilizations was initially a product of the Renaissance in Italy; and that Europe as a whole had no significantly pronounced contact with far-flung foreign nations until at least the late fourteenth century. Jacob Burckhardt, however, in <u>The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy</u>, refutes such a theory, and succeeds in placing the incidence and impact of foreign and ancient cultures on the Medieval society at a much earlier date. Certainly, he states, it was in the fourteenth century that antiquity ". . . obtained so powerful a hold on Italian life as the source and basis of

---

7Melemen, p. 1.

culture, as the object and ideal of existence . . . .[3]

However, the ancient civilizations,

> . . . had long been exerting an . . . influence on Medieval Europe, even beyond the boundaries of Italy. The culture that Charlemagne advocated was, in face of the barbarism of the seventh and eighth centuries, essentially a renaissance, and could not be anything else. Just as in the Romanesque architecture of the North, beside the general outlines inherited from antiquity, remarkable direct imitations of the antique also occur, so, too, monastic scholarship had not only gradually absorbed an immense mass of subject matter from Roman writers, but the style, from the time of Einhard, is not without imitation.
>
> . . . The wave of barbarism had scarcely subsided before the people, in whom the antique heritage was not completely effaced, showed a consciousness of their past and a wish to reproduce it. Outside Italy there was a deliberate and conscious borrowing of this or that element of classical civilizations; in Italy the sympathies both of the learned and of the people were directed toward antiquity as a whole, which stood to them as a symbol of past greatness. The . . . numerous monuments and documents in which the country abounded facilitated a return to the past.
>
> . . . How antiquity made itself felt in the visual arts, as soon as the flood of barbarism had abated, is clearly shown in the Tuscan buildings of the twelfth century and in the sculptures of the thirteenth. In poetry, too, there is no want of similar analogies to those who hold that the greatest Latin poet of the twelfth century . . . was an Italian . . . . To a certain degree these Latin poems of the . . . wandering scholars of the twelfth century . . . are doubtless a product in which the whole of Europe had a share; . . . Here, in truth, is a renissance of the ancient view of life, which is all the more striking in the Medieval form of verse in which it is set. There are many works of this and the following centuries in which a careful imitation of the antique appears both in . . . meter and in . . . subject . . . .[9]

---

[3]Burckhardt, p. 145.

[9]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 145-146.

Burckhardt goes on to stress that,

> . . . The literary bequest of antiquity, Greek as well as Latin, were far more important than the architectural, indeed, more important than all the artistic remains . . . . They were held in the most absolute sense to be the well-spring of all knowledge.[10]

Antiquity, in short, in a very real sense comprised the ". . . introduction to and the chief matter of study in every branch of knowledge . . . ."[11]

Thus far we have principally referred to the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome as being known to Medieval man. Burckhardt, however, establishes for us the fact of foreign (outside of Italy) influence in the Middle Ages of many diverse and ancient civilizations functioning as the subjects of study and thought.[12] From the time of the first crusade (1096) unknown distances were opened to all Europeans and awakened a passion for travel and adventure which became allied with the thirst for knowledge.[13] For example,

> The knowledge and admiration of the remarkable civilization that Islam had obtained . . . was peculiar to Italy from the time of the crusades.[14]

Burckhardt goes on to speak of the constant commercial intercourse which florished between Medieval Europe and

---

[10] Ibid., p. 155.

[11] Ibid., p. 149.

[12] Ibid., p. 150.

[13] Ibid., p. 211.

[14] Ibid., p. 347.

the Eastern and Southern Mediterranian and the countries of the far East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[15]

Taking into consideration the thirst for knowledge of antiquity, it would seem impossible to suppose that many of the scholars and travellers who visited strange and distant lands would not have taken the opportunity to delve into the antique histories of these countries. Moreover, customs belonging to these foreign cultures which had survived from antiquity would surely have been assimilated by the visitors. It would therefore seem implicit that from the beginning of the Medieval period at least some of the ancient cultures were known to Europeans. Furthermore, it would seem reasonable to assume that, as these ancient civilizations had been familiar with the cultures of many of their contemporary societies, knowledge of these, too, would have filtered through to the Medieval and Renaissance civilizations.

In spinning our thread of influence we must not neglect the strands provided by the impact of the Mesoamerican civilizations on Medieval Europe.

> One of the most significant events . . . of the middle ages of Europe was the discovery of America . . . . As in Europe, the nations in the process of formation created great art during these centuries, so also in America certain regions blossomed forth with marked individuality of culture, beginning roughly with our Christian era.[16]

---

[15] Ibid.

[16] Melemen, p. 1.

These American civilizations also contributed much of their cultural beliefs and practices to the Medieval and Renaissance societies.

> The gifts [including books dealing with the life, art, and history of their peoples] that Cortez received from Montezuma for his sovereign were publically exhibited for the admiration of the Spanish court and people . . . . These gifts [and practices] from the New World passed into the [hands] . . . of the Medici and Borgia Popes, the House of Hapsburg, and aristocrats in their favor . . . . Best in a position to appreciate the skill and beauty of objects which had come from a civilization so different from their own, were the craftsmen, members of the medieval guilds. One of them, Albrecht Durer, descendent of a line of Hungarian goldsmiths, wrote in his diary . . . 'I have never seen in all my days what so rejoiced my heart as these things.'17

The expeditions of Cortez, however, took place in the 1500's. Evidence indicates the presence of white men in Meso-america many years prior to this time. When Cortez first landed in Yucatan he was faced with a "legend" which had long formed an important part of the Mayan and Aztec history. The Indians stated that,

> Long, long ago . . . many foreign ships appeared off the coast of Yucatan . . . and from these ships stepped tall, fair-haired, blue-eyed men. The gunwales of these ships glistened like the scales of a snake, and it looked as though giant, shimmering serpents were creeping slowly over the sea towards the shore. These unknown men wore strange clothes, and round their brows an ornament that manifestly represented the image of a coiled snake.18

This legend, known as the "Woten" tradition, is described

---

17Helleman, pp. 2-3.

18Paul Herrmann, Conquest by Man (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), trans. from the German by Michael Bullock, pp. 166-167.

most recently

> . . . by the American authoress, Anne Terry White in . . . Lost Worlds. Reading her description of it, we immediately recall the many old pictorial representations of the dragon-prowed ships of the Norsemen, whose gunwales were hung with the gleaming shields of the crew; ships from whose bows snakes' heads stared out over the sea and whose sides must have glistened like the scales of snakes. And from these long, narrow snake ships stepped men upon whose brows sparkled serpentine diadems, spiral ornamental fibulas perhaps, beloved of the Teutons, beautifully wound like coiled serpents . . . . Ann Terry White relates further that the fair-haired, blue-eyed strangers of the Wotan legend settled in Yucatan, that they lived amongst the Mayas and became their teachers and guides.[19]

The Mayas left their original homes in the Guatamalan forests around 1000 A.D. to occupy the Yucatan peninsula. These legends of ships, then, must have antidated this move and in fact, ". . . manifestly arose at the same period as that in which the Vikings who had settled in Greenland were making their first attempts to establish colonies in America."[20] According to legend this Norseman influence passed from Yucatan into Mexico proper and the realm of the Aztecs with the migration of a white-skinned, long bearded, old man who came to live among the Aztecs and who taught them new ethics and religion. For a long period of time he was regarded as a god (Quetzalcoatl) until finally the Indians revolted against him, at which time legend says he returned to his home in the East beyond the sea.[21]

---

[19] Ibid., p. 167.

[20] Ibid. [21] Ibid., p. 163.

In support of the Wotan legend it is significant to note that the details seem to indicate that it was not altered or colored by the Spanish conquistadores. Far from reflecting the complection and dress of the Spaniards of the 1500's, Quetzalcoatl is fair-haired, blue-eyed, and

> . . .dressed in a garment worn all over Europe in the early Middle Ages, but which had long since vanished by the time of the Conquest, except amongst the Greenland Vikings, the descendants of the Leif the Happy who discovered America in circa A.D. 1000. And curiously enough, the weave of the fabric from which this garment is made is described as coarse, like sacking, precisely as the fabrics disinterred 500 years later from the . . . icy soil by Danish archaeologists excavating Norse farm buildings in Greenland.22

It is fairly obvious then that the Medieval and Renaissance civilization was aware of many diverse cultures and civilizations, both contemporary to their own times and ancient, during its formative stage.

> Those who acted as mediators between their own age and a venerable antiquity, and made the latter a chief element in the culture of the former . . . knew what the ancients knew, because they tried to write as the ancients wrote, because they began to think, and soon to feel, as the ancients thought and felt.23

When we combine the fact of such an attitude toward the ancients with the influence of societal diffusion and with the existence and utilization of dwarfs and deformities in the dramatic entertainments of virtually <u>all</u> of the great civilizations contributing to such diffusion[24] we find that

---

[22]<u>Ibid</u>., 169-170.

[23]Burckhardt, pp. 161-162.

[24]See below, I, pp. 40-56.

the way has been opened to possible future hypotheses concerning the influence of such diffusions on Medieval and Renaissance use of grotesqueries.

The brisk and flourishing trade and exploration which constituted the main artery for the infusion into Medieval society of examples of diverse cultural artifacts, vestigial remnents, and cosmological and secular concepts reached its apex of influence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Long before this, however, as is evidenced by the records of the period,[25] Medieval Europe was fully inured to the presence of grotesqueries in the households of the aristocracy and to their utilization in dramatic entertainments. In view of this fact and of the seemingly universal need in some way to distinguish the abnormal[26] the precedents established by civilizations, both ancient and more immediately contemporary, in regard to the position, significance, and utilization of dwarfs and other deformities, probably served as strengthening and reinforcing rather than as introductory agents.

It is important, however, to note that the societal diffusions which crossed the seas to lodge against European shores were directly absorbed by and influenced the concepts and practices of the small ruling section of the Medieval

---

[25]See below, II, pp. 79-99.

[26]For a discussion of this need see pp. 26-29 immediately following.

population rather than that of the population as a whole. The luxurious products of commerce were for the aristocracy. The captains were entertained at court and in their turn entertained their hosts with stories of the lands with which their travels had familiarized them. The few scholars who visited other lands, and the many knights who had made the tournament rounds, were all members of this ruling class. In the case of the Meso-american civilizations, the shiploads of riches bearing mute testimony of those cultures which the conquistadores sent home were perused and deciphered only by the nobility and a few chosen craftsmen before the arrival of the royal order to melt down the precious cargo. The books which arrived from various cultures, and which undoubtedly gave rich meaning to many of the artifacts, could be read only by a favored few. The precedents and products of societal diffusion, then, were available at first hand only to the aristocracy; and it was principally through imitation of the practices of this small ruling class[27] that comparable usage filtered down to the masses.

However, dwarfs and grotesqueries have seemingly always comprised a certain segment of the population of any given society; and a preoccupation with such deformities would correspondingly seem to be an ever-present ingredient in the makeup of the members of cultures who

---

[27]See below, II, pp. 108-109.

are still responsive to the manifestations of sympathetic magic. Such a preoccupation gives rise to speculation on the possible existence of an unconscious and more or less universal need on the part of the "normal" to distinguish in some way, the abnormal. Certainly the expression of such a need would seem to be evidenced in all of the cases subsequently cited throughout the remainder of this present study.

Virtually all civilizations existing within the boundaries of recorded time have had some concept of a creator or creators (gods) and a destroyer or destroyers (devils). The concept of the "one true god" however, is a relatively modern one.[28] The majority of the ancient civilizations, for example, during the formative period of their religion usually included many deities regarded as possessing equal if different powers. As these civilizations developed, one of these deities usually began to emerge as all-powerful. We tend to forget or overlook the fact, however, that prior to such an occurrence in any given society all of these creators and all of the destroyers were classed together as gods or supernatural beings possessing magical powers and an inordinate interest in mortals.[29]

---

[28]James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (Abridged ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), pp. 56-69.

[29]Ibid.

Admittedly the destroyers would (as is indicated by the very name) possess and embody evil. However, ancient man had no delusions of his power to vanquish the "foe". He freely acknowledged himself as no match for the supernatural powers of destruction such a destroyer-god would naturally command; and went to great lengths to appease and elevate all the gods and especially to insure that the destroyers, embodiments and symbols of evils that might descend upon the community, were and would remain on the side of mortal man.

Such a belief in the ability to appease the gods leads naturally to a corresponding belief in the ability to persuade them. These beliefs constitute a

> . . . Universal faith, [a] truly catholic creed . . . in the efficacy of magic. While religious systems differ not only in different countries, but in the same country in different ages, the system of sympathetic magic remains everywhere and at all times substantially alike in its principles and practices. Among the ignorant and superstitious classes of modern Europe it is very much what it was thousands of years ago in Egypt and India . . . . If the test of truth lay in a show of hands or a counting of heads, the system of magic might appeal, with far more reason than the Catholic church, to the proud motto, 'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus' as the sure and certain credential of its own infallibility.[30]

Deformity has served in all cultures as an accomodation to the facts of evil, death, disease, etc.[31] A deformed god or man would possibly provide an approach

---

[30] Ibid., p. 64.

[31] Ibid., pp. 651-653.

through elevation, appeasement, and coercion to these basic problems which exist in all societies. In a symbolic way deformity would provide manipulation and an object toward which to direct attempts to appease and coerce.[32] The physical person of a deformed dwarf logically serves as a focal point for such a concept. After all, those " . . . who desired to obtain some favor from a god had no chance of succeeding except by laying hands on the deity . . . .[33] or on his earthly representative. And, as ". . . all conciliation implies that the being conciliated is a conscious and personal agent . . . conciliation is never employed toward things which we regard as inanimate."[34]

Strengthing this hypothesis of dwarfs serving as symbolic representations of evil, is the fact that that which is strange and different has seemed always to be equated with the supernatural in primitive societies.[35] The deformed dwarf might signify an inversion of normal man, a re-creation of primeval chaos. And so, being connected with the destroyer-god through these and the symbolic elements discussed above, the grotesque would be allowed to possess godly prerogatives and certain godly

---

[32]Ibid., pp. 105-109.

[33]Ibid., p. 61.

[34]Ibid., p. 59.

[35]Ibid., pp. 11-12.

powers.[36] Wisemen, shamen, magicians, and priests have tended, in the majority of societies containing them, to be the same person.[37] Although there seems to be no authority who explicitly states the fact, research done in connection with this study would seem to indicate that dwarfs have in most cases been regarded as possessing supernatural powers and have acted as priests in many cultures. The magicians and priests who acted as agents of the gods, were looked upon by all (as were dwarfs) as oracles of the nation. They occupied seats by the chiefs in all councils of war and peace and were regularly consulted before any public step was taken. The greatest deference was paid to their opinion.[38]

As the great civilizations began to grow in sophistication of outlook, and rejected the magical tenets which had ruled them for so long a time, it was only natural that their cosmological concepts should undergo a metamorphosis. In connection with this gradual and universal modification, the position of the destroyer underwent a change. By the time of the Mediaeval era he had evolved from a god or godlike entity into a being damned by god and thus a personage to be fought. However, as the church found it impossible

---

[36]For a discussion of these prerogatives and powers see below pp. 40-56.

[37]Frazer, pp. 11-12; 52-55; 60.

[38]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 101.

powers.[36] Wisemen, shamen, magicians, and priests have tended, in the majority of societies containing them, to be the same person.[37] Although there seems to be no authority who explicitly states the fact, research done in connection with this study would seem to indicate that dwarfs have in most cases been regarded as possessing supernatural powers and have acted as priests in many cultures. The magicians and priests who acted as agents of the gods, were looked upon by all (as were dwarfs) as oracles of the nation. They occupied seats by the chiefs in all councils of war and peace and were regularly consulted before any public step was taken. The greatest deference was paid to their opinion.[38]

As the great civilizations began to grow in sophistication of outlook, and rejected the magical tenets which had ruled them for so long a time, it was only natural that their cosmological concepts should undergo a metamorphosis. In connection with this gradual and universal modification, the position of the destroyer underwent a change. By the time of the Medieval era he had evolved from a god or godlike entity into a being damned by god and thus a personage to be fought. However, as the church found it impossible

---

[36]For a discussion of these prerogatives and powers see below pp. 40-56.

[37]Frazer, pp. 11-12; 52-55; 60.

[38]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 101.

to destroy all of the pagan beliefs of the people, it absorbed them. Therefore, it is possible to see in the later church-dominated Medieval and Renaissance societies a combination of pagan and Christian belief in the powers of dwarfs and deformities. On the one hand we have deformities used as representations of evil and reprehensible abstract qualities which the church sought to repress or eliminate. On the other, the very fact that dwarfs and deformities were utilized in such a way reminds us of the old symbolistic belief in them as magicians, priests, and wisemen, as does the continued elevated position and prerogatives of such persons.[39]

---

[39]For a fuller discussion and documentation of this Medieval usage see Part II.

as by anything they might do or say. This

> . . . tendency to burlesque and caricature appears . . . to be a feeling implanted in human nature and it is one of the earliest talents displayed by people in a rude state of society . . . . When, before the people cultivated either literature or art, the chieftain sat in his rude hall, surrounded by his warriors, they amused themselves by turning their enemies and opponents into mockery by laughing at their weaknesses, joking on their defects, whether physical or mental . . . .[42]

as exemplified by the antics of persons whose deformities illustrated to those who watched and laughed the defects of the subject of the piece.

As the forms of the great civilizations began to emerge from the tribal societies, the use of various deformed persons for all types of entertainment-oriented purposes emerged. According to the writings of Wang Ch'ung (born 32-33 A.D.) dwarfs acted as jesters in China even in the earliest days.[43] Grotesque entertainers were also much in evidence in the Indian[44] and Javanese[45] cultures. The Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, Ottavian Don, refers to deformities, dwarfs and mutes who entertained the King and his court and whose friendship was by no means to be lightly regarded as they exercised

---

[42]Thomas Wright, A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art (London: Virtue Company, no date), p. 2.

[43]James B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts (Princeton: University Press, 1950), p. 202.

[44]A. Berriedale Keith, The Sanskrit Drama (Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 311-321.

[45]W. H. Hassers, Panji, The Culture Hero (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959), pp. 24; 33; 133.

great influence over the king;[46] while the Pharaohs of Egypt habitually kept jesters who were natural dwarfs as well as other types of deformities.[47]

Such creatures were also integral to the Classic civilizations. The Greeks especially were "partial to representations of monsters, and monstrous forms are continually met with among their ornaments and works of art."[48] " . . . There is even a Greek word for the chests in which little children were locked up in order to hinder their growth so that the lucrative career of a dwarf would be open to them."[49]

"The Romans . . . eagerly sought and purchased dwarfs to make domestic pets of them"[50] and these creatures ran about naked in the salons of aristocratic Roman ladies.[51] The pigmies, as dwarfs were termed in Roman times, figured largely in Roman literature and art as well as in entertainments (figure 3). "It is difficult to imagine how the story of the pigmies and their wars with the cranes originated, but it is certainly of great antiquity as it is spoken of in Homer."[52] Homer also states that

---

[46]Tietze-Conrat, pp. 93-94.

[47]Ibid., p. 9.

[48]Ibid., p. 3.

[49]Ibid., p. 7.

[50]Wright, p. 33.

[51]Tietze-Conrat, p. 3.

[52]Wright, p. 33.

Figure 3.
A portion of a Roman scene found in Pompeii depicting pygmies enacting a triumphal procession. (Wright, p. 36)

Figure 4.
Pre-Columbian hunchback (reproduced from Treasures of Ancient America: The Arts of the Pre-Columbian Civilizations, p. 119)

the Roman idea of keeping dwarfs and deformities had it's roots with the Sybarites.[53] From the various Roman pictoral representations found in The Houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and on the walls of private houses, cafes, and other public buildings, it would seem obvious that dwarfs were utilized in dramatic representations of these wars, in comic farces, and in scenes burlesquing well-known public events (figure 3).[54]

The dwarf was not by any means the only deformity which claimed the interest of the ancients. They

> . . . compensated the deformed and the idiot, who can utter nonsense unscathed, with gold. The idiot was not only prized for his idiocy, but for the bodily abnormalities that accompanied or conditioned his absurdity. Quintilian . . . speaks of people who prefer monstrosities to normal human beings. And Plutarch tells of buyers in the Roman markets passing over the most beautiful slave girls and boys, concerned only with hideous cripples and freaks . . . . Naturally the great demand had created this market.
> . . . . . .
> . . . When we read in Martial (VIII, ix) 'He was sold to me as a Cretin. I paid 200,000 sesterces for him. Give me my money back, Cargilianus. He has all his wits about him', it means that not only was the Cretin rated more highly than the rational being, but that imbecility was simulated when it promised some advantage. . . .[55]

What would thus seem to constitute a strong propensity toward the prizing of deformities and a subsequent utilization of these creatures as entertainers in many of the ancient civilizations of Eurasia, may also be evidenced

---

[53]Fiotas-Jonnat, p. 58.

[54]Wright, pp. 33-34.

[55]Fiotas-Jonnat, pp. 13-15.

in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, we find that dwarfs and hunchbacks played special and highly prized roles in almost all areas of high pre-Columbian civilizations.

> Cortez and his conquistadores were amazed to see privileges given to them in the splendid court of Montezuma. Bernardino Sahagún, the sixteenth century Franciscan friar who compiled a chronicle of Aztec life . . . devotes a page to jugglers, musicians and hunchbacks, the professional entertainers of the royal court . . . .[56]

Sahagún, in another work refers to "the many things they [the Aztec deformities] did to bring men pleasure. These were their pages who attended them and brought them solace: dwarfs, cripples, hunchbacks;" (figure 5)[57] while Toribio speaks of "strange collections of human monsters, dwarfs, and other unfortunate persons . . . ." utilized as entertainers in the Aztec court.[58] Further evidence of grotesqueries in Meso-America include:

> A Maya pottery urn of a hunchback . . . found in the vicinity of Guatemala City . . . [dating] . . . about the sixth century . . . . From the Inca empire we have also records which show the special role of the hunchback and dwarf there in pre-Columbian times.[59]
>
> The Mochica also applied their skill to the depiction of the grotesque . . . . The two seated figures with disfigured faces found in volume two, plate 161, figure D [of Pal Kelemen's Medieval American Art] are gruesome reminders of the bodily shortcomings that

---

[56] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[57] Sahagún, Book II, Chapter 10, p. 30.

[58] Benavente Motolinia Toribio, Historia de los Indios de Nueva España (Barcelona, 1914), MS, Parte tres, 7.

[59] Tietze-Conrat, pp. 36-37.

Figure 5.
Drawing of Aztec acrobats, dwarfs, and hunchbacks (reproduced from Bernardino Sahagún's Florentine Codex)

existed among these people.[60]

The favorite subjects of the Inlán potters . . . included warriors, musicians, dwarfs and hunchbacks . . . .[61]

---

[60] Kelemen, p. 206.

[61] Miguel Covarrubias, Indian Art of Mexico and Central America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 90.

## SECTION III

## PRECEDENTS FOR THE ELEVATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF DWARFS

It is interesting to note in many of the ancient civilizations the advent of dwarf gods and the almost immediate establishment of a linkage between such gods and grotesque dramatic entertainers. In the case of the Javanese theatre, such an advent and subsequent establishment is so integral and basic a part of the drama as to suggest that the removal of such creatures from the drama might conceivably herald the collapse of the cosmology and social structure of the society.

The Javanese drama has never been regarded as a "mere institute of art, nor even something which is purely entertainment."[62] It has, on the contrary, had a multiple purpose of entertaining and teaching and has always, until fairly recent times, performed an important and obvious social function. So special and significant a place does it occupy, that from the first moment this peculiar civilization came under scholarly scrutiny, it became clear that Javanese art, literature, religion, social structure

---

[62]Hasser, p. 116.

and world view were all reflected in and might be understood through an understanding of the theatre.[63]

The plays themselves are extremely old. However, " . . . there is reason to believe that the performances briefly referred to in the oldest reports had even then a long history behind them."[64] Although the Wayang purwa (shadow plays using flat leather puppets) is considered the classic form of the many types of Javanese drama, "there are good grounds for assuming that all the main forms of the Javanese theatre belong to one type . . . and run parallel to the shadow play. . . .[65] In speaking of the shadow drama, then, we are in effect speaking of all the forms of the Javanese drama, including the wayang wong in which living, unmasked actors performed.

" . . . The shadow play was originally a rite, e.g., a sacred act which has in itself its reason for existence and can, if need be, dispense with spectators."[66] In every case the repertoire of the wayang theatre is composed of the various lakons, or tribal myths, of the Javanese people. These lakon myths, covering the spirtual life of the entire clan, are based on the Javanese creation myth. According to this myth,

---

[63]Ibid., p. 95.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid., p. 168.

[66]Ibid., p. 129.

> At the beginning of time there arose out of the chaos one being, the highest god Wisesa; then there follows the division into two, things or beings are arranged opposite each other in pairs: heaven and earth; sun and moon; and the brothers, Manik and Maya.[67]

This creation myth is intervowen and reflected in the social structure of the culture and, of course, forms the touchstone and central pivot of the totem or ancester oriented religion of Java; the forms and precepts of which are evidenced in the drama.

Following the sacred precept of a division into two parts, the clan is divided into phratries, right and left.[68] The ancesters of the right and left phratries are Manik and Maya, the two brothers of the creation myth. Manik, sometimes called Guru, is regarded as the true heir of Wisesa. He represents the right phratry and is beautiful in appearance and splendid in color. He is the "good" brother. His brother Maya (or Semar as he is more generally known), represents the left phratry. He is "black in color and of a hideous appearance:"[69] most often being depicted as a dwarf. According to a conversation with Professor James Brandon, Ph.D., Department of Speech and Drama, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, specialist in Far Eastern theatre, Semar is always

---

[67] Ibid., p. 24.

[68] Ibid., p. 58.

[69] Ibid., p. 24.

> At the beginning of time there arose out of the chaos one being, the highest god Wisesa; then there follows the division into two, things or beings are arranged opposite each other in pairs: heaven and earth; sun and moon; and the brothers, Manik and Maya.[67]

This creation myth is intervowen and reflected in the social structure of the culture and, of course, forms the touchstone and central pivot of the totem or ancester oriented religion of Java; the forms and precepts of which are evidenced in the drama.

Following the sacred precept of a division into two parts, the clan is divided into phratries, right and left.[68] The ancesters of the right and left phratries are Manik and Maya, the two brothers of the creation myth. Manik, sometimes called Guru, is regarded as the true heir of Wiseas. He represents the right phratry and is beautiful in appearance and splendid in color. He is the "good" brother. His brother Maya (or Semar as he is more generally known), represents the left phratry. He is "black in color and of a hideous appearance:"[69] most often being depicted as a dwarf. According to a conversation with Professor James Brandon, Ph.D., Department of Speech and Drama, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, specialist in Far Eastern theatre, Semar is always

---

[67] Ibid., p. 24.

[68] Ibid., p. 59.

[69] Ibid., p. 24.

portrayed as a dwarf in the Shadow Drama. To question his physical appearance is comparable to questioning the traditional appearance of Santa Claus. (figure 6)

The social structure and religion are reflected in the creation myth and it conversely reflects them. Therefore, all of these elements are reflected in the lakons. All lakons are tribal myths and all have the same basic motif: the two ancestors of the Javanese people, Naya or Semar, the grotesque dwarf and the beautiful Manik, appear, suffer, and are temporarily defeated. Dying, they bring to their descendents the precious products of culture.[70]

The Javanese theatre mirrors the social and religious organization of the culture both in the plays, which are the actual lakons, and in the technical aspects of production, and thus is "bound up with the entire life of the Javanese."[71] The stage of the wayang play portrays the tribe as a whole and thus is divided into two equal parts.[72] The actors and/or puppets are also subject to this division. All characters, then, must belong to either the right or the left phratry---the right being headed by Manik and being beautiful in appearance, the left by Semar, the dwarf-god of evil power and without exception being

---

[70] Ibid., p. 60.

[71] Ibid., p. 196.

[72] Ibid., p. 58.

Figure 6.
Reproduction of the Javanese Dwarf-God, Semar, and two grotesque left phratry figures, Gareng and Petruk (from Moeberman's Wayang Purwa: Theatre d'ombres en Indonesie, plate 67).

grotesque in appearance.[73]

The scenarios for the plays are, as mentioned above, the actual lakons. In consideration of this, then, we come to the realization that the ". . . Javanese theatrical art is . . . a permanent combination of always the same rite and always the same myth;---that the drama performed is, in fact, a totemistic tribal myth . . . .[74] involving a basic conflict between a good power and an evil one which " . . . at the performances were always portrayed by figures of the right and left [phratries] respectively."[75] There is no instance then, of a Javanese drama in which grotesque in general and at least one dwarf specifically do not occupy prominent roles. The creatures of the left phratry are regarded in the light of demons while those of the right take on godly shapes.

The Lunikmaya,[76] which stands as an example of a representative Javanese lakon, provides us with a more clearly defined picture of the wayang play and the parts taken in them by grotesqueries. The dwarf-god, Maya, posing as the hermit, Hanchaputra, plays a leading role in this drama. Hanchaputra arouses the interest and

---

[73]Although Maya or Semar is always portrayed by a dwarf, the members of his left phratry may be distinguished by other types of deformities and are not necessarily limited to Maya's particular brand of grotesqueness.

[74]Hasser, p. 151.

[75]Ibid., p. 135.

[76]Ibid., pp. 14-19.

curiousity of the god Guru by practising asceticism in the middle of the ocean. Guru goes to him and in the ensuing dialogue, Manikaputra and Guru are firmly identified as the god-brothers Maya and Manik.

Maya's retinue of left-phratry grotesqueries in this play includes Antaboga, a deformed giant, Vishnu, a minor god called brother of Manikaputra; a band of children who are transformed into animals and who attempt the destruction of the sacred fields of foodstuffs; and Malagumarang, commissioned by Guru to attempt a most dangerous and difficult mission.

Of this grotesque company Malagumarang is of special interest as he seems to possess some of the characteristics and prerogatives of the court jester dwarf. Such creatures were kept in the households of the Javanese nobility and would seem to have been identified, as in Egypt,[77] with the dwarf-ancestor-god and to have enjoyed a similar position.

In the Manikmaya Malagumarang turns somersaults and roars with laughter as he sets out on his journey,[78] thus establishing his position of jester. The high position of such persons is indicated by the fact that the greatest reward Guru can think of to bestow on Malagumarang if he accomplishes his mission is to

> . . . make him court jester in heaven and on earth;

---

77See below, pp. 49-50.

78Kasser, p. 16.

> none of the gods may then impede him in any way. Kalagumarang sets out, turning somersaults and roaring with laughter, and taking all kinds of liberties with the gods, who are furious and . . . hope that he will not return to heaven . . . .[79]

The fact that he is able to torment and pester even the gods with impunity suggests that he may do and say whatever he wishes to whomever he wishes. Guru specifically points out that as court jester none of the gods may impede him in any way(much less mortals is the implication).

In the lakon Purwakala, the character of Kalagumarang again appears representing the left phratry and is of a "monsterous" appearance. In the play within a play contained in this lakon, the gods and demons become dalangs or actors, thus indicating the sacred regard in which the actors (and thus the grotesqueries) were held. The very special and highly religious significance of the evil demon grew blurred with time until

> . . . finally the demon came to be regarded as the incarnation of all kinds of hostile magic powers which threaten humanity in general . . . . From this moment the wayang play became in a different way a conflict between a good and evil power.[80]

The sacred precinct in which the plays were originally performed evolved into the temple. In this context it is interesting to note the grotesque sculptured figures which adorn many Javanese temples; especially " . . . in the East Javanese reliefs . . . [there are many] series of

---

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., p. 59.

pictures which . . . are, as far as we know, illustrations of Ishon tales . . . ."[31] These show figures which are undeniably dwarfs and grotesqueries. It is clear then that the fact of the existence of a dwarf-god, together with the division into two phratries, gave rise to the inclusion of dwarfs and grotesqueries as integral parts of the drama and religion of the Javanese people.[32]

The Egyptian dwarf-god, Bes, constitutes still another striking example of the linkage between such gods and grotesque entertainers. The figure of Bes in the Palestine Archaeological museum,[33] exhibits the characteristic pot belly and huge head found in many dwarfs. Pritchard's description of this figure even more definitely identifies the god as "a grotesque dwarf, with shaggy beard and prominent tongue [sic] . . . wears a feather head-dress and is holding an infant Bes and twelve monkeys."[34]

The fact of the inter-relationship which existed between such dwarf-gods and the grotesque dramatic entertainers (referred to above) becomes evident when it is

---

[31] Ibid., p. 197.

[32] The use of grotesqueries in portrayals of characters of the left phratry would have served to instantly identify by phratry the many characters that populate the Ishon tales. Such an identification method would equate with that employed on the Medieval stage (See II, pp. 117-124.

[33] A reproduction of this figure is available in James Pritchard, The Ancient Near East in Pictures (Princeton: University Press, 1954), plate 604, p. 216.

[34] Ibid., p. 222.

pointed out that the worship of the dwarf-god by the Egyptians was inextricably bound up with their drama. Much of the "Egyptian religious ceremonial was carried on in dramatic form. Priests and other initiated persons assumed roles and recited parts in a drama dedicated or appropriate to a religious purpose."[35] Dwarfs often took part in these dramas. While they were utilized in varying roles, that of Bes would naturally have been assumed by such a creature. The dwarf entertainer in question was identified so closely with the god whom he portrayed that he was actually looked upon as being a manifestation of the god[36] and thus his person was most probably considered little short of sacred.

The dwarf-god-entertainer also often filled the role of court jester in the Egyptian civilization. Pepi I, like other Pharaohs, kept such a dwarf-jester. There existed as a result of the identity of the dwarf with god, a parallel identity and interchangeability between the king and his dwarf. Pepi I, for example, considered it advisable to change identities with his dwarf in order to insure a safe voyage on a ritual ship bearing his soul to the islands of the other world.

> Pharaoh was not a mortal but a god. The jester who 'dances the god is god'. That is an equation. From this we can infer the motif of interchangeability and

---

[35]Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 389.

[36]Tietze-Conrat, p. 22.

> hence the proximity of two existences, King and jester. A similar parity is to be found again in the Saturnalia, whether these were celebrated uneventfully in Rome itself, or less uneventfully in the provinces . . . .[87]

The exalted position of the dwarf in the Egyptian civilization, involving a particularly close relationship to and identity with both god and king, led naturally to the recognition of such persons as confidants of royalty. In courts filled with intrigue and self-ambition, they quickly became regarded by the king as reliable sources of truth. As a result of their identification with the king and with god, they had license to say exactly what they wished to whomever they wished without fear of punishment. Also by reason of this identification, and because their high positions were assured, they lacked the self-seeking ambition of other courtiers and it would seem reasonable to assume that their advice would be considered inspired and unbiased. It is possible to see a variation on this theme of the dwarf-jester-wiseman who plays the (court) fool in the stories of the famous Egyptian, Sufi Shuman and in Straparolas' <u>Piacevoli Notti</u>. In these works it is the mentally deformed and deranged who are depicted as wisemen in disguise.[88]

The position accorded Egyptian dwarfs is reflected in that of the dwarfs in many of the other great civili-

---

[87] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 9.

[88] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 50-51.

nations. In Uxmal, one of the principal Yucatanian ceremonial Mayan cities, the "House of the Dwarf" overlooks the entire city, " . . . enabling its occupants to be cognizant of all that was passing around them."[89] The house is reached by a broad, steep stairway.

> At the height of sixty feet is a solid projecting platform on which stands a building loaded with ornaments more richly elaborate and carefully executed than any other edifice in Uxmal . . . . The emblems of life and death appear on the wall in close juxtaposition . . . .[90]

As priests constituted the only actual inhabitants of the Mayan ceremonial cities, we are led to the conclusion that the dwarfs who were the occupants of the House of the Dwarfs held the position at least of priests---if not of an even more sacred god-identified nature. Certainly the description of the building and its location seem to support this view.

The House of the Dwarf is also sometimes referred to as "Casa del Advino" or house of the diviner. Such a nomenclature, implying one who sees the future, one who advises on favorable courses of action, would seem to constitute a fairly substantial body of evidence regarding the esteem in which the Mayans held dwarfs.

The hypothesis regarding the Mayan dwarfs enters the realm of hard fact when we consider the position of

---

[89]John Lloyd Stephens, Incidents of Travel in Yucatan (Norman, Oklahoma: University Press, 1962), Vol. I, p. 203.

[90]Ibid., pp. 203-204.

dwarfs in the Olmec culture of Mexico.

> Olmec art seems to have been the most important if not the only, Mother culure basic for the development of middle american civilization. It was clearly the product of an urban type of society; of an intellectual aristocracy.[91]

A vast majority of the early Meso-american cultural complexes share some degree of Olmec influence, and

> . . . among the most characteristic 'Olmec' sculptures are certain . . . pot-bellied . . . dwarfs with over-sized head, short, flexed legs, large feet, and arms folded over the chest . . . . The style of these figurines is realistic, often with dynamic poses and expressions . . . . These figurines [are] . . . often afflicted with physical deformities: chinless, hump-backed, or clubfooted . . . and are reminiscent of the impish <u>chaneques</u> that infest the coasts of Veracruz and Guerrero, the two basic 'Olmec' strongholds. The <u>chaneques</u> are mischievous dwarfs who are constantly persecuting women and playing unpleasant tricks on human beings. The chaneque concept seems to originate in the wide-spread belief among the Indians of Southern Mexico . . . in 'very old dwarfs with baby faces' who live behind waterfalls and cause sickness . . . but who also provide rain and are masters of wild game and fish . . . . In their hands they carry bolts of lightening in the form of serpents. These dwarfs are strongly reminiscent of their probable pre-columbian ancestors, the ancient rain gods . . . .[92]

We have, then, in the 'Olmec' culture, what seems to constitute a possible origin for the Mayan belief in the magical powers of dwarfs and their subsequent connection with deities. Indeed, in reference to this godly equation, we find that the religious and ceremonial ideas of the creators of the Olmec culture consist almost exclusively of a highly intellectualized cult of Jaguar deities with

---

[91] <u>Coe</u>, p. 53.

[92] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 57.

accompanying hunchbacks, dwarfs, and other freaks.[93] It is not strange then, to find Mayan dwarfs accredited with magical powers and identified to some degree with the gods. And, in fact, the scepter carried by many Mayan priest is adorned with the figure of a grotesque dwarf whose form is that of the Chac chaamanes and which is called the "manikin scepter."[94]

We must not neglect the fact that the Mayan dwarfs, as did the Egyptians and the Javanese, most probably took principal roles in the drama of that civilization. The Mayan ritual drama formed an integral part of the religion of the society[95] with priests constituting the main body of "impersonators". As the dwarf occupied a position in the religious hierarchy that was at least priestly, if not actually approaching the godly, it stands as reasonable evidence that they most probably were active participants in the drama.

In speaking of the ancient civilizations of Meso-america, we must not neglect the dwarfs found in the Aztec civilization of Mexico. Here, while there seems to be less evidence of the dwarf-god interchangeability, the roles of entertainer-counselor to kings, and truth-teller are evident. In the account Cortez gives of Montezuma's court, he speaks of the

---

[93] Ibid., p. 31. [94] Ibid., p. 230.

[95] Francisco Monterde, Teatro Indígena Prehispánico (Mexicanos Aztl) (Mexico: Ediciones de las Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1955), prologo.

> . . . exhibitions of his deformed mountebanks and jugglers of whom a regular corps was attached to the palace. Sometimes he amused himself with his [dwarf] jesters; for the Indian monarch had his jesters, as well as his more refined brethren of Europe at that day. Indeed, he used to say that more instruction was to be gathered from them than from wise-men, for they dared to tell the truth.[96]

Indeed, the position of deformities among the Aztecs was so enviable that Toribio speaks of the physical condition being simulated:

> I must not omit to notice a strange collection of human monsters, dwarfs, and other unfortunate persons, in whose organization Nature had capriciously deviated from her regular laws. Such hideous abnormalities were regarded by the Aztecs as a suitable appendage of state. It is even said, they were in some cases the result of artificial means employed by unnatural parents desirous to secure a provision for the offspring by thus qualifying them for a place in the royal museum.[97]

The position of the dwarf-jester-entertainer as confidant of kings again emerges in the Sanskrit drama of India. The principal characters in all Indian drama include the king, the Vidusaka, the parasite, the heroine, and a companion.[98] Keith identifies the figure of the Vidusaka as,

> The King's confidant and devoted friend . . . a Brahmin, ludricrous alike in dress, speech and behavior. He is a misshapen dwarf, baldheaded, with projecting teeth and red eyes . . . . He is always be the king's side and the latter makes him his confidant in all his affairs.[99]

---

[96]William H. Prescott, <u>The World's Best Histories: Mexico and the Life of the Conqueror Hernando Cortez</u> (New York: The Co-operative Pub. Society, 19--?), Vol. I, p. 400.

[97]Toribio, parte tres, cap. 7.

[98]Keith, p. 361. [99]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 211.

the fact that the Vidusaka is called " . . . the wits of the court . . . ."[100] would seem to indicate his position as that of court jester. This supposition becomes fact in the face of Keith's description of his actions in the Mrcchakatika. In this representative Indian drama the Vidusaka occupies his usual prominent place and serves to introduce the comic relief into the piece.

> With natural good taste . . . however . . . he disappears from the last act where the hero has no need as a member of the Buddha's fraternity for . . . a jester.[101]

We have, then, as a principal figure in Indian drama, the figure of a grotesquely deformed dwarf-jester who serves as the close confidant of kings. Although there is no direct evidence of an actual equation between the Vidusaka and god, there exists a definite connection between him and the Indian religion. Keith, in fact, in making a case for the religious origin of the Indian drama uses him as evidence of such an origin:

> For the religious origin of drama, a further fact can be adduced, in the character of the Vidusaka, the constant and trusted companion of the king, who is the normal hero of an Indian play. The name denotes him as given to abuse, and not rarely in the dramas he and one of the attendants on the queen engage in contests of aerial repartee . . . .[102]

Such a statement stands as indication of a license to

---

[100] Ibid., p. 334.

[101] Ibid., p. 33.

[102] Ibid., p. 39.

impudence being granted the Vidusaka; the power to say and do with impunity whatever he wishes to whomever he wishes. In the Egyptian civilization we have seen such a license together with the very position of confidant and truth-teller as deriving from the dwarf-god equation. It is not impossible, then, that the privileges of the Vidusaka, given his religious derivation, and his high Brahmin caste, might possibly have evolved from a religious connection which at one time was much stronger than that which we see in the written drama. This supposition begins to come much closer to fact when we consider that,

> In India . . . the great Hindoo trinity itself of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva is subject to the sorcerers who . . . exercise such an ascendency over the mightiest deities that these are bound . . . to execute . . . whatever commands the magician may please to issue. There is a saying . . . in India: 'The whole universe is subject to the gods; the gods are subject to the spells; the spells are subject to the Brahmans; therefore, the Brahmans are our gods'.[103]

It is, perhaps, possible to speculate (given the societal diffusion previously discussed) that this ancient identity of the deformed court-jester-dwarf with a god and/or as a wiseman would have contributed to the medieval tradition of such persons being the only humans who could tell their masters the truth; the only ones whose advice a king could <u>confidently</u> follow without fear of a self-advantageous twisting of the facts.[104]

---

[103]Frazer, p. 60.

[104]For a discussion of this tradition see III, pp. 89-96.

## SECTION IV

## THE MEDIEVAL ZEITGEIST

It has been demonstrated that dwarfs and other types of deformities were " . . . undoubtedly kept as servants and entertainers in the courts of nobles and homes of the wealthy as well as having at times occupied much higher and more significant positions from the times of ancient Egypt through the late Roman empire"[105] and even into the civilizations of Meso-America. The precedent thus established for the presence, use, and significance of such persons in ancient times forms an introduction for what we shall see was a similar usage in the Medieval and Renaissance civilization. This opening wedge was immeasurably strengthened by the existence of a zeitgeist which had the effect of facilitating the general acceptance of grotesqueries as reasonable and important parts of the Medieval world view.

The peoples of Medieval Europe were steeped in the earlier religious and secular legends, rituals, superstitions, and folklore passed down from generation unto generation. Even the central power which was The Church

---

[105]Harward, Dwarfs, p. 27.

found it advisable to incorporate rather than to attempt to annihilate, many of the early pagan beliefs of it's subjects.[106] Much of the substance of this body of lore dealt with characters of a super-natural disposition, or at least of enter-natural propensities. In the Medieval mind, animated by a wealth of imaginative capacity, these were endowed with and personified by deformed and grotesque physical attributes, first in spoken verse, song, and dance, and later in the written word. Such are the characters of the Celtic dwarfs,[107] the ancient Irish gobblins and elves,[108] the English Grendel and his dam, and the myriad primitive gods whose personal qualities became characters in and of themselves.[109]

The Church carefully channeled yet another stream of superstition into the minds of the people; and it, too, abounded with characters whose abstract qualities lent themselves to personification in and through grotesque and deformed physical attributes. Such were the characters of the Devil, the Sins, and the Vices (figure 7).

---

[106]Francis Pierrepont Barnard, Medieval England (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 72.

[107]John Rhys, Celtic Folklore Welsh and Manx (Oxford: Clarendon Press, MDCCCXCI), Vol. I, pp. 190-191.

[108]E. P. Cross and C. H. Slover, Ancient Irish Tales (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1936), pp. 1-13.

[109]A. P. Rossiter, English Drama (London: Hutchinson Company, 1950), pp. 15-20.

Figure 7.
Allegory of Folly by Quinten Lassey about 1510. (Tietze-Conrat, p. 23).

Figure 8.
Two line drawings by Brueghel. (Reproduced from a plate in the Kresge Art Library, Michigan State University).

The Medieval imagination, backed by the earlier wealth of lore, and encouraged by the universal need to distinguish the abnormal[110] was equal to the task of such an endowment of physical characteristics. The persons who stepped from the ancient and contemporary fables into the Medieval concept of the world could say with the Christian god---"I Am". For though

> I doubt me, that you do not thoroughly believe the truth of this strange nativity; though you believe it not, I care not much; but an honest man . . . beleeveth still what is told him, and that which he finds written.[111]

The civilization which made up the Medieval and Renaissance period, then, was possessed, through its knowledge and acceptance of ancient and contemporary lore, of a <u>zeitgeist</u> which greatly facilitated the acknowledgement of the importance, powers, and significance of dwarfs and other grotesqueries in its society. Indeed, this acceptance becomes even more clearly defined when we look at the European literature, both of ancient derivation and that which was contemporary with the Medieval and Renaissance society.

---

[110]See above, I, pp. 25-28.

[111]Rabelais, <u>The Five Books of Gargantua and Pantagruel</u> (New York: Random House, 1936), trans. by Jacques le Clercq; Chapter VI, p. 29.

# PART II

# MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DWARFS AND DEFORMITIES

## SECTION V

## GROTESQUE FORMS AND FIGURES IN LITERATURE

The literature and art of every known civilization has served as a reflection of the life and beliefs of the people of that civilization. The heritage of deformity of the Medieval and Renaissance culture provides a tradition and precedent for the presence of such persons. Indeed, one need only glance at the literature of the period to see how liberally it is sprinkled with grotesque and deformed shapes and figures.

The Medieval Celts and their descendents in Ireland, Britain and Brittany share remarkably homogeneous traditions concerning dwarfs, their habitats, and physical descriptions: some are strikingly handsome; more are grotesquely ugly and of hideous and deformed appearance; some are malignant; but the majority are beneficent, given to truth, and despise lying.

Even the word in the various languages bears a resemblance to each other. Old Irish literature

> . . . has a word, <u>ger</u> in the sense of a dwarf, and <u>gerres</u> for a she dwarf. The old Cornish had also <u>ger</u>, which in Breton is written <u>ker</u> with a feminine <u>Korrigan</u> and among the other derivatives she finds <u>korrik</u>, 'a dwarf, a fairy, a wee little sorcerer' . . . . The use of these words in Breton recalls the case of the ger, called Mhudlum or else Merlin teaching his magic to

> Colt, son of Collfrewi. Then we have many uncanny dwarfs in the romances, such, for example, as the rude cor in the service of Dorn ab Nud, as described in . . . Chretien's romance of Erec et Enide and . . . also the cor and corres who figure in the story of Peredur. The latter had belonged to the hero's father and mother until the breakup of the family, when the dwarfs went to Arthur's court, where they lived a whole year without speaking to anyone.[1]

The Celtic tales appearing in Medieval manuscripts fall into four general groups or cycles: the mythological, the Ulster, the Fenian, and the Historical.[2] It is significant to note that dwarfs figure to a greater or lesser degree in each of these cycles. The principal characters of the mythological group are the Tuatha De Danann, the early and magic-ridden rulers of Ireland. The tales of the Tuatha " . . . abound in enchantments and transformations and victory is gained by superior knowledge and wizardry;"[3] both dominant characteristics of the dwarfs.

Many of the tales of this cycle concern the wars between the Tuatha and the fomoire (monstrous giants). When the reign of the Tuatha comes to an end, they become even more closely associated with the magical world of dwarfs and fairies. " . . . Amairgen, poet and judge of the newcomers . . . divided Ireland in two and the half . . . that was underground he gave to Tuatha De Danann

---

[1]John Rhys, Celtic Folklore Welsh and Manx (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), Vol. 2, pp. 671-672.

[2]Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, Celtic Heritage (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961), p. 50.

[3]Ibid., p. 53.

. . . who then went into hills and fairy regions . . . .[4] The underground world, where the dwarfs were reputed to have their homes, was ruled by kings in the same manner as was the upper mortal world. The Journeys of the Tuatha Dadhna and the Death of Fergus affords a full and striking description of a dwarf king and his subjects.[5] In this tale, Aed,[6] the court dwarf[7] of Fergus, is a poet and a man of science. Although the "Journey" is preserved in a form of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it is supposed to date back, in part, to the eleventh.[8]

In connection with the magical powers and intelligence of the Celtic dwarfs and of the Tuatha, we may note that,

> The three plagues that befall Britain in the short tale called 'Lludd and Llefelys' bear certain resemblances to the enchantment of Dyfed and to the despoiling of Tuatha De Danann by the Fomoire. The first of these plagues was wrought by beings called Coraniaid (a name derived from Corr, 'dwarf')---so great was their knowledge that there was no discourse over the face of the island, however low it might be spoken, that they did not know about if the wind met it.[9]

---

[4]Ibid., p. 22.

[5]Harward, Dwarfs, p. 10.

[6]It is interesting to note that the name Aed (meaning fire) belonged to a god of druidism or magic of the Tuatha. Rees, pp. 29-30.

[7]According to Robert Hunter and Charles Morris, Vol. III, p. 2390, in Irish literature dwarfs are often termed leprechans. Leprechaun or Lepreaun is derived from the middle Irish luchorpan, which literally means "wee body".

[8]Harward, Dwarfs, p. 10. [9]Rees, p. 46.

The undisputed and brilliant hero of the second or Ulster cycle is Cuchulainn. In the eleventh century tale, The Destiny of Cuchulainn with Scathach,[10] a dwarf musician who is able to make Cuchulainn laugh or cry at will by playing the harp plays a major role. Another dwarf musician appears in connection with the third or Finian cycle.[11] In the Dallaunn of the Ancients, dating from 1112 to 1167, he is one of several dwarfs discussed when

> . . . In response to the question of St. Patrick about the Fianna of Old Ireland, Skeilte, the ancient one, tells of the finest musician in Scotland or Ireland. One Dhairbell ('diminutive Hut') was a dwarf of only four fists' height . . . the player of . . . music that would not admit to indifference. He was found by Finn on a burial mound and Finn married him to a dwarf wife who was his harpist.[12]

Who who seem to have possessed the occult powers found to so great a degree among the Celtic dwarfs, for they foretold and announced to the Fianna all future good and evil events.

Celtic folklore connects the underground divinities in general and dwarfs in particular with water.[13] In connection with this, the Afanc story[14] deals with a dwarf or afanc who dwelt in a pool. A girl enticed him out of the water so as to bind him with iron chains,

---

[10]Harnard, Dwarfs, p. 20.

[11]Finn, the hero of this group of tales, "served Cormac mac Airt who is believed to have been king of Ireland in the third century A.D." (Rees, p. 77).

[12]Harnard, Dwarfs, p. 19.

[13]Rhys, Vol. 2, p. 4[illegible].

[14]Ibid., Vol. 1, p.130.

> . . . whilst he slumbered with his head on her knees, and with the grip of one hand on her breast. When he woke from his nap and perceived what had been done to him, he got up suddenly and hurried to his old refuge, taking with him . . . the breast of his sweetheart.[15]

Rhys goes on to say that " . . . some take the afanc to be a corporeal demon . . . ."[16] At any rate he seems to be immortal; for in the story of Peredon, that knight cuts off an afanc's head only to find that he lives on. The dwarf in this story lives in a cave and sees everybody that comes without himself being seen[17] thus once again giving us an example of the magic powers imputed to such persons.

Such magical attributes and the fact of their underground homes relegate many of the Celtic dwarfs to a purely mythological status. Many of these literary dwarfs, however, were also influenced by and modeled after counterparts in real life to a very great degree and have acquired in folklore and saga innumerable courtly attributes. Many, indeed, possess the armour and weapons of the Medieval warrior, and Nap, a Celtic dwarf king, bestows gifts for the sports of venery and falconry.[18] Nap and Tubdan, another dwarf king, are Christians into the bargain, thus further demonstrating the influence of the Medieval times.

---

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 490.

[18] Harward, Dwarfs, pp. 32-33.

It is interesting to note what may be construed to be a parallel if not a continuance of the prominence and high position enjoyed by the dwarfs of ancient civilizations in these representatives from Medieval Celtic literature. As has been pointed out, the dwarfs of the ancient civilizations fulfilled a multiplicity of roles. While that of entertainer was consistently present among them, they also served as statesmen, were regarded as wisemen whose advice was considered to be of unimpeachable worth, and were sometimes identified with a god or gods and served in priestly capacities.[19]

Aed, Cne Dheircoil and his wife, and Cuchulainn's dwarf were all court entertainers. There seems to be some evidence, however, to support the view that they, in company with their ancient forebears, concurrently filled other positions of high esteem. Aed is called a poet and a man of science. Cne Dheircoil, his wife, and Cuchulainn's dwarf are all musicians of uncommon skill. The fact that Cne Dheircoil and his wife foretold the future to the Fianna, and that they regarded their prophecies as truth, suggests a correlation with the ancient wiseman and truthteller motif as does the imputation to superior knowledge accorded to the dwarfs who brought about the first of the three British plagues.

---

[19]See above, I, pp. 37-58.

Although we find no conclusive or specific claim to a relationship or identity with a god, the possession of occult powers indicating an affinity, at least, with the supernatural, and the mythological character of many of the Celtic dwarfs, suggests a certain basic similarity.

The literature of the ancient Teutonic peoples also reveals the existence of a definite preoccupation with and elevation of dwarfs. The Poetic Edda,[20] translated from the Icelandic Sæmundar Edda, represents the most famous and important extant example of the folklore and legends of this ancient warlike breed. Serving as a reflection of the cosmological and secular beliefs of its creators, the Eddic poems, like those of the Celtic peoples, abound with dwarfs and giants. The similarities found to exist between the Norse and Celtic literature is by no means strange or incomprehensible.

> The roving Norsemen of the Tenth century . . . were . . . in close contact with Celtic races . . . and in many ways the Celtic influence was strongly felt. It seems likely, then, that . . . [many of the Eddic poems and in particular] . . . the Voluspo, were the work of . . . a poet living chiefly in Iceland, though possibly in the 'Western Isles' in the middle of the tenth century . . . a vigorous believer in the old gods, and yet with an imagination active enough to be touched by the vague tales of a different religion emanating from . . . [the] neighbor Celts.[21]

Dwarfs move throughout the pages of the Poetic Edda

---

[20]Author anonymous. The Poetic Edda (New York: The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1928), trans., Henry Adams Bellows, hereafter referred to as Edda.

[21]Ibid., "Introduction", p. 2.

with ever increasing frequency and prominence. In the introductory "Voluspo: The Wise-Woman's Prophecy", the visionary speaks of the nine worlds acknowledged by the Teutonic races, three of which belong respectively to the elves, the dark elves, and the dwarfs.[22] She then proceeds to account for the birth of the dwarfish race:

> Then sought the gods their assembly seats
> The holy ones, and council held,
> To find who should raise the race of Dwarfs
> Out of Brimer's blood and the legs of Blain.[23]

The wise-woman proceeds to list the dwarfs by name in stanzas ten through thirteen.[24] She then tells of how

> The race of the dwarfs in Dvalin's throng
> Down to Lofar the list must I tell;
> The rocks they left, and through wet lands
> They sought a home in the fields of sand.[25]

After continuing her catalogue in stanzas fifteen and sixteen, she tells of how

> Then from this throng did three come forth
> From the home of the gods, the mighty and gracious;
> Two without fate on the land they found,
> Ask and Embla, empty of might.
>
> Soul they had not, sense they had not,
> Heat nor motion nor goodly hue;

---

[22] Ibid., p. 3, stanza 2 and ff 2. The author or authors of the Eddic poems consistently continue to make a distinction between elves and dwarfs but of what this distinction consists is unclear.

[23] Ibid., p. 6, stanza 9. Interestingly enough, Brimer and Blain are identified as giants in ff 9, p. 6.

[24] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[25] Ibid., p. 7, stanza 14.

Soul gave Othin, sense gave Nomir,
Heat gave Lothur and goodly hue.[26]

It is here significant to note that Othin, who gave to the dwarfs the gift of soul, was the chief of the gods and possessor of many magic powers.[27] Nomir, who gave sense, was a god associated with the gift of prophecy;[28] and Lothur, also called Loki, was known for his treacherous, mischevious, but ingenious nature.[29] Throughout the first half of the Postic Edda the dwarfs are referred to again and again as the possessors of many magic powers[30] and as

---

[26]Ibid., p. 8, Stanzas 17-18.

[27]Ibid., p. 9, ff 1.

[28]Ibid., p. 9, ff 18. [29]Ibid.

[30]In the "Havamal: The Ballad of the High One", which Bellows (Edda, p. 29) calls one of " . . . the oldest relics of ancient Germanic poetry . . . ." the magic runes are spoken of as having been written in part by the dwarfs (p. 62, st. 144). In stanza 161, p. 66, which stands as part of a series or list of musical charms, the author speaks of,

A fifteenth I know that before the doors of Delling
Sang Thjothrorir the dwarf.
Might he sang for the gods, and glory for elves
And wisdom for Hroptatyr wise.

Again in "Hyndlulioth: The Poem of Hyndla" the wisewoman declares in stanza 35, p. 229 that

The sybils arose from Vitholf's race,
From Vilmeith all the seers are.
And the workers of charms are Svarthofthi's children
And from Ymir sprang the giants all.

Vitholf and Vilmeith are designated dwarfs on page 532 of the Index, while the workers of charms, also dwarfs, sprang from the Hallein, Svarthofthi. Finally, in "Fafnismal: The Ballad of Fafnir", the fates are described as being kin to elves and daughters to Dvalin, chief of dwarfs.(p.375)

craftsmen who know no peer.[31] They are typically referred to by name or occupation in a way that implies that the audience was so familiar with the individual dwarfs and their traits as to require no more elaborate identification.

"The Alvessmol: The Ballad of Alvis"[32] marks the first Eddic Ballad in which the principal character is a dwarf. The poem has been dated from the twelfth century and " . . . shows marked traces of Celtic influence."[33] The entire ballad is in the form of a dialogue between the dwarf Alvis (whose name means the all knowing[34]) and the god, Thor. Thor's daughter has been promised to Alvis in marriage but the god insists that the dwarf first prove his knowledge by answering a series of questions. Thor addresses each question to Alvis saying,

> Answer me Alvis! Thou knowest all,
> Dwarf of the doom of men . . . .[35]

---

[31] Ibid., p. 16, st. 37. "Northward a hall in Nithavellir of gold there rose for Sindris' race." Nithavellir is the land of the dwarfs and Sindris is the greatest worker of gold among the dwarfs. In stanza 43, p. 101 of the "Grimnismal" we learn of a ship built by Ivaldi, "the mighty", father of the craftsmen-dwarfs. This ship always brought a fair wind when the sail was set and could be folded up at will and put in a pocket (p. 101, ff 43). In the "Thrymsqvitha" (pp. 177-179) several references are made to the "mighty Frisings" (dwarfs) necklace, a marvelous and magical piece of craftsmanship.

[32] Ibid., pp. 133-134.

[33] Ibid., p. 133.

[34] Ibid., p. 134, ff 1.

[35] Ibid., pp. 136-139: First two lines of every other stanza.

and finally admits:

> In a single breast I never have seen
> More wealth of wisdom old.[36]

The fact that a god's daughter had been promised to a dwarf, together with the implication of the possession of oracular powers ("Thou knowest all/ Dwarf of the doom of men") and astounding wisdom, speak strongly for the prominence of the dwarf's position in the Teutonic mind.

The entire text of the "Reginsmol: The Ballad of Regin"[37] deals with the adventures, fortunes, and misfortunes of dwarfs and gods. Regin, the principal character, is " . . . the son of Hreithmar . . . more ingenious than all other men, and a dwarf in stature; he was wise, fierce, and skilled in magic."[38]

The Ballad deals with the stealing by the god, Loki, of the dwarf Andvari's gold. Andvari puts a curse on the stolen horde:

> Now shall the gold that Gust once had
> Bring then death to brothers twain,
> And evil be for heroes eight
> Joy of my wealth shall no man win.[39]

The gods give the stolen gold to Hreithmar, father of the dwarfs Regin and Fafnir. In trying to gain possession of the gold Fafnir kills his father. Regin now demands his

---

[36] Ibid., p. 199, st. 36.

[37] Ibid., pp. 356-369.

[38] Ibid., p. 356.

[39] Ibid., p. 361, st. 5.

share of the blood-red horde, but Fafnir refuses.

Regin had brought up the hero Sigurth from childhood. He now makes him a sword and urges him to kill Fafnir. At the end of the ballad, after several other adventures, Regin is still urging Fafnir's death on Sigurth.

Immediately following the "Reginsmol", comes "Fafnismal: The Ballad of Fafnir"[40] which is actually a continuation of the adventures of the dwarf brothers Regin and Fafnir and their protege, Sigurth. The three are still battling for the gold when finally Sigurth turns on both the dwarfs, cuts off Regin's head, eats Fafnir's heart, and drinks their blood.[41] He then rushes to Fafnir's lair and gains the gold for himself.

The prominent presence of dwarfs throughout the Eddic examples of Teutonic literature would seem to point once more toward a fulfillment of a need for the elevation of the abnormal. Certainly the dwarfs of both Teutonic and Celtic origin seem to have evolved from a magician-priest and/or god-oriented identification: their magic powers, their wisdom, their oracular powers all seem to corroborate such a hypothesis as does their potential for destructive vengeance as evidenced by Regin and Fafnir. These same traits also tend to strengthen the argument for the existence of a pronounced parallel with the

---

[40]Ibid., pp. 370-395.

[41]Ibid., pp. 394-395.

ancient motif of wisdom and truthteller.[48]

This continuing tradition of the dwarf as entertainer, truth-teller and wise-man, and in general a person of high repute, trusted and intellectually able to fill positions of importance in aristocratic circles, may again be seen in " . . . the transformation he undergoes in the folktale 'Solomon and Marcolf' which dates from the early thirteenth century (in England) . . . . Marcolf, [Solomon's dwarf] puts Solomon in his place . . . ."[49] and Solomon, who he places great faith in the dwarf's wisdom, stays there. The motif seems to be a continuous one, emerging again and again among the characters of the dwarfs of the Medieval romances. One of the most important of these dwarfs, and one who may also be traced to the Medieval custom of

---

[48]According to George S. Adams, Civilization During the Middle Ages (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 9, at the time of the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. the Teutonic peoples had already been in close contact with Rome and to some degree had assimilated many aspects of their culture. They would then have had the opportunity to come in contact with the ancient motifs which governed the use and significance of grotesqueries. The Celtic literature was influenced by the Teutonic. Both abound in grotesqueries. Both employ the ancient motifs, but neither had a religious dogma containing a dwarf god; nor were their chiefs considered as gods. It would seem reasonable and logical to suppose, then, that the ancient views concerning grotesqueries were incorporated into these two societies--which already possessed a belief in magic, monsters, hobgoblins, and fairies and where dwarfs and grotesqueries were already regarded as entertainers.

[49]Gillette-Dornet, p. 55.

being a court dwarf, is the spying dwarf who betrays Tristan and Isolde. Following is a short summary of the incidents in which the dwarf appears, taken from V. J. Harward's "The Dwarfs of Arthurian Romance and Celtic Tradition."

> Mark brings to the jealous and suspicious Mark a dwarf named Aquitain, who lives nearby and who has read all the present and the future in the stars. Hearing his lord that Tristan is indeed Iseult's lover, he leads the king to the linden tree, and they climb up to await the lovers' tryst. Tristan espies them by their reflection in the water and thereby spoils the plot. Mark in anger orders to kill the dwarf, but he escapes. Iseult later finds the creature in the forest and, not knowing that he has lost the king's favor, brings him back and obtains pardon for him from Mark.
>
> Installed in the king's court, the dwarf proposes another scheme. He places flour on the floor behind the queen's bed and Tristan's, stations men with guards outside the door, and hides himself beneath the bed. Tristan is unable to resist his desire; the insertion of his leg to Iseult's cold opens his wound and he stains the bedclothing with blood. At a signal from the dwarf, the guards burst in, and Tristan, in the leap back to his own bed, touches the flour with his foot. At Mark's orders he is seized and both he and Iseult are condemned.[44]

The dwarf is a court dwarf. Harward goes on to quote Loroul[45] who indicates that "the creature is some sort of court entertainer" and describes him as clever, witty of speech, and able to read the stars. He gives him a "short hunched body and a large head", realistic physical characteristics of dwarfs.

Here again, then, we have a dwarf entertainer with

---

[44]Harward, Dwarfs, p. 174.

[45]L. L. Loroul, The Romance of Arthur (Oxford: University Press, 1959), as quoted in Harward, Dwarfs, p. 172.

occult powers (able to read the stars) whose advice seems consistently to be followed by his master.

Most of the medieval romances came to England from Celtic tradition via a French refinement.

> As early as nineteen hundred and one the eminent folklorist Sir John Rhys surmised 'the uncanny dwarf of Celtic story would seem to have served in one way or another, as a model for other dwarfs in the French romances and the literature of other nations who came under the influence of these romances'.[46]

Harwell, in "The Dwarfs of Arthurian Romance and Celtic Tradition", identifies Follon, the hermit-mole of Lancelot in the romances of the Grail legend, with the Welsh dwarf Bell, and goes on to point out that in the legends, Follon plays the double role of hermit-mole and dwarf king of the Grail Castle. "It must be more than a coincidence", he goes on to say, " . . . that in Chretien de Troyes appears a dwarf who is a hermit and the whom other resemblances to Follon. Almost all of the hermits of the romances can be traced back to Follon and so are dwarfs. If so--why not the hermits of the Inner Circle?"[47]

The medieval romanticists, finding in their sources numerous dwarfs, utilized them subsidiarily in their works, adding features " . . . like the 'comic' nose and humble birth from dwarfs not in real life."[48]

---

[46]Harwell, Dwarfs, p. 1.

[47]Ibid., p. 71. For a complete discussion of the hermits in the Inner Circle, see Loomis, III, pp. 199-206.

[48]Ibid., p. 80.

> that the little figures who appear throughout the romances are properly dwarfs is usually clear because they are called 'dwarfs', 'nains', or 'ensnaes'. Usually also they are described as short and small . . . . Many figures not specifically labelled dwarfs can be easily identified by their epithet or by related reference to their size . . . . The dwarf in Gerin and the Dwarf . . . 'was not big, but he was broad and his hands were big and . . . .'[49]

Leland "Stubbs Wolfgang in 1,01 in his Zwergen und Zwerge in Altfranzösischen Epischen Dichtungen (Stuttgart, 1,00), concluded that most of the French romances are patterned after real court dwarfs."[50]

There would seem to be a definite indication of a double influence affecting itself in regard to the characters of these literary dwarfs of the medieval period. On the one hand, a consciousness thereof is visible which ties the medieval literary dwarf to his more realistic ancestors through the strong similarity of the roles played by each in his respective culture. The survival of such a type of a supernatural affiliation and the use of this affiliation in obtaining the position of truth-teller and prisoner is apparent, as is the fact that apparently no matter how high a position in court life such creatures attained, they seemingly without exception concurrently fulfilled the role of entertainer.

Operating simultaneously with this influence is that exerted by the currently functioning society. As has

---

[49]Ibid., p. 33.

[50]Ibid., p. 2.

been joined and in the processing pages, the dwarfs of the romances were frequently modeled after their counterparts in real life. They appear in the romances with the full resemblance of courtly manner and attire. Who were these real-life models? To how great an extent did they dominate the Medieval and Renaissance scene? Certainly an overpowering wealth of tradition and heritage seems to have prepared a significant place for their occupancy.

The tradition of grotesqueries as entertainers in general and participants in dramatic entertainments in particular has been established. If it is found that the roles fulfilled by such creatures correlate to any significant extent with the roles fulfilled by their deformed antecedents, we will have the basis for establishing the significance attached to the use of grotesqueries in the Medieval and Renaissance dramatic entertainments.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE DWARFS AND [illegible] OF OLD ROME AND RENAISSANCE ROCCOCO: [illegible], [illegible], AND SEMI-MONSTERS

There is little difficulty in accounting the prominent existence of dwarfs and other grotesqueries in the Medieval and Renaissance periods.[51] Whether records detailing life in the court and aristocratic circles of the times, together with the visual records afforded us throughout the art of the period,[52] effectively serve to banish any lingering doubtings on the part of scholars toward a wholesale relegation of the dwarfs of Medieval folktale and romance to a realm of make-believe. Indeed, the many references to and accounts of grotesqueries provided by such records lead us to conclude that they must have been regarded as essential household

---

[51] [illegible] Schultz, [illegible] [illegible] (Leipzig, 1909), V, p. 279 as quoted in Mannara, [illegible], p. 37.

[52] It would, perhaps, be well to note, before proceeding further into this examination, that according to Arnold Williams, Professor of Comparative Literature, Michigan State University, H. W. Anderson, [illegible], and Thomas Wright, [illegible], the great majority of painted and sculptured records from the Medieval and Renaissance times were taken from real life and/or dramatic representation viewed by the artist and may be regarded as fair representations of the life and drama of the times.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE DWARFS AND GROTESQUES OF MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MODELS: HIGH PLEASURE, WORK, AND SUPERSTITION

There is little difficulty in documenting the prominent existence of dwarfs and other grotesquerie in the Medieval and Renaissance periods.[51] Written records detailing life in the court and aristocratic circles of the times, together with the visual records afforded us throughout the art of the period,[52] effectively serve to banish any lingering tendency on the part of scholars toward a wholesale relegation of the dwarfs of Medieval folktale and romance to a limbo of make-believe. Indeed, the many references to and accounts of grotesqueries provided by such records lead us to conclude that they must have been regarded as essential household

---

[51] Alwin Schultz, Das Höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesänger (Leipzig, 1889), V, p. 270 as quoted in Barnard, Dwarfs, p. 37.

[52] It would, perhaps, be well to note, before proceeding further into this examination, that according to Arnold Williams, Professor of Comparative Literature, Michigan State University, H. D. Anderson, British Art Imagery in English Medieval Churches, and Thomas Wright, A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art, the great majority of painted and sculptured records from the Medieval and Renaissance times were taken from real life and/or dramatic representation viewed by the artist and may be regarded as fair representations of the life and drama of the times.

features, often being looked upon as members of the family.

A figure which has been assumed to be a dwarf retainer of William the Conqueror (1027?-1087) appears in the Bayeux Tapestry under the inscription:

VBI. WANNIL: WVISNEL: DVIS
VERNANT: ADWIDONE
FVRGELDIS

In the Chronicle of a certain Johannes de Oxenedes, probably a monk at the Norfolk monastery of St. Benet, appears as quoted by V. J. Harward, the following entry under the year 1249: "At the same time there was a certain mannikin named John, nineteen years old but scarcely three feet high, whom the queen led with her as a prodigy."[54] The queen in question was Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III. The mannikin was evidently a dwarf and accompanied the royal suite on it's frequent journeys.[55]

Much fuller detail concerning several similar dwarfs is supplied by the household records of Mahaut, Countess of Artois and Bourgogne from 1302 to 1329.[56] When her father, Robert II, died in 1302, the countess assumed responsibility for one of these, the dwarf Colot Jean,

---

[53]Bree Maclagan, The Bayeux Tapestry (Harmondsworth, 1949), plate 2.

[54]T. F. Tout, "Oxenedes or Oxnead, John de", Dictionary of National Biography (London: 1921-1922) XV, p. 12, as quoted in Harward, Dwarfs, p. 40.

[55]Ibid., p. 12.

[56]Jules Marie Richard, Une Petite-nièce de Saint Louis, Mahaut, comtesse d'Artois et de Bourgogne (Paris, 1887), as quoted in Harward, Dwarfs, pp. 40-41.

who had been brought from Sicily some time before and who was one of Robert's most loyal servants. Rehaut bestowed on Jean a lifetime annuity of twenty livres and guaranteed him a permanent home with her household. In 1304 he married, but his wife soon died. He remained with the countess until 1322, when he retired to the Abbey of Maubuisson. He died there in 1329.

In 1309 this same Rehaut "purchased a fine robe of vair as a gift to the dwarf of the queen of Navarre"[57] thus emphasizing her admiration of him. In the letters of Philip II to his daughter, the household dwarf is frequently mentioned in a way that suggests she was regarded as a member of the family, while the portrait of Isabel Clara Eugenia (1590), variously attributed to Bartolome Gonzalus and Felipe de Liano, depicts her with her dwarf by her side.[58]

The few examples detailed above are representative of the many references to dwarfs which exist among the records of the periods in question. Prominent as is the presence of the dwarf, however, his was by no means the only type of deformity which claimed the interest of the Medieval and Renaissance nobility. As in the case of

---

[57]R. S. Loomis, "Chevalric and Dramatic Imitations of Arthurian Romance", Medieval Studies in Memory of Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 89.

[58]Tietze-Conrat, pp. 27-28.

the ancient civilizations[59] the aristocracy delighted in the acquisition of every form and variety of grotesquery. Virtually every noble household, it would seem, had it's quota of such persons, and indeed, the indications are that their presence was considered essential to the household's well-being and prestige.

The paintings of the period bear mute testimony to the presence of such specimens as Eugenia Martinez Vallejo, a five year old dropsical looking child.[60] Deformity in the shape of grotesquely ugly facial features also appears to have been prized as is evidenced by the heads depicted in figures 9, 23, and 24; while in Ribera's portrait of the Neopolitan boy (figure 10), not only does the child have a club foot and a crippled right arm, but appears to be dumb as well, judging from the evidence of the banderol in his left hand. Above all the other afflictions, the grimace of the cretin is evident,[61] indicating a continuing preoccupation with the sub-human first noted in Roman times.[62]

Falling into this category of freaks are certain dwarf-idiots such as Nino de Vallecas (1640) (figure 11)

---

[59]See above, I, pp. 34-35.

[60]Reproductions of two paintings of this child may be found in Mathe-Courat, p. 16.

[61]Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[62]See above, I, pp. 34-35.

Figure 9.
The Jester Claus von Ranstadt by Hans Lautensack, c. 1533, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 21)

Figure 10.
Painting of a deformed Neopolitan boy by Ribera, 1652, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 35)

Figure 11.
El Nino de Vallecas by Velazquez, 1648, (Tietze-Conrat p. 34)

Figure 12.
Sebastian de Morra by Velazquez, 1648, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 34)

and Sebastiano de Morra (1643) (figure 12). Such creatures become pathetic indeed when compared to their exalted and intelligent fellows.[63] Sebastiano de Morra especially, is an object for pity as he,

> . . . sits himself down before the painter like a puppet: his limbs stiff and the body merely bent in two. Sitting down like this he seems smaller than he really is. And on top of this toy is a head which gazes trustingly at the painter, pleading to be understood.[64]

Our first reaction when gazing upon the forms and faces of such grotesqueries is perhaps, to wonder what possible value such creatures could have had other than that of curiousities. Here, too, however, as has seemingly ever been the case, a multiplicity of role-playing was effected, which in all cases and most prominently included that of entertainer.

Although some such freakish specimens were kept primarily for purposes of display, they seem to have served, even in this ignominious capacity as living illustrations " . . . of some kind of human [stereotyped] activity---rather like Massey's 'Moneychanger'---or as an . . . allegory . . . ."[65] The grotesqueries depicted in figures 7 and 13 serve as vivid examples of deformities that were so used. Certain deformic characteristics came

---

[63]See below, II, pp. 31-32.

[64]Mistre-Comrat, p. 30.

[65]Ibid., p. 19.

to be taken as moral symbols,[66] and, in effect, ". . . mental and moral disfigurements . . . [were] . . .reflected in . . . physical deformity . . . ."[67]

Such creatures seem to have been utilized in this capacity of living illustrations primarily in two ways. There is evidence that such creatures took part in the theatrical entertainments of the period portraying the vices with which their deformity had allied them or characters whose moral make-up included such characteristics. This usage became of especial importance and significance in the Medieval religious drama. Deformed grotesqueries often took the roles of Vices or Sins in the morality plays. Such creatures also came to be utilized in the portrayal of reprehensible characters whose duties when played by non-deformed actors caused the audience to look upon them with favor. The supposition is that the eventual portrayal of such characters by grotesqueries was the result of an attempt to keep the character's moral deformities in the forefront of the audience's mind by virtue of a deformed external appearance.[68]

These freakish specimens also served in the

---

[66]Alfred Harbage, As They Liked It (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 13.

[67]Robert Withington, Masquerade in English Drama (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1937), p. 1[illegible].

[68]For a more detailed discussion and documentation of such usages, see below, pp. 117-124.

Figure 13
Monkly depiction of Gluttony by Francisco Goya, (from a plate in the Kresge Art Library, Michigan State University)

Figure 14
A Crotesque Morris Dance from an etching by Daniel Hopfer about 1520, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 24).

Figure 15
A court fool, from a woodcut about 1552. (Lacroix, p. 229)

Figure 16
Detail of the painting "Las Meninas" by Velazquez, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 30).

everyday life of noble households as constant reminders of the virtues of humility, the sin of pride, etc. and could have been effectively utilized to keep the tyranny which might possibly result from a lack of such qualities in a person of power at a premium.[69]

Aside from their activities as living illustrations, these grotesqueries were employed in various other types of entertainments. The grotesque Morris Dance (c. 1500) depicted in figure 14 represents one such utilization; the antics of the court jester comprise another. The jesters and court fools of the Medieval and Renaissance period seem most often to have been dwarfs. Occasionally, however, such personages were deformed in some other striking way. Figure 15 shows a facsimile of a woodcut (c. 1552) which depicts a creature belonging to this latter category. The jester who is the subject of the woodcut, while not a dwarf, is certainly deformed and appears to be a natural fool into the bargain.

The court dwarfs of the Medieval and Renaissance period enjoyed, as did their forebears in ancient civilizations, a great deal of favor, prestige, and an almost unlicensed leave to speak and do as they wished. These privileges were granted indiscriminately to all court dwarfs regardless of mental capacity. In "Las Meninas" (1656) (figure 16), the hydrocephalic dwarf with the

---

[69] Oates, p. 52.

pinched mouth, Maria Barbola, has no trace of servility in her face; nor does she curtsey or surround her mistress with courtly attention. "There is even a note of defiance in her pose, as if she knew that her place lay on some other level . . . ."[70] The more intelligent dwarfs, however, were highly regarded by their masters not only for their physical defects and entertainment value, but also, in many cases, for intellectual services rendered.

Triboulet, jester to Rene de Anjou, is a striking case in point. Although historians have frequently described Triboulet as a dwarf, Brian Vickers-Sonnet, in her Dwarfs and Jesters As Art, assigns him to a different category of freaks. At any rate, records indicate that for the more than twenty years of his service he was highly honored and held in great esteem by his master[71] and was the recipient of many expensive gifts from other noble admirers.

> The most striking proof . . . [of his] . . . standing with the king . . . is the medal of Triboulet by Francesco Laurana, the court sculptor. The medal, the classic award of immortality to a person, was made not only because of the extraordinary ugliness of the jester, but in order to establish his worth as an individual . . . for all posterity.[72]

Hans Leutemmach's painting of the jester Claus Von Renstadt (c. 1533) (figure 9), graphically illustrates

---

[70] Ibid., p. 35.

[71] Ibid., pp. 41-43.

[72] Ibid., pp. 43-45.

another such grotesquely ugly jester noted for his quick intelligence. Gilletto, jester at the court of the Este in Ferrara[73] and Don Antonio el Inglese[74] are also examples of dwarf-jesters famed for their wit and learning, while El Primo (1444) (figure 17) " . . . held a recognized position at court . . . as the King's undersecretary and keeper of the Seal."[75]

Cripples, who were also considered to be deformities, used their twisted limbs to help them to special and highly regarded places in Medieval court society (figure 18). Members of the nobility often kept such a creature near them " . . . with whom . . . they would converse, often talking politics with him."[76] Indeed, such a position in a noble house was so dearly coveted that some persons attempted to feign this type of deformity.[77]

In examining the various roles played by the dwarf in the Medieval and Renaissance societies, two striking correlations of usage between this period and the ancient civilizations discussed in Part One emerge. The first of these concerns itself with what seems to be a parallel of the dwarf-jester equation with visceral-

---

[73]Ibid., p. 45.

[74]Ibid., p. 30.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid., p. 15.

[77]Wright, p. 207.

Figure 17
"El Primo" by Velazquez from
(Tietze-Conrat, p. 34)

Figure 18
A crippled minstrel from
a woodcut (Wright, p. 307).

truth-teller.[78] The evidence for such a parallel, which we found also to exist in literature[79] appears again and is substantiated in the actual court life of the Medieval and Renaissance period. Here again we have found recognition of the intelligence and learning of dwarfs together with a tendency to elevate such persons to positions of influence in the government.

Even more significant is the evidence which points to rulers of nations listening to and following the advice of their dwarfs, who speak out with no fear of retribution.

> . . . In the life of Tiberious, Suetonius . . . describes how one dwarf at table, among the other jesters of his suite, ventured to interpose a remark on the emperor's politics. The emperor . . . acted in accordance with the wishes of the dwarf.[80]

The same motif extends into the realm of dramatic entertainment, again paralleling ancient usage. In the painting which depict "The Return of the Prodigal Son" (1575) and "Mary Magdalene Shown the Worldly Delights" (1588) (figures 19 and 20), both of which are taken to be representations of actual theatrical entertainments of the Medieval and Renaissance era, it is the jester who points the moral---who is the discerning one. In the former painting, he points the finger of scorn at participants in the scene while exhorting the audience to avoid

---

[78]See above, I, 46; 47; 49-50; 52.

[79]See above, II, pp. 67; 68-69.

[80]Tietze-Conrat, p. 15.

Figure 19
"The Prodigal Son" from an engraving by Jacob de Gheyn about 1575, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 53).

Figure 20
"Mary Magdalene Shown the Worldly Delights" from an engraving by Lucas van Leyden, first half of the sixteenth century, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 53).

such reprehensible conduct; while in the latter example it is evidently his office to purge the audience's delight with the grandeur spread out to tempt such "fools" as they. Paintings such as these bear fairly reliable evidence of the use of the fool in a moralizing capacity in the drama of the Medieval and Renaissance period. Such a usage would seem to indicate by it's very existence the acceptance of the court fool as one qualified to moralize to the audience; and as one whose wisdom is of unquestioned value and whose advice well worth consideration.

The same general wise fool motif[21] is to be found in the drawing of Anton Moller the elder in Albertina (1596) " . . . where the fool is depicted between two 'savants' arrogant in their wisdom---'The secret of wisdom is open to me'---the misshapen dwarf in their midst says ---'I cannot compete with fools who are eaten up with wisdom.'"[22]

While there is no evidence from the Medieval and Renaissance period which establishes a dwarf-god relationship (as was the case in the Egyptian, Asian, and Nero-

---

[21]It is interesting to speculate on the extent to which deformed and/or dwarfed court fools, through their advice to and manipulation of kings and their affairs, have influenced the history of the world. Even the famous occult Tarot cards of the Bohemians, dating back to the time-misted emergence of this wandering race, have, as the principal card of the pack that which depicts the court fool. The meaning of the Tarot fool has been lost, but legend has it that <u>with the understanding of the fool</u>, manipulation of the pack foretells the fate of the world.

[22]Mistus-Dewrit, p. 56.

american cultures)[93] it would seem that nothithstanding, the dwarf has retained many of the prerogatives which originally had their origin in such a relationship. The fact that "the secret of wisdom" is purported as being open to the dwarf, and not, one assumes, to his non-deformed wisemen companions, suggests that he is credited with knowledge beyond the scope and ken of the ordinary mortal. Although I have not been able to locate specific instances in the records of the times relating to dwarfs being credited with supernatural powers, we may, perhaps, be allowed to speculate that the literary references to such powers[94] are not entirely without some foundation in fact. The accreditation of such powers (as reading the future in the stars, etc.) to dwarfs would tend to cloak them with an aura of invincibility and, perhaps, to some extent accounts for what seems to be a label of infallibility.

The dwarf in Anton Heller's drawing states that he "cannot compete with fools who are eaten up with wisdom". Tietze-Conrat seems to concur with this view in saying that the deformic fool " . . . as opposed to the naturally formed wiseman has one advantage from the outset, in that he is incapable of glorying in his wisdom as the wiseman is always tempted to do."[95] Why should this be

---

[94]See above, II, pp. 62; 65; 69; 70-71; 72.

[95]Tietze-Conrat, p. 55.

Figure 21
"Two Kings of Spain" by Alonso Cano, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 41).

Figure 22
Detail of the painting of "Prince Baltasar Carlos with his dwarf", by Valazquez, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 31).

so? Such an ability to rise above all temptation would seem to belong to one who is already set above the common (mortal) man in some way and who, by reason of this position, lacks the self-seeking ambition of other courtiers.

The ancient dwarf-wisemen relationship was comprised within a three-way equation which included the identification of the king with the dwarf.[96] This identification is as strikingly and indisputably present in the Medieval and Renaissance period as is that of the dwarf with the wiseman.

The dwarfs of the royal households, whether they were classed as wisemen or belonged to the ranks of the fools, were habitually dressed in kingly garb and often impersonated their royal masters---in theatrical entertainments as well as for their private amusement. The painting entitled "Kings of the Goths" by Alonso Cano (1631?), generally accepted as a depiction of court buffoons dressed up as kings, illustrates this habit as does Cano's "Kings of Spain" (1670) (figure 21). The portraits depicted in figure 22 are joined by the common inscription "Ism et Reginia de Tunis" (1640) and are also accepted as grotesqueries in the form of dwarfs impersonating royalty. Attempts have been made to identify the grotesque old lady shown in figure 24 with the queen of the

---

[96]See above, I, pp. 43-46.

Figure 23
Rex et Regimia de Tunis, from an engraving by Wenzel Hollar. (In Tietze-Conrat, p. 13).

Figure 24
Grotesque old Woman by Quinten Massys, c. 1510.

Figure 25
Grotesque old Man by Quinten Massys, c. 1513.

(Tietze-Conrat, p. 13)

"Men of Regimia".[97] Baltasar Carlos' dwarf (Figure 22) has been diagnosed as a hydrocephalic cretin and is an example of the "sub-human" dwarfs who, in comparing with their more intelligent fellows, shared in the idealization with royalty. In the portrait he appears with his young master playing at being king. The fact that the court dwarfs of the Medieval and Renaissance period could and frequently did impersonate their masters, taken together with the fact that they could be so " . . . unpunished and even in the presence of the heir to the throne (as in the case of Baltasar Carlos' dwarf) proves that the idea of the parallel between the king and the fool . . ."[98] has been retained.

Supporting the existence of such a parallel still further is the fact that "the dwarf-fools at court . . . were often given the title of king . . . . Queen Elizabeth had an Italian jester whom she called Lowrich because he was so great a lord he needed no land."[99] Philip IV called his dwarf-jester after a pirate king; a dwarf-jester in Navarre addressed the heir to the throne

---

[97]Although there have been some who have attempted to discount Leonardo's drawing as more caricature, Brian Pieters-Gerhart contends that it was a portrait and that this same dwarf turns up again in other sketches in too complete a form to be a mere fantasy. "The fact that the dwarf is wearing a Dutch coif could be explained if her home had been in the North. Dwarfs were brought from all parts of the globe to the courts." p. 91.

[98]Ibid., p. 93. [99]Ibid., p. 19.

to his _[illegible]_ rather, thus implying a prior claim to the king's; and hence the Greek number has a [illegible] the king of [illegible].[20]

A well-[illegible] theory, then, runs through the history of civilizations establishing the presence and prominence of [illegible] and other [illegible] in mythic from [illegible] and through medieval and Renaissance times. Even more fascinating, however, is the existence of the same basic motifs governing the significance of the [illegible]-[illegible]: the [illegible]-[illegible] [illegible]. These motifs had definite application in the [illegible] of [illegible] in the recognized theoretical [illegible] of the medieval and Renaissance eras.

---

[20] _[illegible]_.

## SECTION VII

## EMBLEMS AND DEFORMITIES IN DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENTS

The Medieval period has hitherto been the recipient of attention and respect among theatre historians almost exclusively as a result of the rebirth of drama per se which took place within it's boundaries. In the general tumult of scholastic fever surrounding the mystery, miracle, saint, and morality plays, it is only too easy to lose sight of the several other types of dramatic entertainments which flourished during and were representative of this period and that of the Renaissance.

Foremost among such entertainments stand the tournaments, pageants, and royal entries. Although it has not, perhaps, been the practice to regard these activities in the light of their dramatic elements, such elements were definitely present. Indeed, as the periods progressed, the dramatic focus in tournaments, pageants, and royal entries increased, finally reaching a point at which such activities were downright theatrical in nature. Such dramatic entertainments enjoyed a popularity and importance within the structure of their societies which at least equaled that of the more conventional form of drama.

## The Tournament

The tournament provides us with what is, perhaps the most striking example of the expanding dominance of dramatic elements in what was originally a completely non-theatrical activity. While tournaments " . . . of the eleventh and twelfth centuries . . . had been mock battles . . . [these] of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries could fairly claim to be artistic entertainments . . . ."[91] For as they gained in popularity and frequency of presentation, the original purpose of a training ground for warriors became obscured in a morass of conspicuous consumption with each lesting nobleman attempting to outdo his neighbor in pomp and spectacle. The elegant performances which resulted

> . . . conformed to an etiquette as elaborate as . . . their . . . staging. This transformation occurred in all Christian countries over approximately the same period of time, with England having as much to contribute as to receive. It is thus permissible to supplement the sundry records of procedure in one country with those pertaining to another.[92]

As the tournaments grew in complexity of design and execution, various forms began to emerge. The most elaborate and spectacular of these was called the "Pas d'Armes". In this intricate entertainment,

---

[91] Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages: 1300 to 1660 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), Vol I, p. 49.

[92] Ibid.

> . . . it was normal to erect an artificial obstacle, with lists adjacent, in the streets and squares of towns. Castles, gateways, and arches were set up to be defended against all comers, descriptions of which correspond closely with the pageants created for royal fêtes . . . .[93]

Following the general pyramiding tendency of conspicuous consumption, the tournament entrepreneurs were not satisfied to stop with the achievement of dazzling and complicated visual embellishments to the core conflict. "A labyrinthine, allegorical fantasy was . . . [sent] thought necessary to explain the presence of the knight"[94] in which the basic conflict was surrounded with expository plot devices and complications and which even included spoken dialogues. These dramatic elements joined forces with the established spectacle; thus, bringing the tournament to the status of a ". . . species of mixed heroic drama, the central action of which [remained] the actual combat."[95]

Dwarfs played important and varied roles in these allegorical tournaments. The execution of one of these roles had to do with the surviving identification of king with jester.[96] It was the custom for hosting royalty to view the tournament from an advantageously situated pavilion. Dwarfs often impersonated their masters at the tournaments.

---

[93] Ibid., p. 17.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., p. 12.

[96] See above, II, pp. 26-27.

They took their places on the pavilions and were accorded the same respect and obeisance as if they had, in truth, assumed their actual identity with their clothes. The partial description of an allegorical scene in one of King René of Anjou's tournaments[97] gives us an example of this practice. The description includes mention of a dwarf dressed as a Turk who joins another dwarf apparelled in the same fashion on a rich pavilion, presumably to view the jousts. As the tournament evidently could not proceed until the two dwarfs had appeared and seated themselves, it is evident that they were not only portraying royalty, but that royal protocol was being observed toward them. Alonso Cano's "Kings of the Goths" and his "Kings of Spain" (figure 21) are generally accepted as depicting yet another instance of this habit.[98]

In addition to the impersonation of royalty at tournaments, dwarfs were utilized in roles of a more participative nature. Several of these are illustrated in the following account:

> . . . Between 1510 and 1512 there appears in the household records [of Lahaut, countess of Artois] a certain Perrinet, sometimes called 'le petit nain'. Since he is not listed among the valets and since he is also referred to as 'le petit folet', he was Lahaut's jester. He frequently received gifts of apparel, one of which was . . . the specially made outfit of a knight . . . . After 1512 Perrinet

---

[97] Quoted on p. 94 below.

[98] Pijoan-Soubirat, p. 37.

They took their places on the pavilions and were accorded the same respect and obeisance as if they had, in truth, assumed their actual identity with their clothes. The partial description of an allegorical scene in one of King René of Anjou's tournaments [97] gives us an example of this practice. The description includes mention of a dwarf dressed as a Turk who joins another dwarf apparelled in the same fashion on a rich pavilion, presumably to view the jousts. As the tournament evidently could not proceed until the two dwarfs had appeared and seated themselves, it is evident that they were not only portraying royalty, but that royal protocol was being observed toward them. Alonso Cano's "Kings of the Goths" and his "Kings of Spain" (figure 21) are generally accepted as depicting yet another instance of this habit.[98]

In addition to the impersonation of royalty at tournaments, dwarfs were utilized in roles of a more participative nature. Several of these are illustrated in the following account:

> . . . Between 1410 and 1412 there appears in the household records [of Lahaut, countess of Artois] a certain Perrinet, sometimes called 'le petit nain'. Since he is not listed among the valets and since he is also referred to as 'le petit folet', he was Lahaut's jester. He frequently received gifts of apparel, one of which was . . . the specially made outfit of a knight . . . . After 1412 Perrinet

---

[97] Quoted on p. 94 below.

[98] Mistre-Gomez, p. 37.

> Disappears from the records but from 1919 on, his place was apparently taken by Jermet 'le folet' or 'le petit folet'. For the latter Arbent bought various equipment including military dress and a wooden horse. At Gaillac in 1921 he tilted at a quintain.[99]

The above quote seems to testify to the fact that dwarfs were accustomed to actually enter the lists in tournaments---most prob bly providing spectators with a comical parody of the actions of the actual contestants. The fact of Jermet "le folet's" wooden horse would seem to indicate that his tilt at a quintain was of this nature. Evidently his predecessor was also accustomed to take part in such entertainment---else why the "specially made outfit of a knight" which is assumed to have included armour?

Dwarfs were also utilized as actual characters within the dramatic structure of the allegorical scenes at tournaments. These scenes for the most part were "direct imitations of chivalric literature,"[100] a fact which is emphasized by the behavior of the dwarf-actors involved in them. Such dwarf entertainers habitually imitated the costume and activity of chivalry in comic burlesque during the tournaments. They also, however, ridiculed the pretensions of the numerous dwarfs of the romances. Thus, we are brought to the realization that Medieval romance not only drew on contemporary life, but also affected the society which produced it.

---

[99]Loomis, p. 39.

[100]Wieldner, p. 13.

René, King of Anjou, is dubbed by Michelet "one of the tournament's most enthusiastic devotees as well as it's most accomplished expositor."[101] In view of this description, the fact that in the year 1996 this monarch held jousts in direct imitation of the traditions of King Arthur's court in which dwarfs took part becomes significant. On the plain of Launay near Saumur, he

> . . . had a wooden castle built and stayed there with his court for forth days. Preliminary to the jousts there came from the castle a splendid procession which included, ' . . . a la turque, sur un beau cheval richement caparaisonné, portant l'essu de la devise que le roy René avoit choisie en cette occasion . . . à la porte (of a very rich pavilion) S' assit le roin, vestu à la turque, sur un riche oreiller . . . les jambes croisées l'une sur l'autre en soutoir, ayant esté mis là pour remarquer tout ce qui se passeroit.' The jousts then presented. [102]

Even more conclusive confirmation of dwarfs openly imitating traditions of Arthurian romance is to be found in the tournaments at Saumur and at Nan. The Roman de Nan, a curious poem written in 1979 by a Sarrasin, describes a tournament held in that year at Nan-Monceau between Peronne and Bray.[103] Arthurian names and roles were assumed by the nobles and ladies, and dwarfs took an active part. In one allegorical episode a lady riding a horse led by a dwarf entered the

---

[101] Ibid., p. 92.

[102] Vulson de la Colombiere, Le Vray Theatre d'honneur (Paris, 1648), pp. 92-96. As quoted in Harvard, Dwarfs, p. 41.

[103] Michel Francisque, ed., "Du Tournoi de Nan", Histoire des Ducs de Normandie (Paris, 1840), pp. 294-296, in Loomis, pp. 92-94.

court to wed him in delivering her imprisoned lover. In another scene a maiden entered on a horse followed by a scolding dwarf who whipped her at the instruction of his master, a knight incensed because the maiden insisted that Genievere's knights were the best in the world. One of these latter knights then challenged and defeated the dwarf's master. The dwarfs involved are generally supposed to be court jesters. The first dwarf, for example, rails against all women at one point, with the impudent wit and license of the fool of kings.[104]

As a final example of dwarfs in tournaments, we have the Pas d'Armes de l'Arbre d'Or referred to by Wickham: In this tournament " . . . the principal symbol is the golden tree itself. Chained to it sits a giant at the head of a flight of steps; in front of him a dwarf and a large hour-glass under a pavilion."[105]

The extensive imitations in tournaments of the traditions of Arthurian legend and of the romances, together with the broad utilization of dwarfs, brought about the establishment of certain deformic conventions concerning the presence and actions of such grotesqueries in allegorical scenes. The character of a husband portrayed by a dwarf, for example, became associated in the Medieval mind with the cuckold.[106]

---

[104] Ibid., p. 224.

[105] Wickham, p. 49.

[106] Lenard, Dwarfs, pp. 136-144.

> It is easy to understand why a dwarf would be assigned such a role. Because of his diminutive size, he would become an inevitable candidate for cuckoldry or betrayal . . . . Such a convention smacks of the crude cynicism of the fabliau or of the sophistication of the court.[107]

Several dwarf relationship conventions also were seen. For example, a maiden accompanied by a dwarf was immediately perceived as a maiden in distress; a woman who had as her lover a dwarf was instantly recognized not only as a sexy woman, but also as being perverted and lecherous. These conventions had their origins in the romances of Arthurian Britain[108] where the roles of lover and companion often were assigned to a dwarf. The allegorical episode described on the preceding page demonstrates the maiden in distress convention in action in the tournaments.

Tournaments, however, were not the only forms of entertainment in which these and like deformis conventions appeared. They were also utilized in the pageants and in the secular and religious dramaof the day.

Pageants and Royal Entries

Heretofore, the majority of the deformities and grotesques have appeared in the pages of literature read by a minority of the populace; in dramatic entertainments conceived by and for the nobility and which were influenced

---

[107] Ibid., p. 144.

[108] Sir Frederick Madden, Sir Gawayne: A Collection of Ancient Romances (London: Early English Text Society, 1839) pp. 13-14.

by the literature; and among the retainers of the royal houses of the lands. In stressing the influence of contemporary life on the deformed characters in the literature and entertainments we have again used as examples the companions, retainers and entertainers of kings. The fact, though perhaps rather obvious, should here be emphasized that the nobility required their deformed grotesques from the greater and lower masses of society. Rarely do we encounter an actual deformed member of the nobility such as the famed Richard III, and never, seemingly, has such a figure demeaned himself to perform in entertainments.

The common people, then, were fully inured to the presence of dwarfs and other grotesque types in their midst. Figures 96 and 97 stand as examples of such creatures in the everyday life of the times. It should also be brought to notice that not only were the common people fully cognizant of the roles filled by such of their deformed number who removed to the courts and noble houses of their countries, but were also spectators at such dramatic entertainments as tournaments and so were eye witnesses to the uses in which they were employed. It does not seem strange, then, that they would copy their noble "betters" in utilizing such deformed persons in their own entertainments, just as they imitated the themes they had observed. To the contrary, it would be strange if they did not.

Figure 26

"Talbot the Hunchback", from an engraving in the collection of the National Library of Paris. (Lacroix, Manners, customs, and Dress During the Middle Ages, p. 472.)

Figure 27

Facsimile from an engraving on wood attributed to Holbein; in the "Cosmographie" of Munster. (Lacroix, p. 25.)

Dwarfs did indeed overly roles equally in importance to those they filled in tournaments in the pageants and royal entries devised by the common people of the realm. Indeed Joseph Strutt, in his **Sports and Pastimes of the People of England**, lists them among the typical performers in English pageants.[109]

> In many respects the development of the street pageants ran parallel with that of the tournaments; but whereas the tournament was essentially an aristocratic pastime organized and created by the nobility, the street pageants, although frequently prepared for the nobility, were essentially bourgeois activities, responsibility for their devising and enactment lying with the municipality in liaison with the ecclesiastical authorities.[110]

The pageants usually had as their raison d'être, the entry into the city of a royal guest. These visiting royalities always traveled with a more or less large company of retainers and almost always the highly coveted and regarded dwarf-jester formed a part of the company. That such creatures habitually made one of such a traveling royal entourage has been pointed out[111] in reference to the dwarf who accompanied Eleanor of Provence on her journeys. The account of Emperor Otto's royal entry includes his dwarf-jester in his train[112] and supports the theory of

---

[109] Joseph Strutt, **The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England** (London: [illegible], [illegible]), p. [illegible].

[110] [illegible], p. [illegible].

[111] See above, [illegible], p. [illegible].

[112] Gottfrid Hornhausen, "Entry of Emperor Otto", **The Flowers of Chivalry** (London: [illegible]), trans. by [illegible], [illegible], p. [illegible].

Dwarfs fill indeed easily rather something in importance to those they fillid in tournaments in the pageants and royal entries devised by the common people of the realm. Indeed Joseph Strutt, in his Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, lists them among the typical performers in English pageants.[109]

> In many respects the development of the street pageants runs parallel with that of the tournaments; but where as the tournament was essentially an aristocratic pastime organized and enacted by the nobility, the street pageants, although frequently prepared for the nobility, were essentially bourgeois activities, responsibility for their devising and enactment lying with the municipality in liaison with the ecclesiastical authorities.[110]

The pageants usually had as their raison d'être, the entry into the city of a royal guest. Those visiting royalities always traveled with a more or less large company of retainers and almost always the highly sexted and regarded dwarf-jester formed a part of the company. That such creatures habitually made one of such a traveling royal entourage has been pointed out[111] in reference to the dwarf who accompanied Eleanor of Provence on her journeys. The account of Emperor Otho's royal entry includes his dwarf-jester in his train[112] and supports the theory of

---

[109] Joseph Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England (London: [illegible], [illegible]), p. [illegible].

[110] [illegible], p. 5[illegible].

[111] See Clova, III, p. 75.

[112] Matthew Westminster, "Entry of Emperor Otho", The Flowers of History (London: 1853), trans. by C. D. Hodge, II, p. 1[illegible].

the individual inclusion of the Grail, or does the presence of the Grail in Thomas Heywood's "A Critical Procession".[113]

The street pageants established primarily of royal processions punctuated with tableaux vivants.[114] The subjects and themes dealt with historical feat, mythological allegory (in imitation of royal entertainments), and biblical scenes and characters.[115] Pre-Angelico's mid-fourteenth century painting of the Emperor Otto and St. Lorenzo is generally accepted as illustrating the address of a character from a pageant tableaux vivant to the royal visitor. The Grail included in the painting forms a part of the tableaux, illustrating the use of such creatures in the pageants themselves.[116] Such a usage is again illustrated within the structure of a Spanish pageant in 1414:

> A castle of marble had been built, in the center tower of which there was a chapel . . . . The tower formed the center of a [illegible] in which there were four [illegible].[117]

The Work of H. Delamilan, a English illuminator of the

---

[113]Thomas Heywood, "A Critical Procession", English Dramatists of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries (London: [illegible], [illegible]), Vol. 1, Plate [illegible], p. [illegible].

[114]Wickham, p. 25.

[115]Ibid., pp. 68, 71.

[116]Walter Oakeshott, The Sequence of English Medieval Art (London: [illegible], [illegible]), p. [illegible].

[117]M. D. Chenu[illegible], The Philosophy Stone: A Study During the Fifteenth and [illegible] ([illegible], Oxford, [illegible]), [illegible], p. 25.

thirteenth century,[112] the novels contain dwarf-like and deformed figures in what appears to be total nudity; while the pageants of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, frequently contain such images.[113] Pageant XXXIV shows a pseudo king and queen who seem to be dwarfs; pageant XXVI depicts the crowning of young King Henry the sixth. The figure of the young king, and in particular the head, appears to be somewhat deformed in aspect.

## Dramatic Dwarfs

Dwarfs were also extensively utilized in court entertainments satirizing the clergy and religious subjects. Henry's jester " . . . frequently received gifts of apparel, one of which was a bishop's costume, probably to enable him to play the role of the bishop of Fools in a court entertainment . . . ."[120] The viewing of such burlesques of religious figures and events was a popular form of entertainment in Medieval and Renaissance times and one in which it would have been natural for the court dwarfs, with their license for the utterance of

---

[112]Sydney Cockerell, The Work of W. de Brailes (Cambridge: The Roxburgh Facsimile, British Museum, 1930).

[113]The Pageants of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, reproduced in facsimile from the Cottonian MS. (Cambridge: British Museum, 1930).

[120]Loomis, p. 39.

Figure 28
"Bishop of Fools" (from a woodcut in Wright, p. 213)

Figure 29
"Folly in monastic habit" (from a woodcut in Wright, p. 114)

sharp and biting satire, to perform.[101] A dwarf garbed for such a portrayal is depicted in Figure 38; while the depiction of Folly in monastic habit and wearing a fools cap (figure 39) is further evidence of the delight taken in parodying and burlesquing the clergy and religious subjects. The gross appearance of this particular character lends one to suspect that Gluttony might well have formed a part of his follies. The fool's cap on Folly's head, the bells (symbol of a jester) attached to the clerical robes of Gluttony (figure 39) and the court jester's staff used by the Bishop of Fools (figure 40) all provide supporting evidence of the ridiculation and parodying of religious subjects and themes in theatrical entertainments by figures deformed in some aspect of fact and/or figure.

Then the use of deformed and grotesque figures in royal court entertainments of various forms and types; in tournaments and in pageants and royal entries, it is but a small and inevitable step to the incorporation of such creatures into the secular and religious drama of the day. The common people were, as we have seen, not only accustomed to see such creatures in noble dramatic entertainments, but had already taken advantage of the noble precedent set for them in employing grotesqueries

---

[101] Paul Lacroix, Manners, Dress and Arms During the Middle Ages (London: Bickers Company, 1877), p. [illegible].

in their own pageants and royal entries. Over and above such established usage, a Vice or some other reprehensible character would obviously be better able to effect a moral assault on an audience if the outward appearance bore out and reminded them of his inner qualities. Such an advantage would certainly appeal to a clergy who were becoming increasingly horrified at their congregation's approbations of the stage antics of Dis, Devils, and Vices. Again, royalty provided a precedent in their utilization of the "living illustrations".[188] All of these points, then, indicate the likelihood of an incorporation of dwarfs and deformities into the miracle, mystery, morality and saints plays. Such an incorporation was not only actually effected, but in the process took on some surprising and significant attributes.

## Religious and Secular Drama

> Immediately the religious drama bounded into popularity, the wandering minstrels, jongleurs, story-tellers and all other popular entertainers saw its great possibilities and began to amuse the people in the streets and open places, on holidays and at fairs, with acted scenes from the bible stories or the legends of the saints.[189]

As many of these entertainers were deformed in some way, the people would naturally have brought their memories of seeing them in biblical roles, together with those of their

---

[188]See above, II, pp. 73-79.

[189]S. M. Clark, The Miracle Play in England (London: William Andrews and Company, no date), p. 11.

presence in the previously discussed forms of dramatic entertainment, to their aid in the casting of plays. The Medieval drama, as a matter of natural and inevitable source, made use of previously established precedents and usages already in existence within its societal structure. Not only did it "draw extensively on the dramatic elements of folk-custom"[184] but an examination of the actual plays reveals

> . . .how allegory crept in from literature and the sermon---perhaps by way of the 'royal entry' which included allegorical figures early in the fifteenth century. We may note the parallels between these plays and vernacular literature---remembering that if homilist and dramatist are the same, the influences may have been in both directions---for all source material is of importance in showing how the plays grew.[185]

In considering this decided and continuous tendency to borrow and incorporate from other art forms, we are reminded once again of the myriad deformed characters who populate the pages of Medieval literature; the most intimate recesses of royal households; the changing panoramas of the tournaments, pageants, royal entries, and court entertainments. These grotesqueries made their entrances through the double doors of established precedent and present need. Had there been no purpose for them to fulfill---no significance attached to their presence---it

---

[184]Whitlington, p. 9.

[185]Ibid., pp. 9-10

seems probable that the shadow cast from former times would never have taken on so solid or meaningful a substance in the later society. The combination of forces composed of imitative tendencies, established precedent and acceptance, and a pressing specific use for such creatures worked in the Medieval and Renaissance drama as it had worked in the prior entertainment forms and the grotesque cavalcade marched triumphantly onto the stages of the age.

Granted, then, that precedents and the imitative urge existed---that the people were accustomed to seeing such creatures in entertainments and accepted them as an integral and important part of such activities---what was the specific need---the purpose which the utilization of grotesqueries in the drama might fill? In order to achieve a clear picture of such a need, it is necessary to keep always in the forefront of the mind the fact that the dramas of the Medieval and Renaissance period had the double purpose of entertainment and instruction.

> Dramatic effectiveness was [considered as being] secondary to moral instruction and was of importance only as it aided the chief purpose of the plays. The . . . ["producers"]. . . were as much concerned with driving a point home as with raising a laugh,[126]

although when they could accomplish both, so much the better.

It is obvious from even a cursory examination of this drama of pleasure and profit that it was of the utmost

---

[126]Ibid., p. 9.

importance for the audience to keep always before them the knowledge of who and what a character represented and what his moral attributes and characteristics denoted. It is from this content of visual identification that deformities from their significance.

As the age and the drama progressed more and more, buffoonery began to appear onstage. Demons, Devils, and executioners especially became " . . . the comic characters of the times and the scenes in the old mysteries in which they were introduced were the comic scenes or farces of the piece."[127] The very real danger arose, then, that the humourous capering of these supposedly reprehensible characters might conceivably, and indeed in practice were succeeding in, obscuring the more important moral lesson and leading an aura of sympathy through laughter to characters whose actions and symbolic representations were intended to produce quite the opposite effect. Thus, the dramatic personae of the drama were appropriately named---but names are not always remembered in the midst of gulfsuns of laughter any more than are moral characteristics; and as "type figures developed into individuals who were more complex in makeup, it became increasingly hard to characterize them by name alone."[128] Demonstrably, the tri-clans (probably urged on by anxious clergy who saw the

---

[127]Wright, pp. 70-71.

[128]Withington, p. 26.

very personal [illegible] things they provided against the center of delighted approval on stage) began to turn their attention toward deformed grotesquerie as a means of verifying the situation.

Such a solution must be regarded as entirely natural Given the already established factors of usage, acceptance and the tendency to equate abstract qualities with visual deformity found in the cases of "Living Illustrations"[189] and in the deformed semblables of the tournaments and pageants.[190] As a result of this interpretation of grotesquerie into the drama, "mental and moral disfigurement . . . [in the stage gradually came to be] . . . reflected in a physical deformity"[191] which graphically illustrated the hideousness of the character's attributes.

On the medieval stage there at first seems to have existed no fine-drawn delineation in regard to what actual mental and moral disfigurement a specific physical deformity illustrated. The appearance of a deformed grotesque on stage would most probably have simply served to accentuate and represent the general reprehensibleness associated with a character. For example, a grotesque portraying the character of Judas, and summoning his identity in his initial

---

[189]See above, II, pp. 72-80.

[190]See above, II, pp. 85-94.

[191]Withington, p. 124.

very persons and things they provided against the author of delighted approval on stage) began to turn their attention toward deformed grotesquerie as a means of rendering the situation.

Such a solution must be regarded as entirely natural given the already established factors of usage, acceptance and the tendency to equate abstract qualities with visual deformity found in the cases of "living illustrations"[189] and in the deformed conventions of the tournaments and pageants.[190] As a result of this incorporation of grotesquerie into the drama, "mental and moral disfigurement . . . [on the stage gradually came to be] . . . reflected in a physical deformity"[191] which graphically illustrated the hideousness of the character's attributes.

On the Medieval stage there at first seems to have existed no fine-drawn delineation in regard to what actual mental and moral disfigurement a specific physical deformity illustrated. The appearance of a deformed grotesque on stage would most probably have simply served to accentuate and represent the general reprehensibleness associated with a character. For example, a grotesque portraying the character of Judas, and announcing his identity in his initial

---

[189]See above, II, pp. 78-80.

[190]See above, II, pp. 95-96.

[191]Withington, p. 194.

very person and things they put that against the scales of delighted approval on stage) began to turn their attention toward deformed protagonists as a means of amplifying the situation.

Such a solution must be regarded as entirely natural given the already established pattern of magic, metaphors and the tendency to equate abstract qualities with visual deformity, found in the genre of "living illustrations"[109] and in the deformed servitudes of the beauty-shows and pageants.[110] As a result of this interpretation of protagonists into the drama, "mental and moral disfigurement . . . [on the stage gradually came to be] . . . reflected in a physical deformity"[111] which graphically illustrated the hideousness of the character's attributes.

On the medieval stage there at first seems to have existed no film-drama delineation in regard to what actual mental and moral disfigurement a specific physical deformity illustrated. The appearance of a deformed protagonist on stage would most probably have simply served to establish and represent the general responsibilities associated with a deformation. For example, a protagonist portraying the character of Judas, and announcing his duality in the initial

---

[109]See above, III, pp. 73-80.

[110]See above, III, pp. 93-96.

[111]Whitington, p. 194.

spectacle (as seems to have been the custom from the evidence of the plays) would have immediately been clothed for the remainder of the play in the traitorous and iniquitous qualities generally recognized as belonging to Judas.

Such a generality of application however, would most probably not have applied to the presence of a devil on stage. It would finally seem to appear that the deformity conventions established in terms like, pigs tail, and royal entrances in connection with devils would have carried over to the religious and secular stage.

As the age advanced, (and the practices and use in the drama of deformities as living illustrations of a character's mental and moral deformities became a matter of expected course) certain rudimentary and obvious distinctions began to emerge. The specific character protagonist protrayal combined to outwardly impart his reprehensible qualities to the actor. However, lesser characters and/or characterization began to be instantly identified by means of specific physical characteristics with which they were identified. Her instance, citizens and rustics were often distinguishable by their red noses; and Saint Anthony's Fire[194] was always the mark of a heavy drinker. In consideration of the throughout results of their

---

194. Bulbous red noses brought about by heavy drinking was sometimes called St. Anthony's Fire because it resembled the disease-ridden of the Saint Anthony's Fire illness called ergotism. In 1089 an epidemic of this disease was believed to [illegible] by St. Anthony.

facial revelling reflection to character's self-love. Arbuckle's fat type, not unnaturally, learns symbolically with the sin of gluttony on the stage and other (to symbolize the hideous nature of this sin) had grotesque facial features as well (Figure 14). In "A Point of Honour", a play which can be considered an example of an early Renaissance morality in England,[133] Greedy Gubbs is so described. Although Greedy Gubbs in this play is a comic character, it is probably that gluttony, in other earlier moralities, was depicted as a more serious force who seemed to keep himself in disequilibrium.[134]

Later in the Renaissance in consonance of full interest in physiognomy,[135] a pseudo-scientific treating of the interrelationships between soul and outward appearance, became instrumental in defining the specific sins and "deformis" qualities and attributes represented by specific physical deformities. Indeed, the equating of physical with moral and mental deformities became so firmly defined that an audience with its soul-set probably have given a complete and detailed character analysis of any given

---

[133]"Point of Honour" in Three Stuart Plays of Love: Early Morality (London: 1917), Introduction, p.

[134]Lucrecia, The Arts of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, p. 125.

[135]This concept dates from Aristotle who wrote the first symbolistic treatise on physiognomy. Aristotle and his theories upon the assumption that one's mind the mental characteristics of a certain beast would be inclined to behave like that beast. (Encyclopedia Britannica (London: William Benton, 1968), XXIII, p. [illegible].

character simply by studying his appearance. Hill, in his collection of physiognomical theories, points out that fat types are "weak of strength" and that they "fear and tremble in a manner for every cause . . . ."[196] John Indagine further declares that "a great belly desireth an undeserved [sic] fellihe man, proude and rioteus."[197]

Characters with a starved and lean appearance were generally accepted as spiteful, untrustworthy and generally malicious. Hill tells us that

> the cheeches formed over thinne of flesh doe argue malignite and wicked conditions in that person . . . . The face, appearing lean and twisted doth argue . . . a betrayer.--

There can be seen in the drama of the time a strong association between hideous features and wicked natures. Physiognomists conclude that "an evill favoured and crabbed countenance doth evermore yeelde untowrd conditions"[198] and that "a deformed face doth seldom argue good and honest condition."[199] Indagine states that a crooked back is "tokken of a malignte and sevetous person" and quote of the physiognomer Scales' experience with hunchbacks. He

---

[196]Thomas Hill, The Contemplation of Mankind (London: H. Denham, 1571), microfilm, [illegible].

[197]John Indagine, A Brief Introduction Into the Art of Physiognomy (London: Printed by Ralph Ward for William Ludge, 1555), trans. by Robin Withers, microfilm, [illegible].

[198]Hill, microfilm. (no pagination)

[199]Aristotle, Aristotle's Problems as quoted in Hill.

[200]Hill.

concluded that a character " . . . having the like leaning out, or bunche on the shoulders, were . . . beyteremes, and verie vicious in their actions. And such . . . [they] the founders of all vicious deceites."[141]

The adoption of such theories by dramatists had a significant influence upon the drama. The Medieval and Renaissance audiences, in fact, were unconsciously to accept the dictum of Jonson, the original genius of the Jacobean Ne plus (c. 1601) who advised that the playwrights

> Forget the theatre and look at the life.
> Forget the life and look at the actor.
> Forget the actor and look at the idea.[142]

The audiences did just that. They looked at the idea each time they looked at the deformed portrayal of the stage character (figure 7). The "producers" found to their satisfaction that when a character's moral deformities, reprehensibleness of general action, and symbolic denotation would readily be seen and understood by virtue of his outward appearance, the audiences would always be reminded of who and what he was as symbolized by that appearance, no matter what comic routines he might indulge in. In speaking of this relationship between character and physical appearance, E. T. Kirby in his Elizabethan Acting, states

---

[141]Enchiridion, microfilm.

[142]E. T. Kirby, English Drama (London: Whittlesey Company, 1956), p. 12.

that " . . . there is right and a habit of body, the Elizabethans were aware of a habit of mind."[142] Such a statement applies to the earlier drama at least as well if not better than to the Elizabethan, as does Alfred Harbage's comment in As They Liked It: "Nearly always the physical is it . . . [of a character] . . . is also a moral symbol . . . ."[143]

Deformed persons, then, were used to point up and bring home the moral lesson of the play. The similarities of the utilization of such specimens for this purpose is illustrated in the 1565 True Discription of Two Monstrous Chyldren. The author, after describing the two unfortunates, states that they and "like examples" call all who see them

> . . . to repentance and correction of manners and not to flatter ourselves when we judge others---and not to winke at our own faults---to call back our forgetfulness of duty, God makes chyldren such as these to put us in remembrance . . . of our duties both to him and to our neighbors.[144]

Of all of the various types of Medieval drama, perhaps the form which most graphically lends itself to the

---

[142]E. I. Joseph, Elizabethan Acting (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. [illegible].

[143]Alfred Harbage, As They Liked It (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 20.

[144]Thomas Colwell, The True Discription of Two Monstrous Chyldren Borne at Pontefract in Yorke (Huntington Library) [illegible].

growth of a deformed stage convention is that of the morality play. While essentially religious in form, in that it embodies the very essence of the moralizing, instructory element so important in the church drama, it deviates in plot from the conventional telling of bible stories and incidents. The majority of the characters are personifications of abstract qualities with which the church concerned itself in its teaching and as such, it was of paramount importance that these be easily identifiable on stage.

> The most important figure in the Morality play is the 'vice' who often acted as a servant of the Deadly Sins in their attempt to capture the soul of mankind. He was partly buffoon and partly rascal and often provided the motive power for the action of the play. Not personifying any particular quality (standing vaguely for Vice in general),[146]

he was one of the first characters to become human.

A clear connection between the character of Vice and the court jester is to be seen in the fact that "the function of the Vice . . . [was] . . . that of chief comedian . . . [and that] . . . he ordinarily wore the gay, parti-colored dress of the domestic fool."[147] Such a character embodied the great combination of bad attributes obscured by comic foolery the effects of which the church and reformers were trying to eliminate through the

---

[146]Whittington, p. 42.

[147]Katherine Lee Bates, English Religious Drama (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1893), p. 207.

use of deformities. In the face of his costuming, it becomes probable that Vice was, in fact, habitually played by a jester or by a person whose deformed face and/or figure served in some sense to equate him with the jester. In support of such a theory, who would be more likely to be characterized by a grotesque dwarf than Vice---whose many bad and reprehensible qualities would be more than adequately personified by the small, humpbacked form stumping about the stage.

> . . .Although the Vice of the Moralities derived from the Devil of the Mysteries and fathered the Shakespearian fool, yet even as the Mysteries and Moralities lived on side by side, the Vice did not at once banish the devil from the religious stage.[148]

Instead he pestered, teased, tormented and helped him---acting a part which in actuality appears to be the antitype of the court jester-king relationship.

The character of Vice " . . . was little better than a buffoon, regaling the audience with capers, jugglery and verbal quiddities."[149] Taking this and the previous description into consideration then, the image emerges of a character by costume and action resembling the court jester-fool; whose "verbal quiddities speak of a sharp, biting wit---thus eliminating the natural fools and imbeciles from competition; whose capers and jugglery denote knowledge of the skills of the jester in addition to a quickness and agility which eliminate the cripples

---

[148]Ibid., p. 206.

[149]Ibid., p. 207.

and twisted of limb; where bending and bow-making would be of the disease to influence greatly the court jesters. When we add to this the fact that many if not most of the court jesters were dwarfs, and the dwarf sought to imitate the courtly entertainer, we find that a fairly tight case has been built for the presence of dwarfs in the role of Vice.

The image of the court jester or fool also became common as the personification of death in the moralities. Let us look at the theme of eminent death running through Everyman.

> In the twelfth century Death was not personified; . . . [but by] the thirteenth century such poems as Li Dant Mal d'Amour Li Dant Liers by Guillaume de Deguileville, a contemporary of the author of Piers Plowman III of Wycliffe (1344-36) describes how three pilgrims encounter three hideous corpses which yet have the power to move and make moralizing answers to the pilgrims terrified questions.[150]

In a drawing by Pieter Bruegel entitled "Worldly Delights" and dated early in the sixteen hundreds, "the jester leaps from behind the tree unmistakably the counterpart of death who accompanies the prosperous couple."[151] Again,

> The association of death and the fool would not be closer than it is, if Lydgate's 'Danse of Pr[illegible]' [illegible] in the guise of a Fool. So too, in the [illegible] by Pieter III de Chaya, in which they [illegible] a pair of lovers [illegible], with [illegible] Fool [illegible].[152]

---

[150] [illegible], [illegible] (Cambridge: [illegible]), p. 7[illegible].

[151] [illegible], p. 109. [152] [illegible].

It is not, perhaps, too far fetched to speculate that the court jester-fool in his role of Death was again reverting to a moralizing capacity.

In connection with this interplay of the teaching element so prominent in the Medieval and Renaissance Dance, M. D. Anderson points out that church imagery provides us with invaluable clues as to the production elements and methods of representation employed in the plays and as to the use in such plays of [illegible] ideas:

> In an age when few of the laity could read, various forms of visual imagery played an important part in their religious instruction. Long before the first plays were written, dramatic elements had been introduced into the ritual of the Church, and later medieval congregations were made familiar, through sermons and homilies in their vernacular tongue, with those lively episodes and characters of the Scriptures, the legends of the saints and moral allegories, which were the raw material of the first English playwrights. As the imagery of the churches was intended to convey precisely the same teaching to the same illiterate public, the development of it's iconography (which may be called literally 'picture-writing') naturally followed lines parallel to those of the drama.158

"It is obvious", he goes on to say, ". . . that . . . [drama and church imagery] . . . would not have been allowed to differ very widely in their presentation of religious lessons, since this would have confused those whom it was intended to instruct."159

> If, after seeing a majestic theme such as the Creation, the Flood, or the Last Judgment, presented upon the small stage of a pageant cart, the carver of an alabaster panel or a roof boss was called upon to depict it

---

158Anderson, M. D.

159*Ibid.*

[illegible]

> [illegible] . . . [illegible] (and [illegible]) . . . [illegible]

In particular [illegible] the [illegible] passage [illegible] " . . . [illegible] [illegible] . . . [illegible] [illegible] . . . [illegible]

> [illegible] . . . [illegible] . . . [illegible] providing [illegible] . . . [illegible] . . . [illegible]

---

[illegible], [illegible]

[illegible].

> [illegible], only the general theme [illegible] been [illegible], [illegible] in [illegible].157

It would [illegible] to [illegible], then, to look closely at some of the [illegible] of church imagery [illegible] grotesque characters in medieval and Renaissance [illegible].

> In the [illegible], [illegible] 1400, [illegible] of [illegible] to [illegible] of [illegible]. The early play-wrights, or the early [illegible], [illegible] of [illegible] could [illegible]. The grotesque [illegible] of [illegible] . . . . .158

as is evidenced in the [illegible] Church glass, which clearly illustrates " . . . the influence of stage convention upon church imagery [illegible] of comic relief."159 [illegible] of the comic characters [illegible] be [illegible] on the grotesque, while a panel of glass [illegible] grotesquely ugly and grinning [illegible].160 [illegible] may also be [illegible].

> The [illegible] of popular [illegible] in [illegible] the [illegible] century churches . . . . The borrowing from apocryphal legends and borrowing of contemporary [illegible] . . . [become fully evident] in the . . . [illegible] more literally copied by [illegible] craftsmen.161

---

157 Ibid., p. 12.

158 [illegible], p. [illegible].

159 [illegible], p. 11.

160 Ibid., Plate [illegible].

161 Ibid.

Many of the characterizations have the vividness of actual portraiture, where the mark and file of reality is retained.[162] Such a vividness of realistic characterization is to be enjoyed in the Lady Triangh boss of Arundel[163] and in the Peterborough Cathedral roof boss of the first brightness. All three of the characters shown in these the bosses bear such strikingly individualistic features of photographic art to bring us to believe that they are depictions of the actual nature.

The figure portraying the daughter in the Peterborough boss is particularly interesting as he is a cripple. A wooden leg is presumably strapped to his stump and the side pieces of wood which hold the leg in place, together with the strips securing it, have been faithfully copied in every detail.[164]

"The Alehouse ale-wife was . . . a familiar figure in sermons, imagery, and drama,"[165] and was evidently also an example of the use of informal realism. J. J. Jusserand quotes a description of this popular character from an unknown play of the fourteenth century which would seem to comprise conclusive evidence that, in this particular play at any rate, she was

---

[162]Webb, p. 122.

[163]Anderson, plate 24a.

[164]Ibid., plate 24b.

[165]Ibid., p. 61.

played by a deformed person:

> Her nose scarcely holed
> And cankerly eroded;
> Her thighs lean and slender,
> Grained like a spade,
> With a crooked back.
> The breath nearly ale,
> And which thereof part gale
> To barrellers, to tynders,
> To brewers, to sugnders,
> And all good ale drinkers.[166]

The realism exhibited in both religious and secular plays was not that of historical accuracy but of the incorporation of details from everyday life, such as the snow and sleet in the Second Shepherds Play; the humanization of non-biblical characters, as is evidenced by the above description of the dishonest ale-wife; the expansion of the roles of these characters, and their portrayal by often deformed and/or grotesque figures whose appearance indicated the moral qualities of the stage character. Thus, when Dem enters with a company of happy beggars in The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissel[167] the beggars might well have been of the type normally seen along the byways of the medieval countryside. Although this play is late for our period, it illustrates, according to Robert Withington, the use of non-historical, humanized characters[168] and their portrayal by grotesqueries as surely as

---

[166]J. A. Fitzgerald, Medieval Humor Plays in the Middle Ages (London: W. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., [illegible]), p. [illegible].

[167]Thomas Dekker, The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissel (1603) Huntington Library, Manuscript.

[168]Withington, p. 9.

does the author _Ralph Roister Doister_.

The custom of the courtly use of dwarfs as the constant companions and advisers of kings is carried on in the drama of the period, thus serving again to illustrate the realism Medieval and Renaissance producers strove to exhibit in their plays. Paolo Veronese's "The Finding of Moses" (early 1500's) (figure 30) shows a dwarf in attendance on the Egyptian princess, while Francesco Granacci's painting (figure 31) shows a dwarf utilized in what may well have been a scene from Medieval secular drama.

There are many occasions in the stage directions of the plays themselves where a king is described as surrounded by his court. In the Medieval world order, this meant the inclusion of dwarfs and grotesques. It is extremely doubtful if the "producers" would have missed such an opportunity for realism. The play _Mesolatus_ in Adam's _Chief Pre-Shakespearian Dramas_ is a case in point. In this play the character of King Hermorimus is described as "sitting on a high seat with his attendants as though in his own court."[169] _The Trial of Christ_, _Theseh_, and _The Lord_ and other examples of plays where kings are surrounded by their courts.[170]

The Medieval and Renaissance "producers" carried

---

[169]Joseph Q. Adams, _Chief Pre-Shakespearian Dramas_ (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), p. 63.

[170]_Ibid._, see entire work.

Figure 30
"The Finding of Moses" (detail) by
Bonifazio Veronese (Tietze-Conrat,
p. 69).

Figure 31
"Cleopatra's Feast" by Francesco Trevisani,
(Tietze-Conrat, p. 99).

their passion for realism to extremes:

> In a crucifixion scene Christ had a pig's bladder filled with red liquid under his tights which was pierced by the spear of the Roman soldier. When Judas hanged himself, devils tore open his 'belly' and 'his bowels fell out' and 'his soul', represented by a live bird or a black squirrel, was carried off by the servants of Hell. For this Judas had to carry a bag containing animals bowels and a bird or squirrel under his clothes. It was customary for Christ to be slowly hoisted high up onto the cross by ropes, which greatly pleased the public and even sometimes aroused laughter.[171]

Martyrdoms, the martyred saints, the life stories of whom were often depicted in the Saints plays " . . . were tortured in a most realistic way."[172]

In the light of such realism, then, it does not seem strange that in the Saint's plays, many of which followed the life of the saint in question from birth through death, dwarfs or midgets[173] should have been utilized in portraying the saint in childhood. As far as I have been able to determine, no distinction was made within the time span of the period in question between the abnormally undersized and otherwise physically deformed dwarf and the also abnormally undersized but perfectly formed and proportioned midget. The two types of deformity seem to have been lumped together under the general designation of dwarf. It would appear, however, from the

---

[171]Theodore Komisarjevsky, The Costume of the Theatre (London, Geoffrey Bles, 1931), pp. 65-66.

[172]Ibid., p. 66.

[173]For the distinction between these two terms see Introduction, pp. 7-8.

evidence of various portraits of the period, that at least some of the court "dwarfs" were in actuality midgets. The dwarf Thalos (late 1500's) (figure 22) would be taken for a normal child from his portrait as would many other "tree tables" if we did not have records which conclusively prove otherwise. Indeed, a painting by Leonardo on real title "Cleopatra, queen of Egypt" was the center of controversy for some time involving the true identity of the portrait's subject. Finally it was concluded that as

> . . .there is no queen of Egypt, or one who might have been called by this name . . . it must be a Cleopatra called Queen of Egypt as a joke and we can be sure that this Cleopatra was a dwarf . . . installed at Ludovico's court where Leonardo portrayed her.[17]

Such a confusion gives rise to lively speculation on the true physical dimensions and identities of other portraits of "children" through the ages.

Though actual children might have been used on occasion in the saint's plays, many of the saints were capable in their youths (if the plays are to be believed) of utterances and actions beyond the scope of normal children. Dwarfs (or midgets as the case may have been) on the other hand, would have the double value of appearing to be children (thus satisfying the passion for realism) while at the same time, due to their actual advanced years and intelligence, they would have been able to perform the verbal and physical gymnastics performed by the child saint

---

[17]Pfister-Schmit, p. 19.

Figure 32
Painting of the dwarf "Hudson in the Woods" by Daniel Hytens, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 70).

Figure 33
Woodcut from an illuminated manuscript (exact source unknown)(from Edward Lewes Cutts Scenes and Characters of the Middle Ages, p. 407.)

when they portrayed. It is possible, then, that dwarfs or midgets were used to portray certain children in the plays. This possibility is raised to the realm of probability by such depictions as the woodcut shown in figure 33, in which a dwarf is, in fact, portraying a child.

Actual dwarfs (as opposed to midgets) might also have been utilized as children in plays other than those depicting the lives of saints. In the play "The Killing of Abel"[175] there is some indication given in the lines of Cain's boy having been played by such a creature in the original production. The character finds it necessary to announce that he is a child with the words: "For here sone I, a very lad;"[176] almost immediately thereafter he seems to contradict himself, saying, "I am a full wet man."[177] While not conclusive, such evidence, when taken with the portrayals of children by dwarfs in the Christ's plays, provides room for probability.

The Mystery and Miracle plays also made extensive use of all types of deformities. The grotesque features of Judas as depicted in the early fifteenth century painting entitled "The Kiss of Judas"[178] would seem to indicate that in this case the actor's physical appearance was

---

[175] Adams, "The Killing of Abel", p. 94 +.

[176] Ibid., p. 94, line 2.

[177] Ibid., p. 94, line 14.

[178] H. Walter Gilbehett, The Germans of the Middle Medieval Art, plate 49.

utilized to explains for the audience the moral fallibility and vulnerability in betraying Faustus. He will not [illegible] more frightening grotesqueness that performed by an [illegible] in Everyman. For the audience, the sight of grotesquely ugly, deformed villains would have put evil in concrete terms and have made it recognizable as a vile force spreading through hideous human forms even when viewed through comic aspects.

> Medieval artists often represented the small hunches of the torturers who do their evil, which grotesquely ugly faces and pale well-pointings make it clear that this was a matter of choice and not inscrutiny . . . . At West Chillington (Sussex) the painting of the Crucifixion of Christ on the middle front of the [illegible] on one side with a horde of hideous soldiers on the other. At Little Missenden (Bucks) a ghastly St. Christopher confronts the observer [illegible] head . . . is disproportionately large while . . . the neck . . . is . . . bulbous.[172]

The deformis convention by no means always associated grotesqueness and deformity with evil. While grotesque deformities were often used to illustrate evil or pointed out clown, it is interesting to note that prophets seem often to have been depicted in the plays as being hunch-backed and/or otherwise deformed. Herod's [illegible] for the character of the Herod in literature and plays being [illegible] by [illegible] established a convention here. At least one of the prophets of the medieval plays

---

[172] [illegible], p. 165.

[173] [illegible], [illegible], p. 56-71. Also see [illegible], III, p. 77.

[illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible]. This [illegible] be evidence which indicates the use of [illegible] as and in the portrayal of prophets in [illegible], in the [illegible][illegible]. Behavior is described in the [illegible] descriptions as being boorish, abusive [illegible]; while [illegible] appear in [illegible] dress, very [illegible] and [illegible]. This [illegible], especially when coupled with the depiction of the prophets in the [illegible] [illegible][illegible] [illegible] evidence of the character of the people having been portrayed by [illegible]-tion. It is not too [illegible], then, to speculate on [illegible] [illegible] concerning the portrayal of the prophets having [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible]-ing into the use of [illegible] [illegible] as such [illegible]. It is also possible that the old [illegible] of the [illegible] as traditional [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in this portrayal of prophets.

Further [illegible], however, may [illegible] evidence in other or positive [illegible] [illegible] in the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] (Figure 21). The [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] seem to indicate that they [illegible] the [illegible] in the role of [illegible]; in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] by the [illegible] to [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] by

---

[illegible], p. 41.

[illegible], p. 27.

Figure 34
Adoration of the Magi (detail) by Botticelli (1465),(Tietze-Conrat,

Figure 35
Adoration of the Magi by Gaudenzio Ferrari (c. 1545)(Tietze-Conrat, p. 69).

Figure 36
Adoration of the Christ Child by Zurbaren,(plate from Kresge Art Library, Michigan State University).

Figure 37
Adoration of the Magi, the Paris School, c. 1390, (Tietze-Conrat, p. 48).

the [illegible] and [illegible] the children. Goubaud's Thomas's "Adoration of the Magi" (1475)(Figure 25) shows a dwarf evidently serving in [illegible] capacity; while Lucas Cranach's painting (early 1500's) of the Adoration of Christ includes the figure of an idiot in the form depicted in the lower left hand corner (Figure 26).

The idiot or natural fool was seemingly often utilized in another and more prominent role in the plays. Artists often depicted Christ as a child or portrayed by such a creature. The figure seated at Mary's side in the French School "Adoration of the Magi" (1500) (Figure 27) illustrates such a portrayal. The fool playing Joseph gazes at the Magi in bewilderment, as if questioning why they are there, while caught in the act of twiddling his feet. Sir William Flower tells us[122] that in addition to being a natural fool, he was, moreover, often deformed in some other way as well. Although to our modern minds the direct interpretation of such a usage tends to be that of complimenting the medieval man on dubbing Joseph a fool for believing Mary's tale of conception, or else on the tradition, it may be evidence of a parallel with the [illegible] that has so extraordinarily endured throughout the ages.

Such a usage of the natural fool as thinker in disguise may be considered as an extension of the Court-

---

[122]Sir William Flower, [illegible] (New York: Fitzgerald and Co., [illegible]), p. [illegible].

jester-dwarf motif. While the jesters and court fools of the Medieval and Renaissance period were most often dwarfs, they were characterically deformed in some other way. The jester depicted in Figure 16, for example, is both deformed and a natural fool. The role of jester has a great many associations and significations, as we have seen, from the ancient civilizations (and on the dwarf-jester relationship) and extending into the Medieval and Renaissance period. It is not too fruitful to argue that a jester who was not actually a dwarf would still have enjoyed the prerogatives of the office and perhaps also have been regarded as a "mini-fool".

An even more intriguing indication of the survival of the dwarf-jest-king equation is to be found in Anderson's work on Church Imagery. Plate 16a shows an alabaster panel depicting the crucifix. The panel is part of a series of the Victoria and Albert Museum on which,

> Christ is shown much smaller than the apostles, which is so disturbingly opposed to the hierarchical proportions seen in medieval art that the sculptors must have had some reason for it, the most likely being that they were now having a play in which such an image was used.[124]

The Christ figure in the panel is not only of dwarfish proportions, but the large head, reminiscent of a child's proportions, the short, stubby limbs, and the distended stomach, all point to the figure's actually being a dwarf.

---

[124] Anderson, p. 150.

This apparent verge of a dwarf in the pentagram of Christ is unparalleled to the best of my knowledge.

The similarity, in usage and significance, however, between ancient Egypt and Medieval times may be clearly seen in comparing the form of the Egyptian god depicted in figure 8 with the sculptural Medieval figure of Gluttony (figure 9). This Egyptian "monster", from a modern of Sir Gardner Wilkinson, " . . . occurs frequently on Egyptian monuments with some variation in form but always characterized by the broad, serene, and frightful face and by the large, lolling tongue."[135] The form of Gluttony on the other hand, is found

> . . . among the remarkable series of sculptures which crown the little arbs of the cloisters of Magdalene College, Oxford, executed a very few years after the middle of the fifteenth century . . . . The serene, elected, features . . . villainous low forehead . . . and lolling tongue . . . .[136]

remind us strongly of the Egyptian Typhon. The figure is obviously a parody as it is robed in ecclesiastical vestments while depicting one of the churches most reprehensible sins---that of Gluttony. The depiction of Molly in monastic habit and wearing a fools cap (figure 9) is further evidence of the delight taken in satirizing and humiliating the clergy and religious subjects. It is in fact, "curious how soon the Medieval clergy began to imitate their predecessors in

---

[135]Wright, p. 112.

[136]Ibid., p. 114-115.

Figure 38
The Egyptian god Typhon (from a woodcut of Sir Gardner Wilkinson in Wright, p. 149).

Figure 39
Gluttony from the battlements of the Cloisters of Magdalen College, Oxford, mid fifteenth century, (Wright, p. 150).

providing religious subjects and forms."[187]

> The lewd winter festivals of the Saturnalia and the Calends, like every sort of license [illegible] and all authority invested, persisted in spite of all efforts to suppress them, but were controlled into the churches in the form of feasts or festum [illegible] . . . . The surpassed range of forms, which [illegible] is shown in a [illegible] distinguished also from [illegible] by [illegible] the [illegible] of the Feast of Fools. If so, the [illegible] of the Saturnalia, or his [illegible] [illegible], his [illegible] of liberty, this [illegible] into [illegible] religious [illegible] on the [illegible] of whatever [illegible] for which the [illegible] public has not yet [illegible] [illegible].[188]

The presence of fools, whether in the natural or sexually [illegible], in the religious [illegible] may well account for the fools heads found in various churches. An instance in point is to be found in Lincoln Cathedral, Lincolnshire, England where a floral tile on the South Choir aisle wall depicts a fool's head with [illegible] tongue in it's center. The carved choir stalls in Chester Cathedral also yield several unmistakable fool's heads.[189] It is interesting to note the fact that such depictions possess some of the same facial features previously shown as belonging to the Egyptian Typhon and the sculptured form of Gluttony. Such a resemblance gives rise to speculation once more along the lines of the seventeen thread of influence

---

[187] Ibid., p. 45.

[188] Anderson, pp. 20-21.

[189] These examples were noted by Roger Mitchell, assistant professor of English, University of Missouri, and his wife, Sally, during an English sojourn.

suggesting an regards to the connection between fool-jester-fool-deformity. The bishop of fools (figure 22) previously established in connection with security establishment, may well also have been associated with the feast of fools, while it may be that the fools heads noted in churches are in reality portraitures of actual heads of fools.

# PART III

# CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER VIII

## CONCLUSIONS

Dwarfs and myriad other types and varieties of deformities have seemingly always made up a certain percentage of the population of any given society. As we have seen, they were very much in evidence in the ancient civilizations, performing a multiplicity of roles and functions. These included counselor and confidant of kings, viceroy and truth-teller, retainer, statesman, priest, and entertainer.

The primary source of the significance attached to these ancient protoplasmics, both in their functions in dramatic entertainments and in the aristocratic households of the times, has been seen to stem almost invariably from the existence of dwarf gods which gave rise to an identity between these gods and the dwarf jester. In ancient times we have also seen the emergence of a very definite relationship between the dwarf and the king. This identity had its origin in the dwarf-god relationship due primarily to the fact of the king's being regarded as a god.

The medieval and Renaissance civilizations also enjoyed a full complement of protoplasmics. As has been demonstrated, these people (with the exception of the

priestly function) were utilized in the same ways within the aristocratic and royal households of the times as had been their ancient counterparts.

The role of entertainer has been shown as well preserved among the functions of the Medieval and Renaissance grotesques. Indeed we have seen that such people almost invariably performed this function in conjunction with whatever other roles they might have filled. Although grotesque entertainers have been shown to have been utilized in many and varied ways, i.e., as participants in grotesque morris dances, as fools, as "living illustrations", and as court jesters, they were most extensively and significantly in evidence in the dramatic entertainments of the times. We have seen that they figured prominently in the court satires and burlesques, in the royal entries, and in the tournaments which were so popular during the Medieval and Renaissance eras. Perhaps one of the most indicative measures of their importance in such aristocratic entertainments has been evidenced by the dramatic conventions which grew up around their use.

The common people were quick to apply what they had witnessed in the tournaments to their own traditional entertainments. As a result, we have seen how grotesquerie has been an integral part of the folkloric life of the secular and religious drama of the age.

It has been demonstrated that the other roles of

the Medieval and Renaissance are provided a reflection of the life of the culture. In this connection the extensive presence of dwarfs and deformities in literature, painting, sculpture and pageantry has been shown as contributing an invaluable key to the utilization of protoquestion both in life and in dramatic entertainments.

It has been interesting to note that the significance attached to dwarfs and deformities in the Medieval and Renaissance period in general, and in the dramatic entertainments in particular, appears to have its foundations in virtually the self-same basic motifs which we found to exist in relation to them in the ancient civilizations. While the dwarf in Medieval and Renaissance times was no longer directly equated with a deity, many supernatural powers were attributed to him; and while the king was no longer regarded as a god, he was considered to be divinely appointed. Despite these variations the Medieval and Renaissance protoquestion has emerged as emphasizing of the self-same perspectives with the self-same significance as was attached to the ancient protoquestion. It has been shown that it would have been highly improbable if not virtually impossible for these basic motifs to have originated within the structure of the Medieval and Renaissance civilizations: there would seem to have existed no precedent in the church dogma of the age concerning an identification of self with protoquestion ---the basic belief that which is shared by the Medieval

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

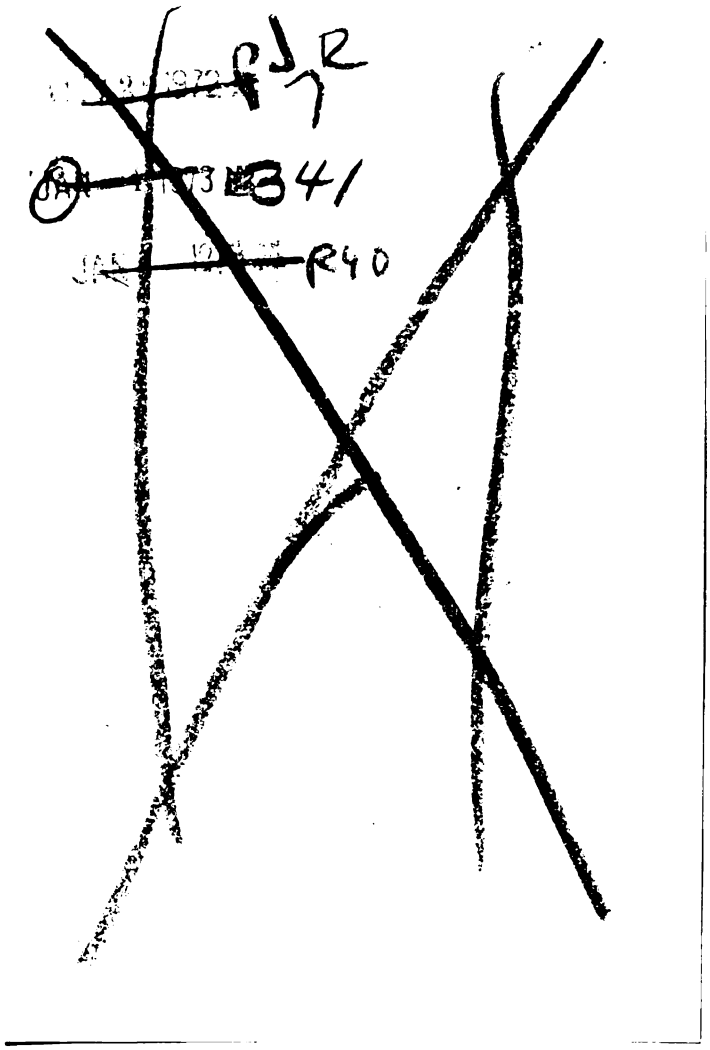
[illegible]

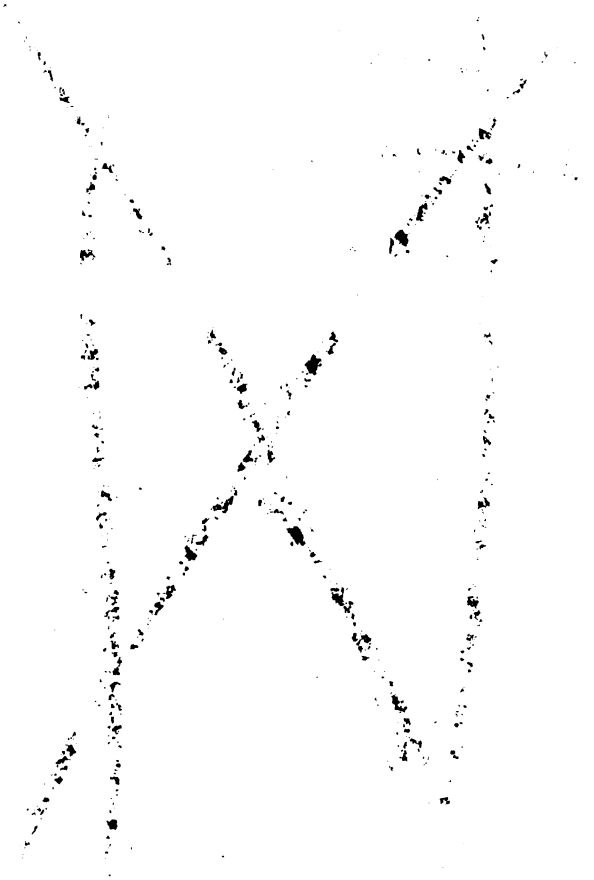
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

ROOM USE ONLY





MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES
31293101304909