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THE BOOK OF JONAH AS A SOURCE FOR DRAMA
IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING THEATER

By

George W. Ralph

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

THE BOOK OF JONAH AS A SOURCE FOR DRAMA IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING THEATER

By

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This dissertation investigates the manner in which playwrights in the English-speaking theater have adapted the Biblical book of Jonah for the stage. The dramas are arranged typologically, according to the dramatist's purpose and primary method of adaptation. The categorizations, however, are not mutually exclusive; and following an historical survey of the appearance of the character Jonah on the English-speaking stage, each play is considered individually in terms of its distinctive dramaturgy.

While the prophet Jonah appeared briefly as part of the "Procession of the Prophets" in at least two of the medieval cycle plays, the earliest extant full dramatization of the Old Testament book is Lodge and Greene's *A Looking-Glass for London and England* in the late sixteenth century. Aside from a lost "Jonah" play of the seventeenth century, only two further dramatizations are known before the twentieth century. Both are dramatic poems, not intended for the stage, from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. Between 1920 and 1980 some forty "Jonah" plays appeared.

The popularity of Jonah in the twentieth century, a phenomenon not confined to the drama but evident in other literary and cultural forms of expression, suggests that this alternately comic and heroic figure who first rebels and then accepts responsibility in the face of ridiculous odds and even yet is not content with the course of events has been found peculiarly suited to the modern temperament.

Eleven of the "Jonah" dramas endeavor simply to retell the story, with little comment or interpretation. Three of the plays offer particular interpretations of the Biblical work. Laurence Housman's *The Burden of Nineveh*, for example, offers rational explanations of the "miracles." Nine plays are primarily didactic in intent, with emphasis on one or more moral lessons drawn for the edification of the contemporary reader or audience. Seven essentially comic "Jonah" plays, including three versions by Scottish playwright James Bridie, appeared between 1920 and 1950. They range from the purely farcical to the ironic. Wolf Mankowitz's *It Should Happen to a Dog*, in a Yiddish humorous tradition, exploits a view of the prophet as *shlemiel*. Six plays are "adaptive" in nature, the Jonah story serving the dramatist as a vehicle for commentary on contemporary society. Thematic interest and focus are drawn from sources outside the Biblical. The English adaptation by George White of Guenter Rutenborn's *The Sign of Jonah* explores dialectical relationships between Biblical and contemporary characters and between stage and audience. Olov Hartman's *Prophet and Carpenter*, the only other play in English translation among those studied, is the single example of a liturgical "Jonah" drama.

As models for the dramatization of Biblical subjects, the "Jonah" plays represent a wide variety of dramaturgic methods. The "story-telling," "interpretive," and didactic approaches appear on the whole to produce little of dramatic or theatrical worth. The major exception in the "story-telling" category is Madeleine L'Engle's *The Journey with Jonah*, presenting the narrative in a fresh and entertaining fashion for children. In the didactic class, the theatrical effectiveness of the Lodge and Greene play and of David Campton's *Jonah* is the result of dramaturgic skill independent of the "lessons" imparted. The comic

dramas succeed in realizing what much contemporary scholarship understands as the tone and purpose of the Biblical source. "Adaptive" dramatizations create audience interest through the integration of contemporary ideas and issues with a familiar ancient story. Hartman's play illustrates the effective use of Biblical literature in a liturgical dramatic form.

It is considerably more than cliché to state that this study would be unlikely to have reached completion had it not been for the assistance and support of

Kay Hubbard

to whom the work is dedicated

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

Biblical themes have inspired dramatic performances from the Middle Ages to the Baroque period. The subject was suppressed by the Protestant Reformers or went out of fashion in the Enlightenment. The reappearance of the theme in modern drama is a subject of great interest which so far has not found adequate treatment.

So stated a panel reviewing a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Sophia University of Tokyo in 1977.¹ My own interest in Biblical literature as a source for drama has grown through five years of directing and fourteen years of teaching in the area of religious drama. The dearth of scholarly work in this field has provided a primary impetus for the present study. The current scholarly interest in the dramatist's exploitation of classical mythology has not been matched by a similar enthusiasm for the playwright's use of Judaeo-Christian mythic material.² And yet, as is emphasized in the above quotation, Biblically-inspired drama has also been of significance in the history of our theater.

It is the purpose of the present study to explore the ways in which a variety of dramatists have adapted for the stage a single Old Testament

¹ Marie Philomène de los Reyes, SPC, *The Biblical Theme in Modern Drama* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines, 1978), p. vii.

² The classical influence has been notable in, but certainly not restricted to, the French and German theater traditions. Major contemporary studies of this subject include Kate Hamburger, *From Sophocles to Sartre: Figures from Greek Tragedy, Classical and Modern*, trans. Helen Sebba (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1969); Angela Belli, *Ancient Greek Myths and Modern Drama: A Study in Continuity* (New York: New York University and London: University of London, 1969); Hugh Dickinson, *Myth on the Modern Stage* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1969); Richmond Y. Hathorn, *Tragedy, Myth and Mystery* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1962); Leo Aylen, *Greek Tragedy and the Modern World* (London: Methuen, 1964).

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legend, that recounted in the book of Jonah. With two exceptions, the dramas to be considered have originated in the English-speaking theater, either in Great Britain or in the United States. Guenter Rutenborn's *The Sign of Jonah*, written and first performed in German, proved to have great appeal to religious drama enthusiasts in this country. Among theologian-critics who felt the production of Rutenborn's play to have made an important contribution to the tradition of religious drama in the United States was Tom F. Driver. Driver regarded *The Sign of Jonah* as setting the norm for a distinctively Protestant dramaturgy. Furthermore, the English version of the play by George White is actually an adaptation, for off-Broadway, and as such perhaps may be considered to some extent an English "original." In addition, Olov Hartman's *Prophet and Carpenter*, in a translation from the Swedish by Brita Stendahl, will be examined as representing the only development of the Jonah theme for the purpose of a liturgical drama.

The English medieval Biblical drama has, of course, received considerable scholarly attention. Otherwise, critical material relating directly to the present study, particularly for the modern period, is relatively scarce. Robert Speaight's *Christian Theatre* remains the standard historical survey of Judaeo-Christian traditions in the theater.³ The work is brief, and the author does not offer criticism of Biblical drama. William V. Spanos' *The Christian Tradition in Modern British Verse Drama* offers detailed analyses of twentieth-century British

³ Robert Speaight, *Christian Theatre*, Henri Daniel-Rops, ed., *The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, vol. 124 (New York: Hawthorn, 1960).

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dramatists dealing in verse with religious themes.⁴ None of the "Jonah" dramatists, however, comes within this purview. Prabodh Chandra Ghosh in *Poetry and Religion in Drama* is concerned with a variety of dramatists who write in a Christian tradition or who deal with Christian subjects or themes.⁵ Maria Philomène de los Reyes in *The Biblical Theme in Modern Drama* studies twelve plays based on Scripture, but none dealing with Jonah.⁶

Five recent studies in British drama touch on the subject of the present study. Two works, Ruth H. Blackburn's *Biblical Drama under the Tudors* and Lily B. Campbell's *Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth-Century England* provide an analysis of Biblical subjects and motifs which is generally lacking for later periods of theater history.⁷ Lodge and Greene's *A Looking-Glass for London and England* is one of the four Tudor plays studied in Naomi E. Pasachoff's *Playwrights, Preachers, and Politicians*.⁸ Gerald Weales' *Religion in Modern English Drama* examines the influence of religion in the theater in England from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.⁹ Weales is primarily concerned with

⁴ William V. Spanos, *The Christian Tradition in Modern British Verse Drama: The Poetics of Sacramental Time* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1967).

⁵ Prabodh Chandra Ghosh, *Poetry and Religion in Drama* (Calcutta: World, 1974).

⁶ Reyes.

⁷ Ruth H. Blackburn, *Biblical Drama under the Tudors* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971); Lily B. Campbell, *Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth-Century England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1959; New York: Gordian, 1972).

⁸ Naomi E. Pasachoff, *Playwrights, Preachers, and Politicians: A Study of Four Tudor Old Testament Dramas*, James Hogg, ed., *Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies*, no. 45 (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1975).

⁹ Gerald Weales, *Religion in Modern English Drama* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1961).

doctrinal and theological themes in the drama, and consequently does not devote much attention to Scriptural adaptation. He does not limit himself, as does Spanos, to verse dramatists, and his work contains a brief discussion of James Bridie's "Jonah" plays and a reference to Laurence Housman's *The Burden of Nineveh*. Murray Roston's *Biblical Drama in England* studies methods of adapting Biblical material for the stage.¹⁰ He stresses the influence of a period's culture and mores on the assumptions governing dramatic adaptation. While not offering exhaustive criticisms, Roston treats the "Jonah" plays of Lodge and Greene, A. P. Herbert, James Bridie, and Laurence Housman. Other works in the area of religion and theater, such as those of W. Moelwyn Merchant, Kay M. Baxter, Ernest Ferlita, Jerome Ellison, John Van Zanten, Richard E. Sherrell, Alfred R. Edyvean, Nelvin Vos, and Nathan A. Scott, Jr., relate theological motifs to themes in both "religious" and "secular" drama, but without dealing in depth with the matter of Biblical adaptation.¹¹

Of work in the broader field of religion and literature, the studies of James S. Ackerman, Thayer S. Warshaw, Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, and their colleagues at Indiana University's Institute on Teaching the Bible

¹⁰ Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England, From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1968).

¹¹ W. Moelwyn Merchant, *Creed and Drama: An Essay in Religious Drama* (London: S.P.C.K., 1965); Kay M. Baxter, *Speak What We Feel* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1964); Ernest Ferlita, *The Theatre of Pilgrimage* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1971); Jerome Ellison, *God on Broadway* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1971); John Van Zanten, *Caught in the Act: Modern Drama as Prelude to the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971); Richard E. Sherrell, *The Human Image: Avant-Garde and Christian* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1965); Alfred R. Edyvean, *This Dramatic World: Using Contemporary Drama in the Church* (New York: Friendship, 1970); Nelvin Vos, *The Great Pendulum of Becoming: Images in Modern Drama* (Washington, D.C.: Christian University, 1980); Nathan A. Scott, Jr., ed., *Man in the Modern Theatre* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1965).

in Secondary English has the closest relevance to my own research. The Institute has been concerned with the study of the Bible as literature, with the study of modern literature directly employing Biblical sources, and with the study of modern literature containing thematic parallels to Biblical writings. The first two of these areas are pertinent to an analysis of "Jonah" drama. Publications by Institute authors provide extensive coverage of Old Testament material, including treatment of the book of Jonah as literature and as literary source.

Jonah seems to me a particularly timely choice for a study such as this. Although there have been in the English-speaking theater a few earlier dramatizations of the story, notably Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's *A Looking-Glass for London and England* in the late sixteenth century, the subject appears to have become especially popular in the most recent decades of the present century. The "Jonah" dramas available for analysis represent both professional and non-professional theatrical production. And because these plays present a broad range in style, intent, and manner and degree of adaptation, their study can offer insight more generally into the dramatization of Scriptural material.

In this study the "Jonah" plays are arranged typologically. Since the playwright's primary purpose in dramatizing the book of Jonah will determine the type of adaptation, I have categorized the plays on this basis. The groupings cannot be considered absolute or mutually exclusive, as certain plays share some of the characteristics of more than one type. The categorization or typing, nevertheless, will serve to delineate major differences in dramatic treatments of the Biblical source. At the same time, each drama within a given group will be analyzed separately

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in order that the playwright's approach be revealed in its distinctiveness and not simply assumed to follow a particular pattern.

Following a brief chronological account of known "Jonah" plays in English, six typological groupings are discussed in turn, and some attention given to each of the dramas in each group. The "story-telling" treatments of Jonah endeavor essentially to relate the Biblical account without interpretive or extra-Biblical thematic additions. Though the playwrights in this group tend to follow the plot strictly as narrated in the source, they may employ contemporary dress or language or other elements of a more contemporary style. The "interpretive" treatments seek to suggest the meaning or significance of the book of Jonah in terms of its own period and setting. The didactic versions attempt to draw from the story a moral lesson applicable to the dramatist's own time and addressed to a contemporary audience. Basically comic treatments of the book of Jonah range from the humorous and ironical to the purely farcical. The "adaptive" dramatizations employ the Biblical source as a vehicle for the author's own point of view. The Jonah narrative provides **only** the occasion, and is otherwise incidental to the theme of the drama. **Finally**, Hartman's *Prophet and Carpenter* demonstrates the use of Jonah in a liturgical play. A short concluding chapter will suggest the implications of the variety of "Jonah" dramatizations for Biblical drama in general.¹²

¹² In *The Biblical Theme in Modern Drama* Reyes implies a typology which at points relates to that employed in my study. In her chapter "Experiments with Biblical Themes" she distinguishes between those dramatists who add to the Biblical characters a psychological believability, those who employ a Biblical source as a vehicle for presenting their own ideas or ideologies, and those who employ Biblical material to bring into a unity of experience an historical incident and contemporary life. Later in her book she discusses Biblical drama as interpretive

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of the source material, as well as "comedy with Biblical dimension." Her final chapter, "Structural Metamorphosis in Dramatic Art--Biblical Themes as Mythopoeic Designs," employs Northrop Frye's notion of "displacement" in which "the events comprising the plot of the biblical archetype have been displaced by events occurring in our times." The chapter is of particular interest with respect to my classification of "Jonah" dramas as "adaptive."

CHAPTER ONE

Jonah on the English-speaking Stage

The first appearance of Jonah on the English stage was inauspicious. Though records indicate the performance of a medieval French "Jonah" play, none existed in England.¹ The Biblical prophet appears in only two of the extant cycle plays. In these he takes the stage to deliver a single speech as part of the "Procession of the Prophets." All of the prophetic utterances in this "Procession" relate to the coming Christ. Jonah alone among these prophets makes reference to Christ's descent into hell where he is to remain for three days before ascending. The parallel is of course with Jonah's own three-day incarceration in the belly of a fish before emerging alive once more onto dry land.

In the *Ludus Coventriae* "Procession" the prophets alternate with Old Testament kings in delivering prophecies concerning the coming messiah. Jonah is twelfth of the twenty-seven speakers. His four lines directly foretell the resurrection experience of the Christ.

I, Jonas, sey that on the iij. de morn
ffro dethe he xal ryse, this is a trewe talle,
Fyguryd in me, the whiche longe beforn
Lay iij. days beryed within the qwalle.²

¹ Hardin Craig cites a "Jonah" drama as one among several on Old Testament subjects performed in France during the middle ages. Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (London: Oxford University, 1955), p. 111.

² James Orchard Halliwell, ed., *Ludus Coventriae: A Collection of Mysteries, Formerly Represented at Coventry on the Feast of Corpus Christi* (London: The Shakespeare Society, 1841), p. 67. Slight spelling variants in the text will be found in K. S. Block, ed., *Ludus Coventriae or The Play Called Corpus Christi* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University, published for The Early English Text Society, 1922), pp. 59-60. It is now considered unlikely that this cycle, also referred to as "Hegge" and "N. towne," was performed at Coventry.

The "Procession of the Prophets" has been combined in the Chester cycle with the dramatic sequences concerning the Ten Commandments and Balaam and Balak. In the Prophets portion of the play Jonah appears as the fourth of only seven prophets, whose speeches are separated by explanatory comments delivered by an Expositor. Jonah is assigned eight lines, prefaced by the recitation of the Latin text of Jonah 2:2. Jonah recites his own experience, and it is the Expositor who relates that experience to the Christ.

JONAS: *Clamavi de tribulatione mea ad Dominum et exaudivit; de ventre inferi clamavi et exaudisti vocem meam et proiecisti me.*³

I, Jonas, in full great any
To God I prayed inwardlye,
And he me hard through his mercy,
And on me did his grace.
In middes the sea cast was I,
For I wrought inobedientlye.
But in a whalles bellye
Three dayes saved I was.

EXPOSITOR: Lordinges, what this may signifye
Christ expoundes apertelye,
As we reade in the Evangely
That Christ himself can saye:
Right as Jonas was dayes three
In wombe of whall, so shall He be
In earth lyinge, as was he,
And rise the third daye.⁴

³ "I called to the Lord, out of my distress,/and he answered me;/out of the belly of Sheol I cried,/and thou didst hear my voice." Jonah 2:2, Revised Standard Version.

⁴ David Bevington, *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 351. Because of textual uncertainties, some scholars decline to view the "Procession" as properly part of the Cappers' play in the Chester text. Lumiansky and Mills have not included it with the Ten Commandments and Balaam material, but have published it as an appendix to the text. Bevington agrees that, as the prophets episode appears in only one of the five available Chester manuscripts, it should be regarded as a late addition. Bevington, p. 337. For slight textual variants see R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, eds., *The Chester Mystery Cycle* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University, published for The Early English Text Society, 1974), vol. 1, p. 478.

Robert A. Brawer calls attention to the particularly wooden quality of the prophets in the cycles which employ the "Procession."

It is essentially a string of dramatic recitals rather than a dramatic action, since it consists of a series of impersonations of prophets whose function it is to exposit future events to be enacted in the cycle . . . Thus the procession of the prophets differs fundamentally from the cycle play's more complex dramatizations, most of which imitate rather than foretell events and which create and develop characters who communicate with each other rather than merely address the spectator.⁵

This characteristic of the "Procession" material in the cycles, according to Brawer, reflects ". . . their adoption of the ceremonial, formalized manner of representation characteristic of the liturgical drama."⁶

A second cardinal feature of the "Procession" prophets is their exclusive role as harbingers of Christ. In the case of Jonah, the prophet not only foretells but also prefigures the coming messiah. As Erich Auerbach points out, in both homiletic literature and theological treatise during the period figural interpretation was common practice.⁷ In preaching and in Biblical commentary Jonah was characteristically viewed as a type of Christ.⁸ Although the most significant literary

⁵ Robert A. Brawer, "The Form and Function of the Prophetic Procession in the Middle English Cycle Play," *Annuaire Medieval* 13 (1972), p. 88.

⁶ Ibid., p. 105.

⁷ "At a very early date profane and pagan material was . . . interpreted figurally; Gregory of Tours, for example, uses the legend of the Seven Sleepers as a figure for the Resurrection: the waking of Lazarus from the dead and Jonah's rescue from the belly of the whale were also commonly interpreted in this sense." Erich Auerbach, "Figura," trans. Ralph Manheim, in Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), pp. 63-64.

⁸ A discussion of medieval commentators on the book of Jonah will be found in F. N. M. Diekstra, "Jonah and *Patience*: The Psychology of a Prophet," *English Studies* 55:3 (June, 1974), pp. 212-214; and in D. E. Hart-Davies, *Jonah: Prophet and Patriot* (London: Charles J. Thynne and Jarvis, 1925), pp. 20-22.

treatment of Jonah up to this time, the homiletic poem *Patience* by the anonymous "Gawain-poet," does not stress the typological significance of the prophetic book, Malcolm Andrew notes in this work Jonah's ". . . three days in the whale as a type of Christ's three days in hell."⁹ In the sacred art of the period one also sees Jonah as a type of the Christ. The prevailing theme is of death, burial, descent into hell, and resurrection. Hans Walter Wolff describes this "Jonah" motif in church

⁹ Malcolm Andrew, "*Patience: The 'Munster Dor,'*" *English Language Notes* 14:3 (March, 1977), p. 165. See also W. Michael Grant, "Comedy, Irony, and Compassion in *Patience*," *West Virginia University Philological Papers* 20 (1973), p. 10. *Patience*, as the title suggests, is an apology for this particular virtue among those enumerated in the Beatitudes, with Jonah exemplifying the lack of the virtue. The poem is available in several editions. Recommended are J. J. Anderson, ed., *Patience* (Manchester: Manchester University and New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969); and Margaret Williams, R.S.C.J., trans., *The Pearl-Poet: His Complete Works* (New York: Random House, 1967). Ordelle G. Hill identifies the approach of the *Patience* poet as tropological, an approach containing the seeds of a satirical, comic treatment. Hill, "The Audience of *Patience*," *Modern Philology* 66:2 (November, 1968), p. 106. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Second Edition (London: Oxford University, 1952), pp. 244-245. Relevant critical commentary on *Patience* will be found in Hill, pp. 103-109; Grant, pp. 8-16; Diekstra, pp. 205-217; A. C. Spearing, "*Patience* and the *Gawain-Poet*," *Anglia* 84 (1966), pp. 305-329, reprinted with slight expansion in Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1970), pp. 74-94; Charles Moorman, "The Role of the Narrator in *Patience*," *Modern Philology* 61:2 (November, 1963), pp. 90-95; Lynn Staley Johnson, "*Patience* and the Poet's Use of Psalm 93," *Modern Philology* 74:1 (August, 1976), pp. 67-71; Jay Schleusener, "History and Action in *Patience*," *PMLA* 86:5 (October, 1971), pp. 959-965; James R. Hulbert, "A Hypothesis Concerning the Alliterative Revival," *Modern Philology* 20 (1931), pp. 405-422; and Ordelle G. Hill, "The Late-Latin *De Jonah* as a Source for *Patience*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 66 (1967), pp. 21-25. On the medieval "Jonah" poems see, in addition to Hill's article on the pseudo-Tertullian *Carmen de Jonah Propheta*, her "The Audience of *Patience*," pp. 103-109. David Bevington, stressing the pervasiveness of a "patience" tradition connected with Jonah, suggests that Lodge and Greene's *A Looking-Glass for London and England* is an argument for patience as opposed to rebellion even when government is oppressive and unjust. The play is thus ". . . orthodox in its disapproval of lower-class restiveness; the commons are, in a conventional metaphor, the 'feet' of the commonwealth, and when they rebel against their head 'The city's state will fall and be forlorn' . . ." Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1968), pp. 235-236. Bevington's thesis is not typical. Other interpretations of *A Looking-Glass* are discussed in chapter four, pp. 76-83.

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sarcophagus engravings dating from the third century and on "whale-pulpit" carvings from the twelfth century and later.¹⁰ Certain examples of liturgical art, furthermore, appear to have a direct relationship to the "Procession of the Prophets." M. D. Anderson points out that all but the last two of the kings and prophets of the *Ludus Coventriae* "Procession" are depicted in the "Jesse tree" window presently located at St. Mary's Church in Shrewsbury.¹¹

The course of development, and even the exact origin, of the "Procession of the Prophets" is subject to some dispute. But it is generally agreed that it was derived directly or indirectly from the late fifth- or early sixth-century pseudo-Augustinian sermon *Sermo contra Iudaeos, Paganos, et Arianos de Symbolo*.¹² This sermon does not include Jonah

¹⁰ Hans Walter Wolff, "Jonah--The Messenger Who Obeyed," trans. Elisabeth Kohl and Rod Hutton, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 3:2 (April, 1976), pp. 88-89. On both the popularity and the figural interpretation of Jonah in early Christian art see Hart-Davies, pp. 20-22; George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Oxford University, 1958), pp. 38-39; Cyril C. Richardson, "The Foundations of Christian Symbolism," in F. Ernest Johnson, ed., *Religious Symbolism* (New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1955), p. 8. Reproductions of third- and fourth-century "Jonah" art will be found in Elias Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York: Schocken, 1967), pp. 5-8. On the persistence of the salvation theme in "Jonah" art of the sixteenth century see J. Richard Judson, "Marine Symbols of Salvation in the Sixteenth Century," *Marsyas: Studies in the History of Art*, Supplement 1 (1964), pp. 136-155. An interesting revival of the major early "Jonah" motifs can be seen in a print by Fritz Eichenberg, reproduced in *The Catholic Worker* 43:7 (September, 1977), p. 1.

¹¹ M[ary] D. Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (London: Cambridge University, 1963), p. 37. Anderson calls attention to a rare appearance of Jonah among the rood screen prophets and apostles, at Ipplepen. Anderson, p. 38.

¹² Brother Linus Urban Lucken, *Antichrist and the Prophets of Antichrist in the Chester Cycle* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1940), p. 78. Though concerned primarily with Chester's "Antichrist" prophets' procession, Lucken also discusses the "Advent" procession at some length, as does Leslie Howard Martin in his "Comic Eschatology in the Chester *Coming of Antichrist*," *Comparative*

among the prophets cited, nor does Jonah appear in the "Procession" of the earliest recorded Latin dramas, at Laon and Limoges. The Rouen play, however, more than doubled the number of prophets, and included Jonah.¹³ Anderson discusses the *ordo prophetarum*, following the pattern of the *Sermo contra Iudaeos*, ". . . as a liturgical procession of priests, impersonating the Prophets, who foretold the coming of the Messiah, and which thus served as an Advent prelude to the Christmas drama."¹⁴ Glynne Wickham maintains that the *Sermo contra Iudaeos* was not chanted by a procession of priests but rather employed as a reading in the liturgy. "The passage in this *lectio* chosen for dramatization was that in which the Jews are told to call upon their Prophets to bear witness to the coming of Christ."¹⁵ Thomas P. Campbell argues that the prophet-play did not evolve directly from either the *Sermo contra Iudaeos* or the priestly *ordo prophetarum*, which he describes as a liturgical "static procession."

Drama 5:3 (Fall, 1971), pp. 163-176. On the origin of the "Procession of the Prophets" and the medieval Old Testament drama in general see, in addition to Lucken, Hardin Craig, "The Origin of the Old Testament Plays," *Modern Philology* 10:4 (April, 1913), pp. 473-487; E[dmond] K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University, 1903), pp. 52-56; Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University, 1933), pp. 123-171; Oscar Cargill, *Drama and Liturgy* (New York: Columbia University, 1930; New York: Octagon, 1969), pp. 60-104; Grace Frank, *The Medieval French Drama* (London: Oxford University, 1954), pp. 39-41, 74-84.

¹³ Lucken, pp. 78, 80. See also Brawer, pp. 92-93. Hardin Craig cites later French *Prophetarum* (Craig, p. 474). Maximilian J. Rudwin lists fragments of three German prophet-plays from, respectively, the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Rudwin, *A Historical and Bibliographical Survey of the German Religious Drama* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1924), p. 26.

¹⁴ Anderson, p. 23.

¹⁵ Glynne Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 230. See also Chambers, vol. 2, p. 52.

Rather, he feels, the form and style of the prophet-play was influenced more generally by liturgical form and style.¹⁶

At least three of the extant English cycles contain the "Procession of the Prophets." The Wakefield, or Towneley, cycle does not include Jonah. While the York cycle lacks a prophetic procession, Brawer argues that it has simply been displaced by

. . . a single speaker, Prologue, who recites and explicates the prophecies. The form of the York dramatization is thus a throwback to the original Augustinian sermon.¹⁷

In any case, as has already been noted, Jonah appeared as one in the succession of prophets in only the *Ludus Coventriae* and the Chester cycle. Martial Rose suggests that in the former the prophecies ". . . prepare more for the advent of the Virgin than for Christ."¹⁸ Lumiansky and Mills argue that in the Chester cycle the "Procession" was eventually changed so as to constitute an Advent play in the New Testament sequence, rather than remaining the concluding Old Testament drama.¹⁹ Bevington believes the Chester "Procession" likely to have been derived from an

¹⁶ Thomas P. Campbell, "The Prophets' Pageant in the English Mystery Cycles: Its Origin and Function," *MLA Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 17 (1974), pp. 107-119.

¹⁷ Brawer, p. 115. For a discussion of the differences in treatment of the prophetic material among the four cycles, see Brawer, pp. 105-123.

¹⁸ Martial Rose, "The Staging of the Hegge Plays," in Neville Denny, ed., *Medieval Drama*, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 16 (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 203. For a discussion of the place of the prophet-play in the *Ludus Coventriae* and its performance, see Kenneth Cameron and Stanley J. Kahr, "The N-Town Plays at Lincoln," *Theatre Notebook* 20:2 (Winter, 1965/6), pp. 61-69; and the same authors' "Staging the N-Town Cycle," *Theatre Notebook* 21:3 (Spring, 1967), pp. 122-138, and 21:4 (Summer, 1967), pp. 152-165.

¹⁹ Lumiansky and Mills, p. xxviii.

earlier play based on the Apostle's Creed.²⁰

By the sixteenth century Jonah was apparently a fairly popular subject. According to Thomas H. Dickinson, ". . . references to Nineveh and Jonas are frequent in the literature of the time."²¹ In both *Henry the Fourth, Part Two*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Shakespeare's Falstaff offers quotations from the book of Jonah.²² The first full-length dramatization of the book of Jonah in English in this period appears to have been a *Jonas* by Ralph Radcliffe, ca. 1519-1559. Ruth H. Blackburn mentions the listing by John Bale of ten plays by this schoolmaster-dramatist. Six of the dramas, including *Jonas*, were based on Biblical subjects.²³ William Hazlitt cites *Jonas* and eight other titles of Radcliffe's plays, specifying that none was ever printed.²⁴ Whether Robert Greene knew of the Radcliffe version, and whether he and Thomas Lodge had any reference to it in composing their own *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, cannot be established. Hazlitt points out, however,

²⁰ Bevington, *Medieval Drama*, p. 337.

²¹ Thomas H. Dickinson, ed., *Robert Greene* (London: T. Fisher Unwin and New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, The Mermaid Series, n.d.), Introduction, p. xlix. One of the most notable literary uses of Jonah, though by a French rather than an English author, was in Rabelais' *Quart livre* of 1552. See Alice Fiola Berry's discussion of the Jonah motif in this work, in her "'Les Mithologies Pantagrueliques': Introduction to a Study of Rabelais's *Quart livre*," *PMLA* 92:3 (May, 1977), pp. 473-476.

²² Cited by Edna Moore Robinson, "Shakespeare's Use of Scripture," in Roland Bartel, James S. Ackerman, Thayer S. Warshaw, eds., *Biblical Images in Literature* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1975), p. 315.

²³ Blackburn, p. 65.

²⁴ W[illiam] Carew Hazlitt, ed., *A Manual for the Collector and Amateur of Old English Plays* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1892), p. 122.

that another of Radcliffe's plays, *Dives and Lazarus*, was mentioned by Greene in 1592 in his *A Groatworth of Wit*.²⁵

Later in the century Lodge and Greene's *A Looking-Glass* was performed in London. Though this is not likely to have been the original production, the first performance of which we have record was at the Rose on March 8, 1592.²⁶ Edward Andrews Tenney documents the play's popularity:

It proved to be a first attraction, for in March, April, and June, 1592, Lord Strange's men revived it four times at the Rose Theatre, and it had the honor to be chosen for the Easter-day performance, at which it realized the goodly sum of fifty-five shillings.²⁷

Tenney further suggests the reasons for the play's popularity.

There are many reasons why *A Looking Glasse* had a strong popular appeal. It is a comic satire directed against the vices of London and England. It satirizes and rebukes every class. The dissoluteness and pride of the aristocracy and the Court are luridly set forth in the plot of Rasni, King of Nineveh, and his debauched followers. The corruption and greed of the middle class are exposed by the satire on the usurer, the lawyer, and the judge; and the drunkenness and immorality of the lower class are rebuked in the clown and in the wife of the blacksmith. In pageant-like sequence, one spectacle of vice follows another; and after each, the prophet Hoseas, suspended from "the heavens" in a throne, pronounces judgment and the coming wrath of God. Finally Jonah arrives to announce the approaching doom. Thereupon, every one dons sackcloth and ashes in sincere repentance, and God's wrath is

²⁵ Hazlitt, p. 65.

²⁶ Waldo F. McNeir, "The Date of 'A Looking Glass for London,'" *Notes and Queries* 200 (July, 1955), pp. 282-283. McNeir summarizes major arguments concerning the play's date of composition, on which see also John Clark Jordan, *Robert Greene* (New York: Columbia University, 1915; New York: Octagon, 1965), pp. 177-179.

²⁷ Edward Andrews Tenney, *Thomas Lodge* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1933), p. 99. Five quotations from the play are included in Robert Allot's *Englands Parnassus* (London: 1600), ed. Charles Crawford (London: Oxford University, 1913), pp. 119, 125, 179, 181, 266-267. The subjects illustrated by the quotations are, respectively, "Justice," "Lechery," "Policie," "Prayer," and "Of Tempests."

averted. Such a play, with its cutting satire, its broad comedy, its spectacular episodes--thunder, lightning, naked swords in the sky, angels, devils, and Jonah cast forth upon the stage from the belly of the whale--could hardly fail to draw a crowd. And in an age when the dreadful intermittent plague symbolized an avenging God, there can be no doubt that many citizens were deeply moved by *A Looking Glasse, for London and England*.²⁸

Dickinson cites the ubiquity of Jonah, the Whale, and Nineveh in puppet shows for two decades after *A Looking-Glass* as further evidence of the popularity of the Lodge and Greene play.²⁹ Blackburn, emphasizing the influence of *A Looking-Glass*, calls attention to both the puppet drama and ". . . 'ein comedia auss dem propheten Jonah' performed at Nordlingen in 1605."³⁰

Some time in the first quarter of the seventeenth century Zacharie Boyd, a Scottish clergyman, wrote his dramatic poem *The Historie of Jonah*. Hazlitt lists another seventeenth-century "Jonah" play, no longer extant, entitled *Nineveh's Repentance*. "This tragi-comedy is mentioned in the List annexed to the *Careless Shepherdess*, 1656."³¹ No further

²⁸ Tenney, p. 99. Critics, it should be noted, do not agree that the play is so predominantly satirical. Critical opinions are cited in the discussion of *A Looking-Glass* in chapter four.

²⁹ Dickinson, p. 78. Alexander Dyce cites references to "Jonah" puppet plays in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* and *Bartholomew Fair*, and two other Elizabethan dramas. Dyce, ed., *The Dramatic Works of Robert Greene*, vol. 1 (London: William Pickering, 1831), p. xlii.

³⁰ Blackburn, p. 171. The German stage performance is also cited by W. W. Greg: "A Jonah comedy performed by English players at Nordlingen in 1605 may have had some connexion with the present piece." Greg, ed., *A Looking-Glass for London and England by Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, 1594* (London: Oxford University, for The Malone Society, 1932), p. viii.

³¹ Hazlitt, p. 166. Coleman designates *Nineveh's Repentance* "a lost play." Edward D. Coleman, comp., *The Bible in English Drama: An Annotated List of Plays Including Translations from Other Languages* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1931), p. 77.

dramatizations of Jonah are recorded until late in the nineteenth century, when John Ritchie's romantic "closet drama" *The Life of Jonah, the Prophet* was published.

What might be regarded as a revival of "Jonah" dramatic activity had its beginnings in the second decade of the twentieth century. In 1921 A. P. Herbert's *The Book of Jonah (As almost any modern Irishman would have written it)* appeared in *The London Mercury*. This tongue-in-cheek commentary on the Irish temperament and British rule, though not written for performance, may be considered the first comic treatment of Jonah. In 1924 *The Jewish Chronicle* of London carried L. V. Snowman's *A Second Chapter of "Jonah,"* again a dramatization not intended for performance. Snowman's short play offers an interpretation of the Biblical Jonah as representing Israel's world mission and her reluctance to accept that mission. Edward D. Coleman in his bibliography of Biblical drama in English lists a play by John A. Maynard which may have been the first "Jonah" drama published in the United States. Coleman's entry reads simply: "Jonah; a play in five episodes. (Boston: American Unitarian Association, n.d.)"³² Since Coleman's bibliography was published originally in 1931, it can be said with certainty only that Maynard's play was written prior to that date.

In 1927 Harry W. Githens published *A Fish Story*, possibly the first of a number of "Jonah" plays written for non-professional, church production. Githens' Preface to his *Dramatized Stories from the Old Testament* specifies the types of production situations he had in mind, and his

³² Coleman, p. 77. The present writer has been unable to locate a copy of this play.

suggestions may serve to indicate the varied uses for which later church "Jonah" plays have been intended.

These short, dramatized stories are suitable for use on various occasions. They may be presented at the Bible-class lesson hour, or at a Bible-class social, at a C. E. devotional service, at mid-week church night, at a vesper service, at a missionary meeting, or used for a feature in the opening worship program of the Bible school.

They are suitable for use with a morning or evening church service, or may be given as a Sunday evening series. They can be effectively used by training-classes and in summer camps of young people.³³

The decade of the nineteen-thirties witnessed somewhat increased "Jonah" dramatic activity, particularly in terms of actual stage production. In 1932 Scottish playwright James Bridie's first version of Jonah, *Jonah and the Whale*, was both produced and published. The play was directed by Anmer Hall for the Westminster Theatre in London. The play was presented with Bridie's one-act *The Amazed Evangelist* for forty performances.³⁴ Among the actors appearing in the production were Edward Chapman, Gillian Scaife, and Joan White.³⁵ Bridie commented on this production of his earliest "Jonah" play:

Anmer Hall . . . doggedly kept on presenting successes of esteem at the Westminster Theatre, losing many thousands of pounds in the process. One of these was my *Jonah and the Whale*, a little piece with an enormous cast. The Westminster Theatre weathered it for forty days, like the Ark but not so full.³⁶

³³ Harry W. Githens, *Dramatized Stories from the Old Testament* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1927), p. 11.

³⁴ Winifred Bannister, *James Bridie and His Theatre* (London: Rockliff, 1955), pp. 84-86.

³⁵ James Agate, "Jonah and the Whale," in *Red Letter Nights: A Survey of the Post-Elizabethan Drama in Actual Performance on the London Stage, 1921-1943* (1944; reissued New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 304-305.

³⁶ James Bridie, *One Way of Living* (London: Constable, pub. 1939), p. 276.

Jonah and the Whale was later produced at the Tewkesbury Festival.³⁷

In 1933 *The American Mercury* printed a "Jonah" play not intended for production, Charles Lee Snider's *Jonah in the Bible Country*. Here Jonah and the events of his career are not portrayed, but the characters are rather members of a men's Bible class engaged in a discussion of the Biblical book. The "Burns Mantle Yearbook" for the 1935-36 season notes one of San Francisco's "little theater" groups, the Wayfarers, as ". . . opening its new home with a production of Robert Nathan's 'Jonah.'"³⁸ It is extremely doubtful that this play was an earlier version of Nathan's *Jezebel's Husband* as produced in 1952. One may conjecture that the Wayfarers rather presented an adaptation of Nathan's 1925 novel *Jonah*.³⁹ Also in 1936 Hammond B. Gayfer's one-act farce *The Subsequent History of Mr. Jonah* was first copyrighted. The play was published in an acting edition in 1938, with no production information listed.

The burgeoning of "Jonah" plays continued during the nineteen-forties. James Bridie's radio dramatization *The Sign of the Prophet Jonah* was presented by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1942. In November of the same year a revised version of his stage play *Jonah and the Whale*, in which Bridie incorporated material from the radio version, was directed by F. Sladen Smith for the Theater of the Unnamed Society in

³⁷ George R. Kernodle, "England's Religious Drama Movement," *College English* 1 (Fall, 1940), p. 420.

³⁸ Fred Johnson, "The Season in San Francisco," in Burns Mantle, ed., *The Best Plays of 1935-36 and the Year Book of the Drama in America* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1936), p. 26.

³⁹ Robert Nathan, *Jonah* (New York: McBride, 1925; London: Heinemann, 1925). The novel was later published in the United States as *Son of Amittai* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1934), and in the same year reissued in England with a new forward by the author. See Clarence K. Sandelin, Robert Nathan, Sylvia E. Bowman, ed., *Twayne's United States Authors Series*, no. 148 (New York: Twayne, 1968), p. 138.

Manchester. Both of Bridie's 1942 "Jonah" plays were published in 1944, with the stage version appearing under the title *Jonah 3*. The 1942 stage version was revived in 1943 by a "little theater" group in Glasgow at the Park Theatre, and in 1954 at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre.⁴⁰ Winifred Bannister notes a fourth Bridie "Jonah" dramatization, for television, but does not record its performance date. "The television play is called simply *Jonah* and keeps fairly close to the final stage version, *Jonah 3*."⁴¹

In 1942, which appears to have been Jonah's landmark year for the decade, British dramatist Laurence Housman published his *The Burden of Nineveh* and American Paul Goodman wrote his play *Jonah*. The latter was not published until 1945; and the first performance of *Jonah*, with revisions by the author, occurred in 1966. American poet Robert Frost's dramatic poem *A Masque of Mercy* appeared in 1947. Lisl Beer's comic puppet play *Jonah and the Whale*, though published in 1961, was first performed in 1949.

American novelist Robert Nathan's play on Jonah, *Jezebel's Husband*, was written during 1951 and 1952, and published in 1953. The premier performance was on August 4, 1952, at the Pocono Playhouse in Mountain-home, Pennsylvania.⁴² Claude Rains appeared as Jonah in the original production.⁴³ Clarence K. Sandelin notes that the Nathan play failed to

⁴⁰ Bannister, pp. 88-89.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 88.

⁴² Sandelin, p. 16.

⁴³ David James Harkness, comp., "The Bible in Fiction and Drama: A Bibliography with Notes," *The University of Tennessee News Letter* 35:6 (June, 1956), p. 6.

reach Broadway after a New England run, probably as a result of Rains leaving the company. Unlike Nathan's other dramas, *Jezebel's Husband* has been presented occasionally since the initial production. In 1963, for example, it was popular among community theaters in the United States and abroad.⁴⁴

In 1956 British playwright Wolf Mankowitz's popular and much-anthologized one-act comedy *It Should Happen to a Dog* was first published. Marilyn Matney's unproduced *Jonah* was probably written in the nineteen-fifties, and Jerome Bayer's *Pity for the Gourd* during this decade or in the early nineteen-sixties.

Das Zeichen des Jona, by German pastor and playwright Guenter Rutenborn, had its premiere in 1947 in Germany where it was performed both professionally and non-professionally.⁴⁵ In May of 1957 the play received its first production in English by students of Union Theological Seminary, New York City, where *The Sign of Jonah* was given three performances.⁴⁶ Subsequently George White was granted exclusive translation rights. *The Sign of Jonah* in White's adaptation opened off-Broadway on September 8, 1960, at the Players Theatre, and ran for fifty-three performances.⁴⁷ It has since been revived by church and college theater groups.

⁴⁴ Sandelin, p. 88.

⁴⁵ Peter Bauland, *The Hooded Eagle: Modern German Drama on the New York Stage* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1968), p. 212. "Rutenborn's drama had approximately five hundred performances in small towns in East Germany alone, where the troupe of players was constantly on the run so as not to be forced to answer questions by the communist authorities." Bauland, p. 213. See "A Pastor's Fine Play," *Life* (June 10, 1957), pp. 121, 123-124.

⁴⁶ Bauland, p. 213; "The Sentencing of God," *Time* 69:19 (May 13, 1957), p. 72.

⁴⁷ Bauland, p. 213.

The White version of *The Sign of Jonah* inaugurated Jonah's most prolific two decades on the English-speaking stage, with the nineteen-sixties witnessing a slightly larger number of dramas than is on record for the nineteen-seventies. In 1961 Richard McBride's *From Out the Whale's Mouth* was produced by the Bread and Wine Mission in San Francisco. In the same year Sarah Walton Miller's *Jonah* was published in a collection of "dramatic features for group worship." The first performance in English of Swedish playwright Olov Hartman's liturgical drama *Prophet and Carpenter* took place at the First Prebyterian Church in Stamford, Connecticut, in September, 1965.⁴⁸ Having appeared in Swedish in 1954, the English version was published in 1966.

During the 1965-1966 season T. J. Spencer's *Jonah* was produced at the Catholic University Theatre in Washington, D.C.⁴⁹ It was produced and directed professionally by Hal Thompson at the off-Broadway theater Stage 73, opening on September 21 and closing on October 8, 1967.⁵⁰ Paul Goodman's *Jonah* was also produced off-Broadway, at The American Place Theatre at St. Clements Church, for eight subscription performances beginning February 5, 1966, and public performances from February 15 through February 25. The production was directed by Lawrence Kornfeld, and featured Sorrell Boone in the title role.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Bernard Ikeler, "Jonah: Prophet and Sinner," *Presbyterian Life* 18:20 (October 15, 1965), p. 49.

⁴⁹ Leo Brady, "Washington," in Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., *The Best Plays of 1965-1966* (New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead, 1966), p. 67.

⁵⁰ Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., *The Best Plays of 1967-1968* (New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead, 1968), p. 385.

⁵¹ Guernsey, *The Best Plays of 1965-1966*, pp. 430-431.

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By the mid-sixties interest in the religiously-oriented musical was growing, and for the next decade and a half Biblical material was frequently the focus of such productions. In 1964 the first version of Lawrence Waddy's *Jonah*, written in 1962, was produced by the BBC as part of a Sunday evening television series entitled *Meeting Point*. That same year dramatist-composer Waddy directed a stage production of his *Jonah* at the Bishop's School in La Jolla, California. In 1975 he again produced *Jonah*, with some textual changes and expansions and a new score.⁵² In 1967 Colin Hodgetts' *Jo Jonah* was published, after having received its first production in England at the St. John-at-Hackney church. As described by Kathleen Bainbridge-Bell, "'Jo Jonah' is a rather noisy musical, liked by the young."⁵³

In 1967 Madeleine L'Engle's whimsical dramatization for children, *The Journey with Jonah*, was performed at Columbia University's McMillan Theatre by students of St. Hilda's and St. Hugh's School in New York City. The text was published in the same year. In England, Laurence Manley's *Jonah* appeared in or shortly before 1968.⁵⁴ Swedish dramatist Olov Hartman's *On That Day* was written in 1967 at the request of the World Council of Churches for its Fourth Assembly held in 1968 in Uppsala, Sweden, where the play was performed in the city's sports arena.⁵⁵ On

⁵² Letter of September 28, 1978, from Lawrence H. Waddy to the present writer.

⁵³ Letter of June 6, 1976, from Kathleen Bainbridge-Bell to the present writer.

⁵⁴ Ibid. The manuscript, undated, was received by the Library of the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain in 1968.

⁵⁵ Olov Hartman, *On That Day*, trans. Brita Stendahl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), Introduction, pp. vii-viii.

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That Day was also published in an English translation in 1968. The play is based primarily on the book of Amos. Jonah appears as a character only briefly, in "The Sixth Song," with three lines. Before an Israelite assembly Jonah attempts to support Amos' claim that current political and business practices are unjust to the poor as well as nationally isolationist, but he is laughed out of court. Gordon C. Bennett's *So Why Does that Weirdo Prophet Keep Watching the Water?* was presented by students at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, in 1969. The play was published in 1973. The short *Jonah, You're My Man*, a "street-talk" dramatization not intended for performance, was published in Karl F. Burke's anthology *God is Beautiful, Man* in 1969.

In 1970 Sarah Walton Miller published her second "Jonah" dramatization, *The Man Who Said No to God*, as a "discussion-starter" play for junior high-age young people. Marion Fairman's *In The Belly of the Fish* appeared in print in 1971. In the same year David Campton's *Jonah* was presented in Chelmsford Cathedral in England. The play was published in an acting edition the following year. Brian Tunstall's *Jonah* was written in or shortly before 1972.⁵⁶ *Jonah*, a puppet play for children by Ewart A. and Lola M. Autry, was published in 1972. Lawrence Waddy's musical *Jonah* was performed in a revised form in 1975 and published in 1978. Two "Jonah" productions by church youth groups occurred in 1977. Jim Rose's *The Fish Who Went Manning* was performed by the author and youth of the North West Bible Church in Dallas, Texas; and John J. Debrecini's musical *Jonah of Joppa* was presented by senior high young people at the Wyckoff

⁵⁶ The manuscript, undated, was received by the Library of the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain in 1972. Letter from Kathleen Bainbridge-Bell.

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered.

2. The second step is to gather relevant information and data.

3. The third step is to analyze the information and data to identify patterns and trends.

4. The fourth step is to develop a hypothesis or a proposed solution.

5. The fifth step is to test the hypothesis or solution through experimentation or analysis.

6. The sixth step is to evaluate the results of the test and determine if the hypothesis or solution is valid.

7. The seventh step is to communicate the findings of the study to the relevant audience.

8. The eighth step is to draw conclusions from the study.

9. The ninth step is to reflect on the study and identify areas for improvement.

10. The tenth step is to apply the findings of the study to real-world situations.

11. The eleventh step is to share the findings of the study with the wider community.

12. The twelfth step is to continue to research and explore the topic further.

13. The thirteenth step is to collaborate with other researchers and experts in the field.

14. The fourteenth step is to stay up-to-date on the latest research and developments in the field.

Reformed Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey. W. A. Poovey's *Jonah--The World's Greatest Miracle* was published in 1972 to be used as ". . . an introduction to a Bible class, as a discussion starter, or as an alternative to the Sunday sermon . . ."57

Chicago's Body Politic in 1978 performed a "story theater" version of *Jonah*. The production, directed by James Shiflett, employed pantomime, mime (as in the depiction of the ship), and configurization (as in the representation of the whale swallowing Jonah). Beginning in the spring and continuing for nine months or a year, *Jonah* toured churches on Sunday mornings as part of a program of Bible stories presented through story theater techniques. In the fall of 1978 *Jonah* was performed on NBC-affiliated WMAQ for the religious television program *Everyman*.58

57 W. A. Poovey, *Six Prophets for Today: Dramas on Jonah, Obadiah, Habakkuk, Hosea, Micah, Amos* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), back cover.

58 The writer is indebted to Mark Atkinson for details of this production. A member of the original company, Atkinson played the Jonah role for the television performance. On stage Jonah had been played by a woman, chosen because Jonah had to be picked up and thrown about a good deal and this particular actress was the smallest member of the cast. Atkinson recalls that church audiences frequently objected to the casting.

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CHAPTER TWO

Story-telling Treatments of Jonah

More than one commentator on the book of Jonah has noted the dramatic, if not stageworthy quality of its structure. In arguing against the widely-held view that the Biblical work is an attack upon Israelite religious nationalism, Elias Bickerman refers to the book as a drama:

. . . the morality play of Jonah has a cast of three characters: God, the prophet, and the Ninevites . . . there is nothing about Israel. The opposition between Israel and the Gentiles is introduced by commentators who find more than is really there.¹

Bickerman describes the book of Jonah in terms of strong dramatic action.

Its plot is simple: a prophet announces the destruction of a city; the inhabitants repent and are spared. This sermonizing theme is transformed into an exciting tale by holding back the solution and keeping the reader in suspense.²

The Biblical writer first wrings suspense from his theme of the disobedient prophet.

How would he be compelled to fulfill the command? In such cases the usual means of celestial discipline was bodily pain. But this trite motif is shunned by our author.

. . . Jonah's self-sacrifice shows his faith in God's justice; thus the reader knows in advance that the prophet will be saved. But how?

The task is accomplished through the introduction of a new danger in the giant fish. What should be Jonah's finish is actually the means of his

¹ Bickerman, p. 28.

² Ibid., p. 4

rescue.³ Again employing the terminology of dramatic criticism, Bickerman points out that in the sparing of Nineveh from destruction ". . . the narrator introduces a new reversal of situation."⁴ T. Henshaw describes the book of Jonah as ". . . a good short story," but with such characteristics as plotting, scene division, and characterization as to suggest again the vehicle of drama.

Though slight the plot is well-knit and is developed in three clearly defined scenes, namely, (1) the flight of Jonah which ends by his being swallowed by a fish and vomited on land; (2) his preaching to the Ninevites and their sudden conversion; (3) his meeting with Yahweh who rebukes him for his intolerance. From the moment Jonah appears, fleeing from the presence of Yahweh, our interest is roused and is sustained throughout the story, which ends abruptly, leaving us to wonder what happened to the Ninevites and to Jonah. Though the characters are lightly sketched, they are not dim shadowy figures but real individuals who can be easily distinguished. Even Yahweh is not a mere abstraction but a living personality, who speaks and acts like a human being. The book is the work of a born storyteller endowed with a fertile imagination, a sense of drama, a touch of kindly humour and the power of graphic description.⁵

T. T. Perowne says of the book of Jonah: "In style it is almost dramatic.

³ Ibid., pp. 10-12. Bickerman cites Jerome as the source for his perception of the dramatic irony in the fish swallowing Jonah. Critics would not by any means be generally in accord with Bickerman's suggestion that the book of Jonah is by design or in effect suspenseful. But note Leslie C. Allen's description of the book of Jonah in terms of the "element of surprise":

In fact this little book is a series of surprises; it is crammed with an accumulation of hair-raising and eye-popping phenomena, one after the other. The violent seastorm, the submarine-like fish in which Jonah survives as he composes a song, the mass conversion of Nineveh, the magic plant--these are not commonplace features of prophetic narratives.

Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, R. K. Harrison, gen. ed., *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1976) p. 176.

⁴ Bickerman, p. 13.

⁵ T[homas] Henshaw, *The Latter Prophets* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958), p. 289.

Its teaching, whatever it may be, is rather acted before our eyes than uttered for our ears." Perowne divides the book into "Three acts, as it were in a drama . . ." paralleling the three scenes of Henshaw's "short story."⁶

Hans Walter Wolff goes so far as to divide the book literally into acts, each with its own locale. The acts he labels as First Act (on the way to Joppa): Commission and Escape; Second Act (on the sea): Jonah's Fear of God and the Sailors' Fear of God; Third Act (on the way to Nineveh): Turn-About and New Commission; Fourth Act (Nineveh): Jonah's Sermon, Nineveh's About-Face, and God's Compassion; Fifth Act (East of Nineveh): Jonah's Anger and God's Compassion.⁷

The playwrights to be considered in this story-telling category all have sought to realize the book's dramatic potential in actual play form. Though interpretive choices may at times have had to be made, these dramatizations are not intended to present a particular (or at least controversial) critical opinion about the book's purpose, meaning, or theme. Nor is it apparently the intention of these dramatists to draw for their audience an overt moral lesson from the Biblical material. Nor with this group is the Biblical source employed as a vehicle for expressing an author's personal vision or commentary on contemporary life. The plays may indeed reflect a writer's own distinct perspective, and may reflect the intellectual or cultural milieu in which he or she is

⁶ T. T. Perowne, ed., *Obadiah and Jonah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1905), pp. 47, 53-55.

⁷ Hans Walter Wolff, "Jonah--A Drama in Five Acts," trans. Elisabeth Kohl and Rod Hutton, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 3:1 (February, 1976), pp. 4-7.

writing. A playwright may even employ contemporary dress and locate the places and events in modern times. But "the telling of the story" nevertheless remains the dominant dramaturgic purpose.

The earliest of these dramatizations is also perhaps the most fascinating. Written in 1872 as a "closet drama" not intended for the stage, John Ritchie's *The Life of Jonah, the Prophet* is rich in the English romanticism of the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸ The dramatic poem is written in iambic pentameter, and the language up to Jonah's arrival in Nineveh is ornate and ponderously lyrical. In the latter part of the text, however, the lines are frequently quite crisp and direct and less marked by the flowery rhetoric in which the earlier episodes are told.

The Jonah narrative is followed in its entirety, with, however, expansion of scenes and the addition of wholly new scenes and characters. Lying in bed, Jonah hears the call. With Byronic heroism his servant immediately announces that he will also undertake the dangerous mission. Jonah is concerned for his reputation, however, because he is convinced that the commanded prophecy is actually for the purpose of saving the Ninevites. He then dreams in anticipation of the romantically lonely life of the wandering rebel against God.

On the ship the seamen are polite and civil, representing a kind of enlightenment in the manner of Lessing. Justice and mercy, Jonah learns

⁸ John Ritchie, *The Life of Jonah, the Prophet* (London: Partridge, 1872). Action in Ritchie's play is continuous, with sub-headings indicating a change in locale ("Joppa," "Haran, in Syria" which appears to become Nineveh without this time any indication of change of scene, "Gath-Hepher"), but with no actual transition provided. Within a character's single speech a dramatically impossible passage of time may occur. A good deal of the action is simply narrated by an observer. The voice of God is never heard, his words repeated only by one of the characters.

from the sailors, are superior to any religious creed. The captain's young son, portrayed in a quite sentimental fashion, describes the coming storm. The mariners suddenly become extremely pagan in the drawing of the lots, a scene devised with a good deal of excitement. As the sailors pray to be spared the guilt of this man's death, Jonah is suddenly found to be already overboard. The captain gives the mundane instruction that the ship be inspected for damage, and Jonah's heroically noble and rather miraculous entry into the sea is depicted. In the fish Jonah marvels at length at his undersea world. Then he himself describes God's command to the fish to regurgitate him, and resolves to follow the example of the fish in obedience. Finally, near Tarshish, occurs the scene of the mass conversion of the sailors.

Journeying to Nineveh, Jonah recites a fantasized early Old Testament history. He stops to rest and hears about Nineveh from a shepherd and his wife, who engage in a genuinely dramatic debate over how rich an entertainment this prophet should be afforded. Jonah learns how truly vicious a place is Nineveh and how fierce its inhabitants. In the recitation of its sins it is clear that Nineveh's failings are essentially ethical. Having no idea of what he should preach to the people, Jonah is assured that when it is time he will receive the words to be delivered.

Jonah quite miraculously passes by the guards and through the gate into Nineveh. He delivers his message and becomes convinced that the city indeed will be destroyed. The prophecy itself is particularly crisp. Jonah reiterates "Yet forty days, and Nineveh's destroyed" as a refrain to the narration of events in Nineveh by the Serjeant and other citizens. Nineveh's original laws, it is revealed, were just, but they have been since abandoned in practice. The people's repentance appears

motivated by the nature of Jonah's message itself and by the mystery and authority attending his presence in the city. The extremely severe fasting is described in detail. The king, who evinces better judgment and greater perception than does Jonah, resolves that the people shall remain God-fearing.

When Nineveh is spared Jonah is invited to join with the people in celebration. Though he feels he should accept the invitation, he recalls his earlier conviction that this assignment would damage his reputation and cannot bring himself to do it. The ship's captain is sent to eavesdrop on Jonah so that the king might learn anything further of importance to his kingdom's well-being. Jonah comes to understand the lesson to which he has been subjected, and proceeds to moralize on the theme of ethics in personal and political relationships. He resolves to go to Joppa to see how the mariners have fared. There he chooses an upper room in which to meditate, because in eight hundred years ". . . a greater man than Jonah shall appear/and lodge within that self-same, upper room."⁹ The message delivered by this later prophet will be of salvation rather than destruction. In Jonah's vision Jew and Gentile shall ". . . live as brothers, 'seeing eye to eye.'" (pp. 42-43) Finally Jonah and his former companions enjoy a reunion on the ship.

Though the egalitarian sentiments and the stress on ethical behavior suggest a thematic interest on Ritchie's part outside those derived from his Biblical source, these matters are treated really as assumptions rather than as a primary focus for the reader's attention and reflection.

Typical of the dramatization of Biblical material for church

⁹ Concerning the idea of Jesus as the "greater man than Jonah" see Luke 11:29-32.

production is Harry W. Githens' 1927 *A Fish Story*.¹⁰ Githens' stated purpose is:

. . . to present an accurate interpretation of the Scripture story, strengthened by imaginary dialogue of "what probably happened" during the intervals not recorded in the Bible . . . The words, for the most part, have been taken directly from the Bible narrative, so that the actors will be learning Scripture as well as a story."¹¹

The four brief scenes take place, respectively, in Jonah's home in Zebulun, on the ship, in the Ninevite king's palace, and outside Nineveh. The scene inside the whale is omitted, necessitating Jonah's recitation to the king of his adventure. Otherwise there is no departure from the incidents of the Biblical book, except for Jonah's final line which Githens has added in order that the prophet's own response to the lesson delivered to him by God not be left in doubt:

O Lord, my God, forgive the anger of Thy servant, I pray Thee.
Nevermore shall I rebel against Thee, for Thy mercy is great above
the heavens, and Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. (p. 200)

As evidenced in the above passage, Githens attempts in his dialogue to capture the language of the King James Version of the Bible. Character motivations are not made clear, and transitions are not provided between scenes. At the end of Scene One, for example, Jonah is left hiding his face on his couch; and at the opening of Scene Two he is on board ship in the process of being questioned about his sleeping through a storm.

¹⁰ In Githens, pp. 195-200.

¹¹ Githens, Introduction, p. 13.

Written for children, Madeleine L'Engle's *The Journey with Jonah* tells the story of Jonah with considerable whimsy.¹² The crisp dialogue, partly in verse--both rhymed and unrhymed--and partly in prose, serves to create a keen sense of action. No change of scenery is required, as Jonah's various companions enter to describe events that are taking place in Gath-hepher, on the ship, or in Nineveh. Aside from Jonah, all of the characters are non-human. The talking animals include birds, rats, a fish, a turtle, the worm, and the whale--the last heard but not seen.¹³

¹² Madeleine L'Engle, *The Journey with Jonah* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967). The play was performed by students of St. Hilda's and St. Hugh's School in Columbia University's McMillan Theatre.

¹³ Among the other "Jonah" dramatists, James Bridie makes use of not only an (unseen) talking whale but a talking jackal as well. The present author is indebted to Kay Hubbard, who has discussed her play with L'Engle, for the information that L'Engle was aware of Bridie's dramatization when writing her own *The Journey with Jonah*. As in Bridie's play, L'Engle's whale is loquacious and verbose, and instructs Jonah through direct admonition, sarcasm and psychology. A comparison of stage directions for the whale scene in the two dramas is particularly interesting. L'Engle notes:

A red spotlight thrown on the stage served as the interior of the whale's belly, and two tape recorders were hooked together so that the whale's voice came out with an eerie hollowness. At intervals the whale blew into the mike so that he sounded as if he were spouting. (p. 63)

Bridie suggests:

The stage is entirely dark except for a red spotlight in the insufficient beams of which sits JONAH . . . bowing his head before a stream of eloquence that flows from a dozen amplifiers in the auditorium. The audience is to be deafened by the bellowing noise . . .

James Bridie, *Jonah and the Whale* (London: Constable, 1932), p. 36. Both Bridie's and L'Engle's Jonahs argue that too much prophetic work needs to be done at home to permit a trip to Nineveh. And in both dramatizations the prophet's fellow townspeople show him official respect while taking unkindly to too rigorous a concern for their moral behavior. For a discussion of Bridie's play see chapter five.

L'Engle's telling of the Jonah story may be said to emphasize the Biblical themes rather than to depict the Biblical incidents. At the beginning of the play Jonah offers among his excuses for not going to Nineveh that the pagan city is not the concern of the Israelites' God and furthermore that the Ninevites are the enemies of the Hebrews and therefore will hardly welcome or heed him. Later, on discovering that Nineveh is to be spared, he repeats these arguments, insisting that Gentiles have no right to mercy and adding that he knew all along that God was likely to relent.

The trouble is that he's a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. It is unreliable to have so soft a heart. (p. 53)

In all of these excuses L'Engle reflects a variety of scholarly opinions on the Biblical author's view of Jonah's reasons for his reluctance to preach to Nineveh.¹⁴

¹⁴ L'Engle does not choose the two justifications of Jonah's flight and anger most commonly employed by the "Jonah" dramatists. One, the notion that Jonah did not wish to risk being known as a liar or "false prophet," has acquired a currency which Bickerman attributes to its espousal by John Calvin. The other justification is the anti-universalist posture discussed later in this chapter (see p. 42, n. 21) wherein ". . . Jonah was not grieved for Israel's sake but begrudged the Gentiles their salvation." Bickerman considers this a Christian view which had solidified by the end of the fourth century, with Augustine determining that Jonah prefigured an Israel unwilling to accept universal salvation. The idea was rejected by most medieval commentators, such as Jerome, because Jonah had come to be regarded as the prefiguration of Christ. Martin Luther, however, revived the characterization of Jonah as the parochial nationalist. Bickerman, pp. 17-18.

Closer to *The Journey with Jonah's* argument is the critical analysis of D. E. Hart-Davies who suggests that Jonah fled not because of cowardice and not because of "religious exclusiveness" and not out of

. . . jealousy for his prophetic reputation . . . But because of patriotic zeal for Israel's preservation . . . Jonah's refusal sprang from a two-fold dread. As a patriot, he was full of fear of the ruthless ferocity of the Assyrians as the world-power destined to destroy Israel. As a prophet, he was acquainted with the ways of Jehova. Therefore he was fearful of the tenderness in the heart

Owl, making humorous use of the traditional classification of Jonah as one of the twelve "minor prophets" in the Old Testament canon, asserts that Jonah is ". . . as a minor prophet, egregiously successful." (p. 49) Representing God's point of view, Turtle employs the vine, which had sprung up to shelter Jonah and then suddenly withered, in an expanded analogy with nature to make the point regarding the sparing of the city.

It is easier, prophet, to destroy the entire universe
 than to prepare this vine in whose shade we now relax.
 Can you create with all your anger a single leaf?
 And yet it was easier to create all the stars in the sky than to
 prepare me.

of God, who, he reasoned, might spare Nineveh should the Ninevites repent after hearing the proclamation of their doom. And, for Israel's sake, Jonah resolves that Nineveh shall have no chance of repentance.

Hart-Davies, pp. 50-54. This view follows that of Jerome, whom Hart-Davies quotes:

"The Prophet knew, through the inward suggestion of the Holy Spirit, that the repentance of the Gentiles would be the ruin of the Jews. Therefore, as a lover of his country, he was not so much displeased at the thought of Nineveh's salvation, as he was adverse to the destruction of his own people." (p. 48)

Bickerman, offering the same quotation from Jerome, sets the comment in a somewhat different context.

The traditional Jewish explanation was that Jonah, being a prophet, knew in advance that Nineveh would repent and be saved. But that would put to shame stiff-necked Israel. "Since the heathen are nearer to repentance, I might be causing Israel to be condemned."

Rabbi Nathan in the second century went so far as to argue that Jonah boarded the ship not to flee but to drown for the sake of Israel--later a Christian view as well, as in the thought of Rupert of Deutz in the twelfth century. Jerome countered the "whitewash" of Jonah by emphasizing Jonah's perception that Israel, with the advantage of so many prophets of God in her history, would indeed look bad in the eyes of the repentant Ninevites. In the twelfth century Jewish commentator David Kimchi of Narbonne proposed that the book of Jonah was written, in fact, to set an example for Israel. The transition from Jonah as dour patriot to Jonah as type of a parochial Israel is thus apparent in the critical tradition. Bickerman, pp. 15-17.

You think he would find it difficult to destroy Nineveh,
that great city?
A thunderbolt could lay waste to it in three seconds,
but compassion takes eternity. (p. 54)

Then Worm, having destroyed the plant, argues the lesson of this incident: if Jonah so pities the vine, should he not even more pity the worm (about to be eaten by Jay), and even much more pity the people and beasts of Nineveh? L'Engle maintains a psychological consistency, as well as retaining the note of ambiguity on which the Biblical book ends, in Jonah's departure for home not really much wiser in the ways of God than when he began his mission.

Also intended for children is the puppet play *Jonah* by Ewart A. and Lola M. Autry.¹⁵ The play relates the major incidents of the book of Jonah in language intended to be comprehensible to young children, with frequent close paraphrases of the Biblical book itself. The seven scenes are quite brief, with successive single speeches each tending to explain an action or call attention to a visual element. As an example of such "explanatory" dialogue, in Scene Five the Ninevite King is visited by his Servant.

KING: Have you heard the man, Jonah, preach?

SERVANT: O, yes, Your Majesty. He is going throughout the city telling all the people to repent--to stop sinning against the Lord God.

KING: So I've been told. It has been said that he prophesies the overthrow of Nineveh just forty days from now if we do not obey God. Do you believe this?

SERVANT: Indeed I do, Sire. And if I may say so you seem, by the way you are dressed, also to believe what Jonah says.

KING: Yes, that's why I, the king of Nineveh, am wearing sackcloth instead of my royal robes. That is why I sit in ashes. I, too, have been convicted of my sins. And like my people I am sorry for my wickedness. (p. 79)

¹⁵ Ewart A. Autry and Lola M. Autry, *Jonah in Bible Puppet Plays* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972), pp. 72-82. Though hand puppets are described, the authors assert that other types might be employed (p. 7).

Whale and Worm appear as characters, but are non-speaking. In addition to the puppets the Voice of God is heard from off-stage, and a human Narrator appears at the beginning of Scene Two--after Jonah himself has delivered part of the narration--and thereafter remains visible to the audience. The Narrator recites some of the action of the story, which is occasionally repeated by a puppet character. There is little interaction among characters and Jonah frequently talks aloud to himself. Scene Three consists of the whale furnishing the visual interest while Jonah's voice is heard, presumably emanating from the beast's interior. Unfilled breaks in action and dialogue occur, as when the seamen leave the stage to awaken Jonah and bring him up on deck.

God is Beautiful, Man is the third in Carl F. Burke's series of collections of Biblical paraphrases by urban youngsters in jails and detention homes.¹⁶ As perhaps further evidence of the inherently dramatic nature of the book of Jonah, its "translation" is one of the few in the anthology done in play form. Though the anonymous teller of *Jonah, You're My Man* has not intended that the work be performed, he or she has in each of the seven scenes realized a major action drawn from the Biblical source. In Act One, Scene One, God calls Jonah; in Scene Two Jonah bargains for passage in a ship bound for Egypt. Act Two, Scene One, finds Jonah sick and hanging over the rail while the storm gathers; in Scene Two matchsticks are drawn and Jonah, receiving the short one, goes overboard; in Scene Three Jonah is swallowed by the whale¹⁷ who has

¹⁶ Carl F. Burke, *God is Beautiful, Man* (New York: Association, 1969); *Jonah, You're My Man*, pp. 110-116. Previous titles in Burke's series are *God Is for Real, Man* and *Treat Me Cool, Lord*.

¹⁷ The whale has three lines in the scene, and is thus one of the few talking whales in the tradition of "Jonah" drama.

mistaken him for something to eat, receives God's second call, and is thrown up onto the beach. In Act Three, Scene One, Jonah preaches, secures the peoples' repentance, and complains about losing face when the city is spared; in Scene Two he learns the lesson of the vine.

Jonah, You're My Man is spare in dialogue and moves rapidly from incident to incident. In the final scene an entire day passes within a single speech by Jonah. All of the essential circumstances of the book of Jonah, except for the wearing of sackcloth and ashes, are incorporated. The modernization and urbanization of the story are reflected in the street language spoken by all characters, the lack of reference to farm animals, and the contemporary city setting. "The city is full of hoods, horsemen, freaks, con artists, loan sharks and people like that." (p. 110) Jonah, appointed by God as his "Reverend," preaches particularly against drug users and pushers. The sailors, rather than praying to various pagan dieties, attempt to allay the storm with lucky dice, a lucky quarter, and a rabbit's foot.

Three of the dramatizations belonging essentially to the "straight story-telling" group nevertheless suggest a degree of interpretive or adaptive treatment, thus placing them closer to the plays to be considered in the following chapter or those in chapter six. While these three dramas do not attempt to "explain" the Biblical book or illustrate a particular critical interpretation, they at least from time to time raise questions or issues not contained strictly within the Biblical narrative itself. In addition, in terms of plot and characterization, their tendency is to resolve such apparent contradictions and tie up such loose ends as are found in the Biblical source.

The essentially straight story-telling of Laurence Manley's *Jonah* is achieved despite some rearrangement of events and the omission of the scene inside the whale.¹⁸ Act One is set on a hillside near Jonah's farm. Jonah has returned home after his attempted flight and deliverance from the belly of the whale. In Manley's version, therefore, there is apparently a considerable lapse of time between Jonah's adventures at sea and his *second* call to preach to the Ninevites. As the prophet and his wife discuss Jonah's relation to God, exposition is introduced to provide the information concerning Jonah's reaction to the first call. As Jonah muses, his wife complains: "It's coming, it's coming. Now we shall have the whole story and breakfast time will never come." (p. 2) And Jonah indeed tells of his original disobedience.

Through flashback the mariners are introduced, bringing with them a cut-out ship. The language in the flashback is less colloquial and somewhat more formal and elevated than in the rest of the play, perhaps in order to distinguish the scene as a kind of dream sequence. In a second brief flashback the whale enters and swallows the prophet.¹⁹ The act ends with Jonah receiving his commission again, and agreeing to carry it out.

¹⁸ Laurence Manley, *Jonah: A Play in Two Acts* (1968, typescript). The play was performed in 1967 by the Tidmarsh Players of the New Road Baptist Church in Oxford, England, and subsequently toured to other churches in the area.

¹⁹ Manley describes these two properties as follows:

Our ship was of flat hardboard pierced with holes to accomodate the oars, which were sections of a tent-pole. It was bolted on to a frame of "dexion" strip and weights were attached to keep it erect when set down by the sailors who carried it on stage. It could be taken apart and transported in two sections which were bolted together for performance. The whale was also of hardboard but mounted on small wheels to facilitate easy movement across the stage. (p. 14)

Manley further suggests that "Jonah may be swallowed by the whale's occluding him." (p. 15)

Act Two takes place on the road to Nineveh. Manley again restricts the action to a single locale, in this act through bringing the Ninevites to Jonah and obviating the necessity for him to enter the city at all. Dramatic economy is achieved in handling the story's concluding events. Jonah's plant grows while he dozes and withers immediately upon his falling asleep again.²⁰ Then the lesson to be drawn from all of this is made quickly.

Jonah engages in frequent monologue, at times talking to himself and at times speaking directly to the audience. In his conversations with God, only Jonah's voice is actually heard. Much of the dialogue is straight narration, particularly in Act One where Jonah and his wife alternately address the audience and then converse with each other. Several songs are called for, to be sung respectively by Jonah, the mariners, three Ninevite maidens, and the King's retinue.

Manley resolves one of the apparent contradictions in Jonah's motivation by having him offer the Ninevites salvation through repentance as a genuine option, but at the same time *hoping* they will not follow his advice. Later Jonah does not really ask for death. He simply complains, "Lord, it's too hard for me, I can't stand it, I'd sooner be dead." (p. 12) The "interpretive" emphases include a thumbnail history lesson which Jonah delivers at the beginning of Act Two. Relating the history of Israel from the time of Abraham, Jonah arrives at the just reason for the Hebrews' hate of the Assyrians and the injustice of God's allowing ". . . them this loophole to wriggle out of the punishment they

²⁰ An earlier economy in action appears more difficult to accomplish. The Captain of the ship orders that Jonah be awakened and brought forward, and continues his speech, now addressed to Jonah, with no time allowed for the stage business to have been carried out.

deserve . . ." (p. 7) The importance of ethical behavior is stressed in the King's ordering social reform in Nineveh as well as the more formal ritual of repentance. Manley's understanding of the point of the book of Jonah appears to be the universalism which many critics find to be the lesson of the Biblical book.²¹ Whereas the Biblical account

²¹ A. R. Johnson summarizes the universalist point of view and its critical standing:

It is now generally agreed by students of the O.T. who have been trained in the principles of literary criticism that the Book of Jonah, though apparently purporting to deal with a prophet of this name who lived in the reign of Jeroboam II, is really a parable (or even an allegory) designed to teach that the gracious purposes of God were not limited to Israel but embraced other peoples as well, if they, too, repented of their evil. As such (and in virtue of its strongly Aramaic colouring, as well as the fact that from the author's standpoint the greatness of Nineveh already lay in the past), it is to be assigned to the post-exilic period as being a protest against the narrowly exclusive spirit which sprang up in Judaism from the fifth century B.C. onwards.

A. R. Johnson, "Jonah II.3-10: A Study in Cultic Phantasy," in H. H. Rowley, ed., *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Theodore H. Robinson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 82. See Johnson's second footnote on this page for a listing of scholars supporting this view.

As B. Davie Napier points out, the dreaded Assyrians were a particularly apt group for the author of Jonah to single out to emphasize Yahweh's concern for all peoples. B. Davie Napier, *Song of the Vineyard: A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 367. The repentance of the Ninevites can be seen as a reproach to the Jews who have existed ". . . amid so much greater light . . ." than have the ferocious pagan Assyrians. E. B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets: A Commentary, Explanatory and Practical*, vol. 1: *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah and Jonah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 372. It is relatively easy to move as earlier commentators have from this understanding of the purpose of the book of Jonah to a consideration of the story as elaborate allegory ". . . in which everything has a hidden meaning" relating to Israelite history. John Mauchline, however, after summarizing its characteristics warns against the interpretation of Jonah as allegory rather than as ". . . a parable or a didactic poem." John Mauchline, *Prophets of Israel (3): The Twelve*, William Barclay and F. F. Bruce, gen. eds., *Bible Guides*, no. 9 (London: Lutterworth, and New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), p. 42. For a similar discussion see also Henshaw, p. 288.

ends with no reference to Jonah's response to God's last word, Manley's Jonah does appropriate the "lesson."

Oh, is that the city? Is that how you see it? All those people walking about, are they Assyrians? But it's beautiful, it's so beautiful . . . I think I'm beginning to understand. I feel suddenly shrunken . . . like the gourd . . . and small and mean. I did the things you told me, Lord, and yet inside I felt quite different. You showed me, Lord. You really wanted [King] Choraxis to repent, didn't you? You never wanted to destroy him. You really loved the Assyrians--always--you really loved those Assyrians all the time. (p. 13)

Short of allegorizing, it is nevertheless possible to perceive the prophet Jonah as representing a religiously isolationist nation.

The book of Jonah is a prophetic story indicating the inclusiveness of the Divine government for Nineveh as well as Israel; and rebuking the exclusiveness of the Hebrew nation as manifested in the prophet himself.

G. Campbell Morgan, *Voices of Twelve Hebrew Prophets, Commonly Called the Minor Prophets* (New York, London and Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.), p. 12. The choice of Jonah to represent the national myopia has been commented on as particularly fortuitous. "Being the child of an insular society . . .," suggests Geoffrey T. Bull, Jonah has a natural parochialism which dominates his character despite the abundant precedence for prophetic universalism. Geoffrey T. Bull, *The City and the Sign: An Interpretation of the Book of Jonah* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), pp. 24-28. Leslie C. Allen further observes:

There is shrewd psychological insight in the choice of Jonah as the key figure. Nothing was known about him apart from the information in 2K.14:25, and no writings derived from him have been received into the Judean collection of holy books. 2K.14:25 sets him in the reign of the eighth-century king Jeroboam II as a nationalistic prophet who forecast the extension of the frontiers of the Northern Kingdom. He is thus ideal as the butt for an attack on religious nationalism.

Allen, p. 179. Mauchline, specifying those post-exilic prophetic books whose exclusivist attitude Jonah was intended to combat, points out that not only the Ninevites but also the pagan sailors who so quickly accept Jonah's God serve to illustrate the author's universalist view. "The mariners in ch. 1 behave as highly estimable characters compared with the fugitive Jonah, whose thoughts are only for his own safety." Later Jonah himself, ironically, ". . . contrasts the mercy and love of God with his own selfishness and churlishness (4:2-4)." Mauchline, pp. 40, 44.

Jerome Bayer's *Pity for the Gourd* consists of a prologue, epilogue, and four scenes.²² In the Prologue and Epilogue Jonah appears alone, speaking to the contemporary audience. The remaining scenes, with the addition of a few characters not found in the source, cover the major incidents of the book of Jonah. Generally Bayer concentrates on the action of the Biblical book, avoiding long narrative passages. The movement from scene to scene is kept continuous through shifting the action from one side to the other of the relatively bare stage. The final scene, set in Nineveh, moves somewhat more slowly than the earlier scenes because of the playwright's use of a number of blackouts to indicate passage of time. The play is written in a free verse which is effectively employed particularly in the second scene on board the Tarshish-bound ship. The five Sailors and the Shipmaster engage in a terse stichomythic exchange as they battle the sea. With dramatic economy Jonah is aroused from slumber, the lots are cast, and Jonah is deposited overboard.

Jonah in the Prologue promises to fill significant gaps in the Biblical record, though the non-Biblical material in the ensuing scenes does not seem particularly substantial. In the Prologue Jonah also expresses ". . . a dread concern . . ." over the ". . . dire peril etched in poison/across the face of the earth." But the contemporary peril is never specified beyond the Prologue's generalized

I hear it in a vast choral yawn
of unconcern;
in the cries of hungry wrath I hear it;
I see it festering
in the sickly silent terror of annihilation. (p. 2)

²¹ Jerome Bayer, *Pity for the Gourd* (n.d., typescript). The play was written in the 1950's or early 1960's. Bayer has designated his scenes 1, 2, 3, and 5, with no fourth scene indicated in the script.

And, despite Jonah's insistence that the matter is urgent, what one is to do about the peril is not clarified. Jonah refers in the Prologue to a legend concerning his having been allowed to enter Paradise following his Nineveh experience. In the Epilogue he returns to this legend, claiming that since dwelling there he has learned to appreciate his finitude, to be content with the kind of obedience which enables one to accomplish those tasks realistically within one's abilities. Though such a perspective is urged upon the members of the audience, the point itself is opaque.

A summary of the themes which Bayer appears to have in mind reveals their inconsistency and incompleteness. Scene One consists of dialogue between Jonah and his Wife. She is proud of her husband's latest call, and encourages him to obey the voice he has heard. Bayer avoids the contradiction between Jonah's stated reasons for fleeing essentially by having them all presented together at the outset. Jonah argues that the Ninevites may well repent and be spared and that he will thus have helped them, the enemy, to destroy Israel. The Wife counters that if they repent they will no longer be bent on the destruction of other nations. Jonah complains that the Ninevites should be as strangers to the God of Israel. His Wife responds with the standard universalist argument:

We, my husband, have no monopoly
on the love of God.
He is Lord of Nineveh as well. (p. 7)

Jonah is concerned that he will be mocked, as has happened in the past.

She asks:

Is it better that you be spared
a pain to pride
than that thousands of God's creatures
be spared their lives? (p. 8)

Jonah concludes the exchange with the confession that, whatever the arguments,

There is a force, a terrible force
 that drives me to flight!
 I cannot check it, I cannot!
 I am helpless, helpless! (p. 9)

Early in Scene One God in his call to Jonah makes clear that the sins of Nineveh involve injustice as well as licentiousness. Scene Five (the actual fourth scene) opens with Jonah already preaching to a frightened crowd. He criticizes in particular their penchant for warfare, especially against Israel, but also cites ethical failings, materialism, lust, and greed. The King issues the traditional proclamation, followed by a brief exchange with Jonah through which the prophet reveals his intransigence. He

(. . . turns slowly to look down upon the king with loathing:)
 JONAH: I have no ear for the easy music
 of repentance
 nor an eye for the garb of contrition. (p. 21)

Upon the sparing of the city Jonah complains that he has simply rearmed the enemy warriors, and is then mocked by the Apparitions of Two Taunters. Alone, Jonah reiterates that though he knows God to be merciful he himself can feel only the demands of justice.²³ It must be God himself who has ". . . made the nature that commands me!" (p. 22) Therefore God should now allow Jonah to die. God argues that in the rescue from the fish Jonah himself has known the divine mercy. Furthermore, God reminds him,

I have taught you the hate of evil, yes;
 but have I not taught you as well
 the evil of hate? (p. 23)

At this point Jonah becomes convinced that he should die because he cannot forgive himself.

²³ Robert Frost advances a similar idea in his *A Masque of Mercy*, on which see below, pp. 137-144.

I cannot serve God's mercy
and I cannot change!
I am at odds with God! (P. 24)

An Apparition of His Wife appears, to end the scene with a wish that Jonah might be at peace with himself.

With neither the "filling in" of the Jonah narrative realized nor the promise of contemporary relevance fulfilled, the focus of *Pity for the Gourd* is finally on Jonah himself. Bayer seeks to understand the Biblical prophet from the standpoint of an apparently existentialist view of human nature. In Scene Three, consisting primarily of Jonah's prayer for deliverance from the whale and God's reply that he shall indeed yet preach to the Ninevites, Jonah questions his own identity. To be cut off from human community and deprived of a cause to serve "is to know/the anguish of unmeaning." (p. 17) The resolution of his personal dilemma, of "The still stubborn swing of the heart's pendulum/from passion to opposed passion," is reported in the Epilogue. In Paradise, Jonah tells the audience,

. . . knowing the truth of what I am,
content with what I can become,
aspiring, attuned,
I find courage to risk compassion,
confidence to smile at offence to pride,
readiness to do what is mine to do,
and in the doing
to accept the furthest end. (pp. 26, 27)

The message remains cryptic.

The prophet himself again receives the primary focus in Marilyn Matney's *Jonah*.²⁴ He is depicted as a likeable escapist idealist, given more to contemplating the meaning of his actions than to engaging in

²⁴ Marilyn Matney, *Jonah* (n.d., typescript). Written in the 1960's. Since each of the four scenes is paginated independently, citations will include both scene and page number.

them. Jonah B. Amittai²⁵ is first seen in Scene One with a wife and three children, who both dote on him and persist in asking rather pointed questions about his travel plans, as they assist in hunting for a ticket to Tarshish which seems mysteriously and consistently replaced by one to Nineveh. Jonah offers a number of the excuses employed by other dramatists for avoiding Nineveh: he doesn't want to be the messenger who always does God's "dirty work"; he has quite enough to attend to at home; Yahweh is not the Ninevite God; the people will return to their sins once the affair is over. He feels he must stand up to a God who insists on making him "the Prophet-failure," and take a bit of time out to think over the arduous prophetic vocation. ". . . A man's/Got a right to ask what it all means." He then rationalizes that his flight may in actuality be the means of obedience.

A man has to act on
What he believes, no matter what the conflict with God.
It may be God overrules him
But his act still stands. . .
To rebel so that he won't let go of you
May be only to obey (Sc. 2, pp. 4-6)²⁶

Jonah engages in a kind of interior dialectic as he attempts to make sense of God's expectations and his own responses. But the method is one of raising extreme and opposing points of view and then dismissing rather than resolving them, as is particularly in evidence throughout Jonah's lengthy monologue in the whale in Scene Two.²⁷ Jonah's chief difficulty and fear in terms of his profession is that such a mission of prophecy

²⁵ The same "modernization" of Jonah ben Amittai is employed by Wolf Mankowitz in *It Should Happen to a Dog*. See chapter five, p. 133.

²⁶ This rationalization may be compared with T. J. Spencer's version of doing God's will by running away. See chapter six, p. 157.

²⁷ Matney neither employs a scene on board ship nor makes reference to Jonah's experience with the sailors.

and salvation as one is called upon to undertake ". . . costs part of *you* . . ." (Sc. 3, p. 5) After the Ninevites' repentance and the sparing of their city, however, Jonah returns to the kinds of complaints with which he began the play. The King's Messengers chide him for feeling self-pity when he has helped to avert the wholesale slaughter of human and animal life. Jonah nevertheless declines their invitation to attend as guest of honor the King's celebration. He bemoans his fate as a failure and a fool, and iterates his conviction that the Ninevites' repentance will soon wear off.

A nod in the direction of relevance to contemporary social and political circumstances is achieved primarily through the several abrupt appearances of Jonah's son David. The boy's presence in the whale is left unexplained in Scene Two. In Scene Three, however, Jonah describes his own deliverance from the whale in terms of a violent explosion from which ". . . I, only I am escaped to tell you." Lamenting the loss of his son, Jonah suddenly introduces two more recent, man-made cataclysms: "Hiroshima./Nineveh./Nagasaki./The big three." (Sc. 3, p. 2) At the beginning of Scene Three Matney suggests the New Testament motif of Jesus as a sign more potent for his generation than Jonah for his. ". . . You men don't know it, but/You'll rise up and condemn the generation/Who gets the Angels." (Sc. 3, p. 1)²⁸ If the Ninevites are to be a "sign" for those responsible for dropping atomic bombs, however, Matney does not clarify the relationship between the ancient Assyrian and the modern Japanese cities. There occurs in Scene Four a reference to ". . . a Jew in a/Prison camp . . ." (Sc. 4, p. 2) But again this theme is not

²⁸ See Luke 11:29-32.

developed.²⁹ Finally, after Jonah's tent (rather than a plant) is destroyed, David appears, dressed in play angel garb. In the highly sentimentalized closing scene, David helps Jonah perceive the lesson that, indeed, God has made everything, from tents to Ninevites. Jonah and his son together chant:

We didn't make the whale. God did.
We didn't make the tent. God did.
We didn't make the city. God did.
We didn't make the world. God did. (Sc. 4, p. 10)

The verse form generally employed in Matney's *Jonah* is iambic, but with no standard number of feet in a line. In the dialogue contemporary colloquialisms are mixed with Biblical-sounding language. For example, after delivering his edict in a close paraphrase of the proclamation in Jonah 3:7-9, the King tells Jonah, "I dig your message, son." (Sc. 3, p. 6) Various anachronisms are sprinkled throughout the text. These may amount to no more, for instance, than a brief reference to "cars." (Sc. 2, p. 2) Other anachronisms are extended, such as the awkward:

JONAH (shouting): People of Nineveh, listen
To the word of the Lord!
I bring you good tidings of great . . .
(embarrassed, fumbling with notes and in pocket)
No, no, wrong speech . . . didn't quite make the
Angel corps this year

A MAN: Whatsamatter, buddy? Aren't you a little
Ahead of yourself? We don't rate that message
For say, 800 years, right? (Sc. 3, p. 1)

The exchange follows a set of "stage directions" concerning Jonah's manner of arrival in Nineveh which are neither explicated nor justified in the scene. Finally, the interpretive ideas raised in the course of the play are unfulfilled because of the manner in which Jonah and other

29 Each of these ideas is explored in depth in Guenter Rutenborn's *The Sign of Jonah*, on which see chapter six, pp. 169-178.

characters make a point and then appear to have their attention diverted from pursuing it. The persons of the drama thus appear rather distant from their thoughts.

Just as several plays in the present group reveal tendencies toward the more fully "interpretive" or "adaptive" dramas to be considered in later chapters, so others contain "moral-lesson" elements which place them closer to the didactic treatments to be discussed in chapter four.

Sarah Walton Miller's *Jonah* appears in the "Bible Teaching" section of her *Acting Out the Truth: Dramatic Features for Group Worship*.³⁰ The device of the "speech choir" is employed frequently in Miller's playlets. In *Jonah* the Chief Storyteller and "mixed group" of Storytellers, three of whom become the Captain and two Sailors for the ship scene, comprise the entire cast of characters aside from Jonah himself. Much of the story is narrated by the Storytellers. While certain simple properties--such as an urn and small pieces of wood for the casting of the lots--are called for, and some physical action is indicated, at a number of points Jonah has no clear action or business in which to engage during choral speeches.

The brief dramatization opens with Jonah's call to go to Nineveh. Within four lines Jonah is boarding the ship bound for Tarshish. Dialogue between Jonah and the seamen moves rapidly through the boarding, the storm, the casting of the lots, Jonah's confession that he is at fault, and the descent into the sea. The last incident is narrated, with Jonah remaining on stage, rather than portrayed. The sailors pray to

³⁰ Sarah Walton Miller, *Jonah* in *Acting Out the Truth: Dramatic Features for Group Worship* (Nashville: Broadman, 1961), pp. 77-83. In her Foreword, p. v, Miller makes clear that her short dramas are intended for use by church groups on occasions other than that of the formal worship service.

Jonah's God, without, however, any allusion to their conversion. There is no real Nineveh scene, with both the whale and the Ninevite episodes presented narratively. Jonah's initial reason for refusing obedience is that the task is ". . . a thankless effort." (p. 78) After the sparing of the city Jonah argues that he knew God would revoke his decision and make Jonah the fool. Then Jonah allows himself the hope that Nineveh may yet be destroyed. This attitude is seen to provide a specific motivation for the lesson of the play, since thereby ". . . God knew that Jonah's heart was still hard and his spirit unforgiving." (p. 82)

The point for the audience of the telling of the story is no more than suggested, by the Chief Storyteller:

Did Jonah feel shame for his hardness of heart? Was he big enough to admit he was wrong? The chronicle doesn't tell. But, perhaps the answer is to be found . . . in your own life. (p. 82)

In a later, expanded version of *Jonah*, Miller emphasizes the "lesson" of the story as obedience to God. As with the other plays in her *Bible Dramas for Older Boys and Girls*, however, the open-ended conclusion of *The Man Who Said No to God* is intended to lead into discussion; and the application of the play's "moral" is to be discovered by the audience rather than specified by the dramatist.³¹

(JONAH closes and freezes. The STORYTELLERS look at JONAH a moment, then come center, concealing him, except No. 1.)

STORYTELLERS (except 1): Well, That's our story.

No. 1 (puzzled, joining them): Wait. What was the ending?

STORYTELLERS: Oh, it is still going on. Again and again. People running away from God. A lot of us are Jonah. We are still working on the problem.

³¹ Sarah Walton Miller, *The Man Who Said No to God*, in *Bible Dramas for Older Boys and Girls* (Nashville: Broadman, 1970), pp. 47-62.

No. 1: Will we find the ending?

STORYTELLERS: Who knows? (*Indicating audience*) Ask *them*. (p. 61)

Seven "Questions for Talking" are supplied following this closing dialogue.

The Man Who Said No to God is the least "realistic" of the plays in this later volume of Miller's, containing dramas ". . . written for boys and girls in the eleven- to fourteen-year-old age range."³² Again, Jonah and eight Storytellers make up the cast, and it is the only play in this collection to retain the device of a chorus. The flexibility and flow of the earlier *Jonah* is retained, with the chorus, however, replacing less of the action with straight narration. An opening narrative by the chorus establishes the background concerning Jonah, his home village of Gath-hepher, and the moral state of the city of Nineveh. There follows the brief scene in which Jonah hears the voice of God. A short scene within the fish is enacted, as well as a full Ninevite episode with Storytellers playing the parts of that city's citizens. Miller begins this scene with dishonest businesswomen attempting to sell their wares. Jonah addresses his message of doom not only to the Ninevites on stage but to the audience as well. Jonah's initial disobedience is motivated by fear. Later, when the Ninevites at first refuse to heed him, he complains, "I knew all the time they wouldn't listen." (p. 56) When the city is spared and he feels he has been made a fool, Jonah retires angrily to keep watch. Again motivation is provided for Jonah's action, in his belief that after all ". . . they won't hold out." (p. 60) The episode of the shade-producing plant is in this version seen, with Story-

³² Miller, *Bible Dramas*, Foreword, p. v.

tellers pantomiming the gourd vine and the cutworm. The play then moves quickly to the Storytellers' final line before the "conclusion" is handed to the audience: "You would have me destroy a hundred and twenty thousand people who didn't know right from wrong? Why, Jonah?" (p. 61)

Lawrence Waddy's *Jonah* is a musical version of the main events of the Biblical account, with certain omissions--of the whale scene with Jonah's prayer for deliverance, for instance, and of the gourd incident--to facilitate staging and assist in the modernizing of characters and events.³³ The result is an essentially "straight" rendering of the Jonah narrative with, however, a moral drawn at the drama's conclusion to the effect that we should all be obedient to God. Waddy here employs a particular homiletic method wherein a Biblical story is recited, with the exclusion of those details considered unnecessary to the point to be made, to the end of deriving from that story a practical and applicable truth.

³³ Lawrence Waddy, *Jonah*, in *Drama in Worship* (New York; Ramsey, NJ; Toronto: Paulist, 1978), pp. 121-131. An earlier and somewhat shorter version of *Jonah* (1966, typescript) was written in 1962, first produced on television by the BBC in late 1964, and as a stage performance at the Bishop's School in La Jolla, California, in 1964 and 1975. (Production information in letter of September 28, 1978, from the playwright to the present writer.) In the earlier version Jonah is identified as ". . . a minister or rabbi" (p. 2), whereas in the later version he has become "Pastor Jonah." The earlier version lacks the Narrator's prose introduction of the Jonah family, beginning rather with the "You can't keep running away, Jonah" song. In the later version Jonah's son's name has been changed from Samuel to Amittai allowing the Narrator's comment: "That was his grandfather's name, so he's stuck with it." (p. 123) While the original version lacks any reference to the fish, the published version includes a brief narrator's description of the incident. The introduction to the Ninevites through the song of the city's Boosters is an addition to the later version. The earlier version ends with Jonah and Wife singing an "I want to serve him" song and exchanging greetings with the Ninevites. In the later version the "greeting" business is omitted, and the song is delivered by Jonah, his family, and the chorus.

Like Miller, Waddy makes use of a chorus, from which emerge both the sailors and the Ninevites. He also provides a Narrator who, though not a member of the chorus, on occasion sings with them. Waddy chooses the scenes with the most evident potential for action, and the short play moves fairly rapidly. The Narrator's speeches, on the other hand, often in the form of commentary not connected with the action, tend to slow the pace. This is particularly true when the Narrator quotes sections of the Biblical book of Jonah, contrasting markedly in style with the language of the lyrics, dialogue, and non-Biblical narration. The Narrator speaks for God, with the unaccountable exception of one instance in which a separate "Voice of God" is specified (p. 128).

The characters of Waddy's *Jonah* are to appear in modern dress. The colloquial tone and the ironic pointing of contemporary parallels to Jonah are established in the Narrator's opening comments. He begins:

Hello! I'd like you to meet this family. They're nice people, and they get along well with each other, as families go.

The man of the house, over there, is Pastor Jonah. He has one of the best attended churches here in Pleasantville-by-the-Sea: what you could call a fashionable church. But don't misunderstand me. Jonah may be a trifle too comfortable, and just a bit of a snob, but he works hard, visits his people, both rich and poor, watches over the sick, and preaches a good sermon . . . you see, Jonah is a Prophet. Week by week, he denounces things: Red China, foreign aid, long-haired young criminals, too much welfare--he's great on all of those. Most of all the Ninevites. He can't stand Nineveh: it gets under his skin. (pp. 122-123)

Jonah's reluctance to go to Nineveh, nevertheless, is the result of his and his family's complacency and home comfort.

Following his attempt to escape on the ship--called, with prophetic irony, the *Swallow*--Jonah arrives in Nineveh. The Ninevite Boosters' song is again a commentary on contemporary civilization, with its Chamber of Commerce, supermarkets, movies, smog, inflation, scandal in government,

"And plenty of credit, and easy financing . . ." (pp. 128-129) The song which concludes the drama perhaps is intended to imply that the ". . . richer and better living/[which] Is all that I have to give" is in opposition or contrast to that style of living praised by the Boosters. The emphasis, however, is on individual service and obedience.

I want to serve Him
 Body and soul,
 Because I came to Him empty
 And He made me whole.
 I want to give Him
 All that's best of me,
 Because I was a prisoner
 And he set me free. (p. 131)

A survey of this first group of "Jonah" plays suggests that as the author's purpose is more strictly and simply to "tell the story" the less interesting the drama is likely to be. The interest in John Ritchie's *The Life of Jonah, the Prophet*, for example, derives from the playwright's extra-Biblical material and cultural perspective. Of the plays here examined, Madeleine L'Engle's *The Journey with Jonah* seems most worthy of theatrical attention. And, as has been noted, L'Engle avoids a mere retelling of the plot of Jonah in favor of recasting the themes of the Biblical source in a manner intended to communicate with and entertain a particular audience.

CHAPTER THREE

Interpretive Treatments of Jonah

A few of the "Jonah" dramatists have sought primarily to *interpret* the Biblical story. The intent of these writers is to clarify a particular understanding of the book itself, rather than to present an ethical or moral lesson for the audience as in the didactic treatments to be examined in chapter four, or to employ the Jonah narrative as a vehicle for engaging the audience with certain contemporary ideas or issues as in the "adaptive" treatments to be examined in chapter six.

The earliest of such interpretive dramatizations is L. V. Snowman's *A Second Chapter of "Jonah,"* published in 1924.¹ Though not written for performance, the play--a dialogue between Jonah and Leviathan, with "stage directions" describing several visions--illustrates the degree to which extra-Biblical material may be employed in order that the interpretation be established. In an opening note Snowman explains that Jonah's prayer from inside the fish

. . . has always caused difficulty to the critics, for it appears to be a selection of verses from Psalms which, instead of forming a prayer for deliverance, is a thanksgiving by a man who has been saved from great peril. The rabbis, too, it would appear, were not easy in their mind as to the exact significance of this chapter, and a considerable store of Midrash has been accumulated round this portion of the story of Jonah. These sources have been drawn upon in fashioning the framework of the following scene . . .²

¹ L[eonard] V[ictor] Snowman, *A Second Chapter of "Jonah"* in *The Jewish Chronicle* (London): September 25, 1924, pp. 26-28.

² Ibid., p. 26. Edwin M. Good presents the now common view that the psalm of Jonah 2:2-9 is a later insertion in "Jonah: The Absurdity of God," in *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), p. 39. T. Henshaw exemplifies the view that Jonah's prayer is

The conclusion to which Snowman comes to justify Jonah's giving thanks for deliverance while yet entombed beneath the sea is that Jonah

not only a later addition but inappropriate to its context. Henshaw, p. 287. See Henshaw for citation of the prayer's relation to various passages from the Psalms. Parallels are also listed in Mauchline, p. 43. Elias Bickerman suggests that the psalm in question was already in circulation, under Jonah's name, at the time the book was written. Like Snowman, Bickerman proposes that the prayer is not for deliverance but, as Jerome had noted, ". . . a thanksgiving for grace already granted." In the Greek past tense was not used in order to avoid the apparent anomaly. At the end of the first century Josephus accepted the already current interpretation that the prayer was actually offered by Jonah after his deposition on shore. A generation earlier Philo of Alexandria had introduced the idea of the prayer as a supplication; and in the medieval Hebrew paraphrase Jonah ". . . prays to be restored to life." Bickerman, p. 12. D. E. Hart-Davies, arguing the thanksgiving motif, offers an extensive analysis of Jonah's prayer on pp. 75-79. The most comprehensive study of the psalm is George M. Landes' "The Kerygma of the Book of Jonah: The Contextual Treatment of the Jonah Psalm," *Interpretation*, vol. 21 (1967), pp. 3-31.

Herbert Weisinger finds a resolution to the matter in that

. . . the prayer of Jonah reveals how God and man by their actions in concert resolve the dilemma involved in the relationship between God's universal plan on the one hand and man's individual will on the other. . .

It should be noted that all but the final vision (that of the pearl of illumination) in Snowman's play are derived from the imagery of the Jonah psalm. Of interest in terms of Snowman's third vision (see below, p. 59) is Weisinger's further interpretation of the passage:

Salvation is indeed of the Lord, but Jonah must look to the holy temple and must remember the Lord of his own free will; then salvation is of the Lord. Here, in this brief prayer of Jonah, are the very libretto and imagery . . . of the myth and ritual pattern of the ancient Near East: the God deflated in combat & submerged in the waves of death, humiliated and plunged into the pit of hell, yet when he reaches the nether bottoms, then is he resurrected, but now how transformed, how risen in spiritual significance, is the pattern, and this is the very epitome of the Hebrew contribution to the myth and ritual patterns of the ancient Near East.

Herbert Weisinger, *Tragedy & the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall* (E. Lansing, MI: Michigan State College, 1953), pp. 173-174. In terms of other Old Testament parallels in Jonah, Leslie C. Allen discusses the dependence of various verses of Jonah upon other prophetic writings, and cites in chapters three and four the ". . . apparent use of Jeremiah 18 and Joel 2." Allen, pp. 177, 186. B. Davie Napier lists three verses in Jonah specifically dependent on verses in Joel, two of which are also cited by Henshaw. Napier, P. 366; Henshaw, p. 285.

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has asked to be thrown from the ship in order through death to be united with God. While offering thanks for being allowed such a death, however, Jonah realizes suddenly that he appears to be still alive. Although "Leviathan is seen advancing through the darkness," since he is "a spirit" Jonah cannot see him. Leviathan objects to Jonah's present desire for unity with God with his repeated ". . . no man shall die before he has lived." What is meant by the living which Jonah has not yet accomplished Leviathan describes in a series of questions:

If every man desired this unity, all creatures would have to die. Have you shared your crust with the orphan, so that in sharing it you have shared its orphanhood? Have you covered the threadbare wanderer with garments and, seeing his lonely voyaging, yourself become an outcast vagabond? Have you restored the straying beast of burden to its master or life to the dying warrior? Have you given of your blood to build a generation to succeed you? Women may travail time and again so that you may be one. And all the other issue of her loins--is not each a unity? They live; cannot you live with them? (p. 26)

Leviathan causes Jonah to see a series of visions. The first is of dead Egyptian horses and riders at the bottom of the Red Sea. They were destroyed that the Hebrews might know freedom; similarly the Ninevites need to be set free from the spiritual bondage which is their lot until they too know the God of Israel. Jonah insists that he should work only on behalf of Israel, and that since his people *are* free they do not require his offices. The second vision is of waves breaking against pillars, signifying:

. . . a story of Israel . . . The whole earth is watered by these waves, and servants of Israel must serve even as the waves.
(p. 27)

The third vision is of a rock, the foundation of seven mountains above which stands a holy temple. On the rock men and children in chains endeavor to offer prayers to a God who will not listen. Jonah now determines to live, and to return once again to serve the Israelites. But a

fourth vision, of a pearl illuminating that rock supporting a humanity in anguish, becomes Jonah's "conscience" impelling him to fulfill his mission to Nineveh. Thus his sojourn in the depths of the sea serves to convince Jonah of the universality of his God, and of the servanthood of Israel.

Laurence Housman approaches the subject through a telling of the events of the Biblical book of Jonah much in the manner of the "straight" versions discussed in chapter two. His interest, nevertheless, is in rescuing the tale from its superstitious or magical elements so that it might be palatable to modern sensibilities. In his preface to *Palestine Plays* Housman stresses that in his Biblical dramas he has taken care to omit references to miracles. Such recorded occurrences the playwright regards as conceits of the Israelites who were

. . . thoroughly spoiled children. Having decided that they were "the Chosen People," they wrote their history in terms of tribal megalomania; and, as a consequence, ostentation and favouritism became divine attributes; and their extravagant taste for miraculous intervention, often on quite trivial occasions, has obscured the meaning and lessened the spiritual value of many a beautiful Old Testament story.³

Consequently, while his one-act, five-scene *The Burden of Nineveh* follows the outline of the Biblical book of Jonah, Housman dispenses with both fish and angel.⁴ Even without the fish, Jonah's rescue seems not so far removed from the miraculous.

³ Laurence Housman, *Palestine Plays* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1942), pp. 5-6. See Roston's discussion of Housman's demythologizing attitude in these plays, including the Jonah dramatization, pp. 286-288. See also Weales, pp. 131-134.

⁴ Laurence Housman, *The Burden of Nineveh*, in *Palestine Plays*, pp. 129-146.

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So they took and made ready to cast me forth into the sea. But because they wished not my death, they made a cross-beam of wood, and bound me to it, and therewith they cast me from the ship . . . And the raging of the sea was round me, and the roaring of its waves went over me. But the beam bore me up through the midst of it; and the Hand of the Lord held me so that I did not die. Three days it bore me; three days I was without food or water, yet my life stayed in me, and my strength failed not. (p. 135)

The "fish story" comes to Jonah as he preaches to the Ninevites, who are disinclined to accept his utterances until they hear of the marvel of a man's living three days inside a fish. Afterwards, when Jonah asks why prophets must tell lies in order to impart the truth, his friend Shemmel replies:

Not lies, Jonah . . . You do not tell the truth to a child as you do to a wise man; for he would not understand it. Even so has God spoken in parables . . . (p. 142)

The parable in this instance is explained by Shemmel:

The great Fish that swallowed *you* was the power of God and His righteousness, and His great mercy and loving-kindness to a people that knew not Him, and a Nation that would not come unto Him. Aye, maybe, as you say, Nineveh will return to her sins, and again do wickedly. And a day will come, and Nineveh will perish from the face of the earth and be only a name. But the story of Nineveh will be told for ever--so that God's mercy to sinners may be known among men. (pp. 143-144)

Housman further takes pains to provide an explanation of the common reference to Jonah's "whale," in Shemmel's prediction that for those who will pass on the tale ". . . a whale is the only thing they know big enough." (p. 143)⁵ Shemmel considers Jonah's insistence on the forty days left to Nineveh a questionable interpretation of God's message, since ". . . when the Lord says 'days,' sometimes it has meant years--even thousands of years . . ." (p. 141)

⁵ Edwin M. Good points out that while the Biblical text refers to a "big fish," the "whale" tradition is likely to be fairly old. Good, p. 46. Bickerman considers this tradition to have originated in the middle ages. Bickerman, p. 11.

The introduction of older fellow-prophet Shemmel enables Housman to avoid the angel as a character, and to employ Shemmel throughout the play as convenient foil and *raisonneur*. In the first scene Shemmel talks with Jonah as the latter is packing for his flight. When Jonah complains that the Ninevites are not the people of the Israelite God, Shemmel replies that because the Ninevites do not know this God is no doubt why Jonah is being sent to them. Here Housman hints at the common universalist view of the book of Jonah. The two prophets debate the function of prophecy, Jonah maintaining that when no one will listen it is pointless to speak the truth, and Shemmel that the recording of such prophecy will be its justification. "It takes long for man to learn God's ways; but he *will* learn them some day." (p. 130)

In Scene Two, three months later, Jonah returns to tell Shemmel of his adventure at sea and his new resolve to go to Nineveh. Housman thus avoids the theatrical as well as theological difficulty in presenting the shipboard scene as given in the Biblical source. Shemmel on this occasion distinguishes between two types of prophets: the preacher, such as Jonah, and the "counsellor," such as himself. Shemmel then accompanies Jonah to Nineveh, so that Housman can make use of only two characters from beginning to end of his drama, Shemmel continuing to discuss with his companion the events as they occur. In Scene Three the voices of a crowd are heard, as the Ninevites at first react in violent protest to Jonah's proclamation of their destruction. In Scene Four Housman, like many of the "Jonah" dramatists, follows the precedent of the Biblical source in having Jonah present his rationale for having fled from God at this point in the story rather than at the time he actually departed for Joppa and Tarshish. "Surely this is why I fled from the Lord, because

I feared that He would not keep His Word." (p. 143) In Scene Five Shemmel, in place of an angel, delivers the "lesson," quoted from Jonah 4:10-11. In his final line Shemmel indicates that he will be the author of the written story of Jonah and Nineveh.

Housman's tendency to a rational view of Jonah extends to an emphasis on the psychological or motivational aspects of the prophet's behavior. Jonah explains to Shemmel, for example, that he had a logical purpose in asking to be thrown off the ship. "Then I saw the way straight before me, and the Lord's will made plain; for I said to myself--'now surely, if I am to perish, then has the Lord *not* called me; but if He save me, then He *has* called me to go and prophesy to Nineveh.'" (pp. 134-135) After the experience of near-death and then rescue at sea Jonah is emotionally prepared to carry out the Ninevite mission. He appears truly fearless as the citizens of that city rage and throw stones at him. As soon as he has carried out his commission, however, his vanity asserts itself.

JONAH: Well? What d'you think of that, Shemmel? Did I speak the word of the Lord as it should be spoken?

. . .

SHEMMEL: Where are they going, Jonah?

JONAH: To their temples, to pray--that their gods may save them.
But if the Lord hath spoken by *me*, *He* shall not hear them.
(pp. 139-140)

Jonah has set himself up to be made the object of the lesson of the withered gourd-plant and the saved city.

All of the incidents of the Biblical book are included in Brian Tunstall's *Jonah*.⁶ But Tunstall has added a good deal of material of

⁶ Brian Tunstall, *Jonah* (n.d., typescript). Received in the library of the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain in 1972.

his own, from outside the Biblical narrative, including frequent references to the scholarly commentary on various details of the book of Jonah. Like Housman, Tunstall warns against a literal interpretation of the Biblical account; unlike Housman, he argues that the book's point of view is to some extent humorous. Early in the play the Author claims that the theologians ". . . took the whale story too literally" and that ". . . in the course of pointing a moral I was having a bit of fun."

(p. 4) In the conclusion the Redactor reiterates:

And the whole story is told not solemnly but with considerable wit and with a succession of fantastic and impossible incidents piled on one another, just to make us realize that this is pure romance, as Churchill might have put it, "grim and gay." (p. 24)

Tunstall extends the principle of a humorous approach to Jonah to a gentle mockery of much of the Biblical scholarship he cites. He ridicules, for instance, the debate over the kind of fish which could swallow a man, and whether Jonah was sheltered by a gourd or castor oil plant. As an example of visual humor, Tunstall has the plant played by a girl with a parasol. When he omits the kidding, on the other hand, as when the size of Nineveh is debated, the playwright's use of scholarly commentators is itself simply pedantic. Tunstall occasionally raises the question of the "reality" of the character as opposed to the actor. For example, when the Author enters he is accosted by the First Critic.

FIRST CRITIC: So *you* wrote Jonah.

AUTHOR: Well, yes, though in point of fact--

FIRST CRITIC: Stop that double talk about point of fact. Did you write Jonah or did you not?

AUTHOR: I am the actor whose business it is to impersonate the author of Jonah, but as no one knows who the author was, I am no more than an actor speaking the part which the author of *this play* has put into my mouth.

FIRST CRITIC: Just what I suspected, you're bogus.

AUTHOR: Not at all. And what about you? (p. 2)⁷

Tunstall includes no stage directions in his script. It is obvious, however, that the action of the play shifts between on-stage characters and observers. There is occasional interchange between the two sets of characters, as when Jonah responds to the Explanator. Jonah and the King of Nineveh also shift suddenly from speaking within the scene to narrating the action. Though the performance's observers have supplied necessary exposition, Jonah upon his entrance takes time to explain to the audience again who he is. The characters existing outside the action--three Critics, Author, Explanator, Redactor--are numerous to a point of possible confusion. Nor is the function of an "explanator" or a "redactor" explained to those uninitiated to these terms. Tunstall does not make clear why the Third Critic, entering late in the play, is necessary. Midway through the play William Jennings Bryan appears briefly to mention that ". . . in the year 1925, I testified that I was convinced the whale swallowed Jonah and I went on to say that if the Bible said that Jonah swallowed the whale I would have believed that also." (p. 15) Off-stage voices, including that of God (rendered by Tunstall in the Hebrew consonants YHWH), are employed. An entire scene is played with Jonah alone on stage preaching to the Ninevites while the Ninevites are heard reacting to him from off-stage.

Tunstall's thematic interests, other than his parading of scholarly criticism, are revealed in the action of *Jonah*. In an apparent reference to the story of Jonah in relation to mythic archetype, the Author

⁷ Such devices as making fun of Biblical as well as classical scholarship and actors questioning the roles they are playing are employed by Guenter Rutenborn in his *The Sign of Jonah*, discussed in chapter six. In Rutenborn's drama the devices are much more integral to both plot and theatrical style.

states:

The idea of the fish was that Jonah should suffer a kind of temporary death or divine imprisonment and with it a mystical cleansing and purging. (p. 15)⁸

⁸ Joseph Campbell discusses "The Belly of the Whale" in terms of the symbolism of death and rebirth. He cites Eskimo, Zulu, Irish, German, Polynesian, and Greek versions of the myth. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Meridian, 1956), pp. 90-95. Mircea Eliade demonstrates the cultic significance and cultural pervasiveness of the practice of entering the monster's belly in rites of initiation into adulthood. The symbolism is that of death and rebirth. Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth: The Religious Meanings of Initiation in Human Culture*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Benjamin Nelson, gen. ed., The Library of Religion and Culture (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), pp. 35-37 and passim. A popularization of this rite and myth occurs in the story of Pinocchio, whose experience in the whale's belly marks his transition from wooden puppet to real boy. Further reference to Jonah in the fish as mythic archetype will be found in Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (New York: Viking, Compass Book, 1968), p. 13. See also John Paterson, *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: Studies Historical, Religious, and Expository in the Hebrew Prophets* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 281; Bickerman, p. 11; and M. M. Kalisch, *Bible Studies: Part II: The Book of Jonah* (London: Longmans, Green, 1878), pp. 176-183. Kalisch also calls attention to Mohammedan legends concerning Jonah, including his being swallowed by the fish. Kalisch, pp. 288-290. Hans Walter Wolff mentions Greek and Indian parallels to Jonah and suggests that ". . . our narrator is probably making use of material which was being passed around the port city of Jaffa as a fable . . ." Wolff, "Jonah--The Messenger Who Obeyed," p. 86. E. Henderson suggests possible pagan origins for the myth in his *The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets, Translated from the Original Hebrew. With a Commentary, Critical, Philological, & Exegetical* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1859), p. 197. E. B. Pusey recounts a number of pagan tales whose linking with the Jonah story he considers absurd. Pusey, pp. 389-392. John Mauchline suggests that the mythic importance of the sea as the realm of death may be of primary significance in the Jonah narrative, in which case ". . . the fish is simply the means used by God to restore Jonah to land." Mauchline, p. 43.

Carl Jung explores the notion of the whale as a symbol for the womb, the return to which may be understood as a means of enlightenment. Entry into the whale, that is, is to be viewed as making direct contact with the "collective unconscious." In terms of individual psychology, the "'Jonah and the Whale' complex" occurs at a presexual, nutritive and oral-exploratory stage of development. C[arl] G[ustav] Jung, *Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to a Case of Schizophrenia*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5 (New York: Pantheon, Bollingen Series 20, 1951), pp. 330, 408, 419. See Jolande Jacobi's commentary on Jung's interpretation in *Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon,

As the play opens two Critics are asking the Explanator what is going on. The Explanator replies that they are about to see ". . . the story of a spiritual pilgrimage . . ." and identifies the protagonist, Jonah, as ". . . an anti-prophet." (p. 1) Jonah before fleeing to Joppa expresses his fear that the Ninevites may actually repent. On the same grounds later, after the city has been spared, he justifies his anger.⁹ According to

Bollingen Series 57, 1959), pp. 155-156, 177, 183. Some of Jung's imagery is employed in Jean-Paul de Dadelsen's poem *Jonah*, trans. Edward Lucie-Smith (London: Rapp and Carroll, 1967). The womb metaphor seems implied in Paul Goodman's play *Jonah* in the protagonist's line from within the fish: "Surely if a man *could* sleep, he could sleep *here*, in this warm, wet, soft and swaying interior." In *The Young Disciple, Faustina, Jonah: Three Plays* (New York: Random House, 1945, 1961, 1965), p. 157. See also Arthur Koestler, "The Belly of the Whale," in *The Act of Creation* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 358-365. From a psychoanalytic point of view, Erich Fromm discusses Jonah as an example ". . . of the function of the universal symbol . . ." in *The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths* (New York: Grove, Evergreen Book, 1951), pp. 20-23. Fromm also employs the Jonah story as a symbolic representation of "productive love" in *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, Premier Book, 1947), pp. 104-5. Goodwin Watson discusses the universal experience of being "in the whale" and "free again" in "A Psychologist's View of Religious Symbols," in *Religious Symbolism*, ed. F. Ernest Johnson (New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1955), pp. 121-122.

A few scholars have discussed the mythic interpretation of Jonah more strictly within the confines of a Judeo-Christian frame of reference. Marion A. Fairman in "In the Belly of the Fish" perceives Jonah's experience as a metaphor for the individual's alienation from God, in *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature* (Cleveland: Dillon/Liederbach, 1972), pp. 67-83. (Fairman's own dramatization of Jonah is discussed in chapter four, pp. 111-114.) Northrop Frye in "Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths" examines the several appearances of "leviathan" in the Old Testament, and notes the relationship of Jonah to Christ as monster-slayer, in *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (New York: Atheneum, 1957), pp. 189-192. In this latter connection see also Cyril C. Richardson's identification of the fish as the "sign of Jonah" in early Christian symbolic art, in "The Foundations of Christian Symbolism," in F. Ernest Johnson, p. 8. Olov Hartman's "Jonah" play, *Prophet and Carpenter*, makes use of both the belly of the fish as the kingdom of death and Jonah as a type of Christ. This drama is discussed in chapter seven.

⁹ Tunstall's resolution of any inconsistency between Jonah's "before" and "after" excuses is thus similar to that of Jerome Bayer, whose Jonah wishes in both instances to see the Ninevites damned. See the discussion above of *Pity for the Gourd*, p. 45.

the Redactor,

Jonah is not just to be written off because of his faults. He offered his life for the ship's company, without any hint of compulsion.¹⁰

Jonah's redeeming qualities are nevertheless insufficient, since at Nineveh ". . . he hoped to see his prophecy fulfilled. But he had no right to see this happen." (p. 23) The Explanator then introduces another perspective, in stressing God's *use* of Jonah's actions both praiseworthy and reprehensible.

Early in the play the Explanator states that Jonah

. . . couldn't understand that if the Lord God of Israel was the only God and that he was supreme throughout the whole world, He couldn't be just the religious private property of the Jews and the destroyer of all the heathen nations. (p. 2)

The Author then indicates that the universalist lesson directed at Israel in the book of Jonah

. . . is meant to apply to everyman at any time in History, since it relates to man's refusal to accept God's universal compassion for all men everywhere and always. (p. 3)

On board ship, the mariners' lengthy prayer for deliverance repeats as its motif that God is universally the creator and sustainer. In summarizing the lesson to be learned from the adventures of Jonah, Tunstall echoes L. V. Snowman's double theme of the universal nature of God and Israel's role as a servant. Tunstall's Redactor, however, makes the point in a negative context rather than with Snowman's more positive, forward-looking vision.

¹⁰ Compare Snowman's similar observation, in the words of Leviathan: "The storm came circling round your ship; there was some good in your heart; you felt that men should not die for the sins of others." Snowman, *A Second Chapter of "Jonah,"* p. 28.

Jonah stands for the extreme militant yet inward looking attitude of Judaism after the exile and restoration. According to this attitude Israel could never forgive her persecutors and had no mission; no sense of being God's instrument for a universal purpose.

This view is then brought to bear on later generations, since "Every age has its Jonah," and the audience is reminded of the difficulty which Peter and his fellow apostles had initially in carrying the Christian message to the Gentiles (p. 22). But then the focus shifts again to the idea of God's ability to use all human actions to his purpose, as the Author states that it was

. . . my idea to show people how unaccountable God sometimes seems to us and how strange are the ways in which he uses even those of his servants who seem to be the most unprofitable. "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

And that lead-in prepares for the concluding singing of the hymn, with the Author mentioning that it was written by William Cowper, of whom the Third Critic asks: "Didn't he die mad?" (p. 24)

The attempt in dramatic form to interpret a Biblical book in the context of its own historical and literary setting appears an unusual and relatively minor theatrical endeavor. Snowman's work is not intended for the stage; and while his thesis finds support among Biblical scholars, his images are perhaps too esoteric for effective dramatic impact. Housman's exposition is based on his personal and cultural bias; in his treatment the story is more distorted than illumined. Tunstall's use of Biblical scholarship is more playful than serious, and in any case the author seems at pains to avoid drawing conclusions. The drama may not be, after all, the most convenient form for the conducting of Biblical exegesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Didactic Treatments of Jonah

Dramatizations of the Jonah story for frankly didactic purpose emphasize one or more "moral lessons" which are overtly stated for the instruction of the audience. A play in this category may be intended to "inspire" as well as to instruct, and, indeed, the inspirational purpose may take precedence over the more objective instructional one. Of the ten dramas in the present group, two in particular employ "inspirational" techniques, with Fairman's *In the Belly of the Fish* making the more obvious use of such device. Many Biblical scholars have provided impetus for a moral-lesson approach to the Jonah narrative, in describing the Biblical book as ". . . a didactic parable . . ." or a work ". . . probably to be read as an allegory or a didactic (instructive) poem."¹

The line between the "straight" story telling with some moralizing along the way, and the fully didactic treatment, may at times be difficult to draw. The dramas by Sarah Walton Miller and Lawrence Waddy have already been discussed as primarily story-telling but with moralizing tendencies.² The seventeenth-century dramatic poem *The Historie of Jonah* by Scottish clergyman Zacharie Boyd stands midway

¹ Allen, p. 186; Mauchline, p. 10. The claims that the book of Jonah is didactic, generally in terms of a universalist message, are numerous and no attempt will be made here to list them. As unqualified an interpretation as any along this line is perhaps that of Paterson, pp. 271-283.

² See chapter two, pp. 51-56.

between the two categories.³ Though homiletic passages are present, the movement of the piece does not simply lead the reader to an inescapable lesson. The narrative elements carry their own independent dramatic interest. *The Historie of Jonah* resembles in some respects the medieval English morality play.⁴ In expository speeches the various characters tell the reader about themselves. In the opening monologue the Lord sets forth his view of the present human condition and his determined course of action.

I play with kingdomes as with Tenice Balls,
Some I fell downe, and some I raise that falls:
When cities great give ov'r them selves to sin,
They turn like mist uphaled by the sunne:
When strongest holds are batt'r'd by my strength,
They lose their ground and tumble down at length;
I heape up vengeance upon sinfull souls,
and write their sins upon most ample scrowles.

In great Assyria there's a city rare
Call'd Nineve, that is to say most faire.

. . .
This city's wealth do make her wits to waver,
my wrath it burns, what men have force to save her?

. . .
Yet sith I'm God I slow am to destroy,
Before I strike, some Prophet I'le employ,
To preach to them that they may judgment heare,
Some reck not mercy, but will judgment feare.

. . .
Ho! Jonah, come and flee with wings of Dove . . . (pp. 3-5)

The drama concludes with a summary statement of the moral lesson to be derived from the story. The final speech of the Lord's is addressed to

³ Zacharie Boyd, *The Historie of Jonah, in Four Poems from "Zion's Flowers;" Or, "Christian Poems for Spiritual Edification,"* ed. Gabriel Neil (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1855), pp. 3-43. Though the exact date of composition is not known, Neil proposes the period between 1607 and 1626. Introduction, p. 12.

⁴ The verse form of Boyd's play, however, is the more sophisticated rhymed iambic pentameter. The single exception, "The Prayer of Jonah in the Whale's Belly," contains seven feet in each iambic line, reading rather like a Lewis Carroll verse parody (pp. 23-24).

Jonah and consists of the standard (and Biblical) chastising of the prophet for his bitterness at the leniency shown the Ninevites, with the customary lack of response from Jonah himself. The speech is followed, however, by a passage entitled "The Use," with the speaker not indicated. Here it is made evident that the Ninevites, not Jonah, provide the moral instruction.⁵ The reader is admonished to heed the preachers and to rely on God's mercy while beginning immediately to be purged ". . . from the rust of sin," for God may not in every case remain patient for as long as forty days (p. 42).

Otherwise, Boyd's dramatic poem follows successively the Biblical incidents, and contains no greater degree of "editorializing" than do a number of the "straight" story-telling dramatizations. It is apparent in the opening speech by The Lord that the Ninevites knew of God's will, but had chosen not to follow it, since blasphemy against the divine name is one of the sins cited. Jonah is then sent in order that they might have an opportunity to repent. Jonah expresses the familiar objections that God's prophets have quite enough to do in Israel, that the Ninevites will not listen to him, and that if they should heed him he will be put to shame. The sailors, typically, repent upon being convinced that Jonah's God indeed controls the wind and sea. Jonah's preaching reveals that injustice as well as hedonism has aroused God's anger. Even though Jonah will not be pleased with the sparing of Nineveh, he obediently instructs the King in repentance, to the end that he and his city be saved. An interesting dramatic tension is introduced in the prophet's outcry

⁵ Lodge and Greene in *A Looking-Glass for London and England* also place the moral focus on Nineveh rather than on Jonah. See below, pp. 74-76. *A Looking-Glass* may well have been in performance at the time Boyd wrote his dramatic poem.

1. Introduction

The following text is a translation of the original document.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the smooth operation of any business and for the protection of its interests. The second part of the document describes the various methods used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for a systematic approach to data collection and the importance of using reliable sources of information. The third part of the document discusses the results of the data analysis and the conclusions drawn from it. It notes that the data indicates a significant increase in sales over the period covered by the study. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings and the recommendations for future action. It suggests that the company should continue to monitor its sales and to implement the recommended changes to its marketing strategy. The fifth part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research. It notes that the study was limited to a small sample of companies and that further research is needed to confirm the findings. The sixth part of the document discusses the conclusions of the study and the recommendations for future action. It suggests that the company should continue to monitor its sales and to implement the recommended changes to its marketing strategy. The seventh part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research. It notes that the study was limited to a small sample of companies and that further research is needed to confirm the findings. The eighth part of the document discusses the conclusions of the study and the recommendations for future action. It suggests that the company should continue to monitor its sales and to implement the recommended changes to its marketing strategy. The ninth part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research. It notes that the study was limited to a small sample of companies and that further research is needed to confirm the findings. The tenth part of the document discusses the conclusions of the study and the recommendations for future action. It suggests that the company should continue to monitor its sales and to implement the recommended changes to its marketing strategy.

against God's fickle change of heart *before* Jonah stomps off to the outskirts of Nineveh to await stubbornly the passing of the full forty days. Jonah's booth is first destroyed, and then the gourd springs up. Thus when the plant withers, Jonah is deprived of his *only* shelter against the sun and wind, and his self-pity is the greater.

Though placed more comfortably in the present category than in any other, Charles Lee Snider's single-scene "closet drama" *Jonah in the Bible Country* is closer than others in the group to the "straight" versions.⁶ Didactic in style and intent, the piece nevertheless raises issues for reflection rather than providing overt moral instruction. The major events of the Biblical book are followed step-by-step; and the telling, in fact, when not relieved by the author's attempts at humor, becomes labored and tedious.

The setting for *Jonah in the Bible Country* is the Men's Bible Class of the Benwood Baptist church in the Carolinas. The Teacher, ill-prepared for the lesson, is leading a discussion of the book of Jonah. As the men grope their way through and joke about the story, Jonah is likened to

. . . the sinner today. There he was on that ship, about ready to be sunk, and yit he didn't realize he was in any danger. (p. 167)

The lesson in Jonah's flight is found to be obedience, and in his anger over God's mercy that he

. . . had a kind of selfish disposition about him. Seems that he wanted ever'thing to go his way. In other words, he wasn't willin' for the Lord to rule. (p. 169)

When the class has been formally ended, a debate ensues over whether Jonah was Christian because the Lord called upon him to preach, or a

⁶ Charles Lee Snider, *Jonah in the Bible Country* in *The American Mercury* 30 (October, 1933), pp. 165-171.

sinner because he failed to do as he was told. The final argument is that of Brother Oates who maintains that Jonah was converted to Christianity in the belly of the fish, as evidenced by his prayer for salvation.

BROTHER SAWYER: Well, if he was a Christian when he come out o' the whale, how come he thought more of his gourd vine than he did o' the lives o' them people?

BROTHER OATES: Why, he jist had that much o' the Old Adam left in him. He was a Christian, but he was like all the rest of us: he weren't perfeck. They don't none of us live as close to the Lord as we ought to. They ain't no man, I don't care how good he is, but what's got *some* o' the Old Adam left in him.

Although early in the drama the day's Golden Text has been introduced as "Go ye, therefore . . . and make disciples . . . of all the nations . . .," the universalist idea as a lesson in the book of Jonah is not further developed by Snider or by his Men's Bible Class.

The first "Jonah" play to exploit fully the didactic possibilities of the subject is also the earliest extant drama based on the Biblical book. Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's *A Looking-Glass for London and England* was first performed in London within the last two decades of the sixteenth century.⁷ In the drama primary attention is directed to

⁷ Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, in Dickinson, ed., *Robert Greene*, pp. 77-164. Textual citations will be to the Dickinson edition of the play. For major scholarly editions of the text see the following sources: Dyce; Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene, M. A.* (London: Huth Library, 1881-1886), vol. 14; J[ohn] Churton Collins, ed., *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), vol. 1. Dickinson's edition is based on the text of Dyce, who followed the practice which has become normative of employing almost exclusively the earliest quarto, of 1594. For the more recent scholarly editions of the text see Greg, and a review of this edition by Alice Walker in *Review of English Studies* 10 (April, 1934), pp. 223-225;

Nineveh and its sins rather than to the prophet Jonas, who indeed does

and Tetsumaro Hayashi, ed., *A Looking Glasse for London and England by Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene: An Elizabethan Text* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1970). The major quartos with which that of 1594 is usually collated are those dated 1598, 1602, and 1617. A seldom-consulted quarto, which Charles Reed Baskervill identifies as a company's prompt book in use at least as early as 1606, is described in his "A Prompt Copy of *A Looking Glass for London and England*," *Modern Philology* 30 (August, 1932), pp. 29-51. The early printing history of the play will be found in A[ntony] F. Allison, *Robert Greene, 1558-1592: A Bibliographical Catalogue of the Early Editions in English (to 1640)* (Folkestone, Kent: William Dawson and Sons, Pall Mall Bibliographies, no. 4, 1975), p. 42. The most important reference tools for Greene research are the bibliography in the Hayashi volume cited above and his *Robert Greene Criticism: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1971).

Dickinson discusses various possibilities regarding the dating of the Lodge and Greene play and concludes that it was composed either prior to 1588 or between 1589 and 1591. Dickinson, Introduction to *A Looking-Glass*, pp. xlix-lii. Hayashi believes the play to have been written in 1586. Hayashi, *A Looking Glasse*, Preface, p. v. Allison and Paradise agree upon 1587 as the probable year of composition. Allison, p. 42; N[athaniel] Burton Paradise, *Thomas Lodge: The History of an Elizabethan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1931; Archon, 1970), pp. 151-142. Gayley holds 1588 as the latest possible composition date. Charles Mills Gayley, "Robert Greene: Critical Essay," in Gayley, ed., *Representative English Comedies, From the Beginnings to Shakespeare* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), pp. 405-406. But on the basis of parallels to *Dr. Faustus* and *The Famous Historie of Fryer Bacon*, Law concludes that the Lodge and Greene play must have been written between 1589 and 1591. Robert Adger Law, "Two Parallels to Greene and Lodge's *Looking-Glass*" *Modern Language Notes* 26:5 (May, 1911), p. 147. See also Law's "A *Looking Glass* and the Scriptures," *Texas University Studies in English* 19 (1939), p. 46.

Though the date of the first performance is not known, Dickinson suggests that it was originally produced by the Queen's players before 1591. The first recorded performance is that by Lord Strange's servants in March of 1592. Dickinson, *A Looking-Glass*, p. 78. See Philip Henslowe, *Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (London: Cambridge University, 1961), pp. 16-17, 19. The four recorded performances by "my lorde stranges men" are listed by Henslowe as taking place on March 8 and 27 and April 19 in 1591 and June 7 in 1592. The *Diary* editors point out that each of these years must be advanced by one. See Introduction, p. xxvi; Note on the Indexes and Glossary, p. 337; Index of Year-Dates, p. 368. Hayashi, however, maintains that all four performances were given in 1590. Hayashi, *Robert Greene Criticism*, p. xviii. Gayley believes the original production, by the Queen's Company, to have been in 1587 or early 1588. Gayley, pp. 406-407. Acheson assigns to this production the year 1590. Arthur Acheson, *Shakespeare, Chapman and "Sir Thomas Moore"* (London: 1931; New York: AMS, 1970), pp. 157-158.

1. The first step in the process of the investigation is the identification of the problem. This is done by the investigator who is responsible for the investigation. The investigator must identify the problem and the scope of the investigation. The investigator must also identify the objectives of the investigation and the methods to be used. The investigator must also identify the resources available for the investigation.

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Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the inhibitor on the rate of polymerization of α -methylstyrene in the presence of SnCl_4 at 25°C .

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

2. *How do you feel about the way the police handled the situation?*

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8. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 93(443):1089-1092, 1998.

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not make an appearance during the first two acts. And although Jonas takes responsibility for the overt moralizing at the end of the play, his role up to that point is relatively minor. Furthermore, Jonas himself serves as the object of one--and one of the least convincing--in a series of moral lessons delivered directly to the audience by Oseas. The homiletic vehicle is thus the prophet Oseas, a character which as Ruth H. Blackburn points out is based not only on Hosea but on other Old Testament prophetic books and New Testament passages as well.⁸ E. K. Chambers proposes that Oseas represents the formal device of a "presenter," situated during the course of the performance on the balcony or space above the stage and commenting on the action while ignored by the actors.⁹ The function and effect of this device are suggested by T. G. Scalingar, characterizing the play as ". . . virtually a series of diatribes against vice by the prophet Oseas, borne out by illustrative episodes on the two planes of court and tavern."¹⁰ Blackburn labels *A Looking-Glass* a ". . . sermon in dramatic form."¹¹

That *A Looking-Glass* should be considered in the tradition of the medieval morality play is a virtual consensus among the critics, designating the drama variously as: ". . . an Elizabethan Morality play . . .," ". . . a modernised morality," ". . . a kind of late morality play . . ."

⁸ Blackburn, pp. 167-169.

⁹ E[dmund] K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), p. 92.

¹⁰ T. G. Scalingar, "The Elizabethan Literary Renaissance," in Boris Ford, ed., *The Age of Shakespeare, The Pelican Guide to English Literature*, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955), p. 58.

¹¹ Blackburn, p. 171.

and ". . . a belated morality . . .," a ". . . morality type of play . . .," an example of ". . . elaborate morality plays," ". . . a sensational Biblical Morality," and manifesting ". . . the deliberate didacticism of the old Moralities."¹² This is not to maintain that the drama lacks either humor or a keen sense of box-office theatricalism, for ". . . here were two experts who knew just how to plan a two hours' entertainment which would keep the audience thrilled and happy, to send them away well-filled and feeling good."¹³ Identifying the confluence in the play of waning medieval dramatic traditions, Schelling observes that ". . . we find in the strange production, *A Looking Glass for London and England*, once more an attempted reconciliation of the conflicting elements of scriptural story, moral abstractions, and interlude of farcical intent."¹⁴ This "pure moral interlude," according to Dickinson is a notably English

¹² Hayashi, *A Looking Glasse*, p. vi; Dickinson, p. 78; Thomas B[radley] Stroup, *Microcosmos: The Shape of the Elizabethan Play* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, 1965), pp. 51, 184; Paradise, p. 157; Blackburn, p. 191; Scalingar, p. 57; Arnold Wynne, *The Growth of English Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1914), p. 151. G. Wilson Knight says of *A Looking-Glass*: "The vast design draws on the Miracles and Moralities, Seneca's five-act structure and chorus, Italian Machiavellianism, Marlovian excess, and Elizabethan conscience." Knight, *The Golden Labyrinth: A Study of British Drama* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), p. 65. With respect to the chorus cited by Knight, Sidney R. Homan points out that Oseas, and later Jonas, are "choral figures." Homan, "'A Looking-Glass for London and England': The Source for Dekker's 'If It Be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is in It,'" *Notes and Queries* 211 (August, 1966), p. 301. Knight's suggestion of Senecan influence in terms of "five-act structure" is questionable, as the play was written with the scene as the basic dramatic unit and the earliest printing does not contain act divisions. Law, "A Looking Glass and the Scriptures," p. 34.

¹³ G. B. Harrison, *Elizabethan Plays and Players* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Books, pub. 1956), p. 90.

¹⁴ Felix E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama 1558-1642*, vol. 1 (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1908), p. 41.

development. "The English morality combines with rustic low life to produce the interlude, which continues its course of didacticism and horseplay until the end of the century."¹⁵

In one particularly important respect this Elizabethan morality differs from the medieval variety. As Bernard Spivak notes, if the latter typically urges proper religious and moral conduct upon the individual Christian, *A Looking-Glass* should rather be grouped with

. . . socio-political moralities, their concern being the safety and health not of the individual but of the whole state. Their dramatis personae have civic or national significance and so do their values.¹⁶

The Lodge and Greene play thus can be labelled "politically didactic," with the Ninevite King Rasni one of several dramatic ". . . studies of imperfect kings who learn the lessons of experience and become better."¹⁷ Thomas B. Stroup suggests the relationship between individual and social immorality:

The conflicts wrought by sin within the soul of the individual, the microcosm, lead to conflicts and corruption among individuals and those to the conflicts and disruptions of the affairs of nations.¹⁸

Stroup considers this vision as especially characteristic of Greene.

¹⁵ Dickinson, Introduction to *A Looking-Glass*, pp. xvi, lviii.

¹⁶ Bernard Spivak, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains* (New York: Columbia University, 1958), p. 209. See his full discussion of this point, pp. 209-211.

¹⁷ Blackburn, p. 191. It is her view that the social morality is not without medieval precedent. "Rooted in medieval homily and expressed in the shepherd's talk in the work of the Wakefield master, the impulse to criticize and correct society appears . . . in the strictures . . . on a society rotten from the top to bottom in *Looking Glass*." (p. 193)

¹⁸ Stroup. p. 52.

All the pageants of Robert Greene demonstrate this . . . attempt to suggest the whole of society by including in the cast of each representatives of the various orders . . . In *A Looking Glass for London and England* . . . the two writers feel obliged to present the entire spectrum.¹⁹

Dickinson, arguing that moral purpose remains prominent in all of Greene's writings, points out that the didactic tradition in drama was still quite strong at the time Greene was attending school.²⁰ Attention has been called in particular, with reference to *A Looking-Glass*, to Greene's pamphlets. Scalingar considers the play to be ". . . in the same vein as Greene's autobiographical pamphlets of 'repentance' and his 'conycatching' exposures of the London underworld."²¹ Greene himself vowed to devote himself to religious and moral subjects in order that he ". . . may with the Ninevites shew in sackcloth a hearty repentance."²² As in the play, so in Greene's "Coney-catching series" the intent is ". . . to expose the practice of sharpers and knaves who were fleecing the country people who came to London."²³ Greene's sympathy for the lower classes and his use of lower-class heroes and heroines²⁴ has led some critics to regard "the lighter prose scenes" such as those involving

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 155-156.

²⁰ Dickinson, Introduction to *A Looking-Glass*, p. x.

²¹ Scalingar, p. 57.

²² Collins, p. 137. Quoted in Roston, p. 100.

²³ William H. Chapman, *William Shakspeare and Robert Greene: The Evidence* (Ashland, CA: Tribune; New York: Haskell House, 1974), pp. 56-57. Nicholas Storojenko provides a concise review of Greene's "conny-catching" pamphlets in his *Robert Greene: His Life and Works. A Critical Investigation*, trans. E. A. Brayley Hodgetts, vol. 1 of Grosart, ed., *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene*, M. A., pp. 129-134. See also Collins, pp. 30-34.

²⁴ Chapman, p. 56.

the ruffian Adam as directly from Greene's pen.²⁵

Lodge, too, in his other writings gives evidence of knowledge of and concern over the sharp practices of unethical Londoners. Evidence suggests that Lodge himself had fallen prey to usurers.²⁶ He also appears to have been engaged in a number of litigations, including one with his elder brother William whom he attempted to sue for funds. Sisson wonders ". . . whether Lodge had William in mind when he drew the picture of that 'covetous caterpillar,' the Usurer in *A Looking Glass for London and England*, in a scene which we may reasonably take to be the work of the young lawyer rather than of Greene."²⁷ Of particular relevance to *A Looking-Glass* is Lodge's pamphlet *An Alarum Against Usurers*, printed in 1584. Alexander Dyce comments that Scene One in Act Five, in which the Usurer cries out his repentance, ". . . is little more than a versification of a passage in the *Alarum Against Usurers* . . ."²⁸ In the pamphlet Lodge takes usurers to task for tricking young heirs out of their entire farm holdings--the fate of the young gentleman Thrasybulus

²⁵ Frederick S[amuel] Boas, *An Introduction to Tudor Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), p. 168.

²⁶ Wesley D. Rae, *Thomas Lodge*, Sylvia E. Bouman, ed., Twayne's English Authors Series, no. 59 (New York: Twayne, 1967), p. 29. See also Charles J. Sisson, "Thomas Lodge and His Family," in Sisson, ed., *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1933), pp. 152-156.

²⁷ Sisson, pp. 88-89. Though Lodge was himself a lawyer, Sisson suggests that he was not seriously engaged in the profession, pp. 5, 82.

²⁸ Dyce, p. 141. See also Law, "Two Parallels to Greene and Lodge's *Looking-Glass*," pp. 77-80. Boas cites two scenes drawn from Lodge's polemical pamphlet, as well as pointing out that the scenes involving the sailors were doubtless based upon Lodge's own sea voyages. Boas, p. 167.

in the play.²⁹ Lodge further accuses the usurers of ". . . making their debter to discharge in their bookes of account the receipt of so much money, where indeede they had nothing but dead commoditie." This circumstance corresponds to that encountered by Thrasybulus, who receives part of a loan in goods while signing a receipt indicating that the transaction has been entirely in cash. The example Lodge cites in the *Alarum* is of the receipt of lute strings, the commodity which Thrasybulus in the drama complains did not prove to equal the value claimed by the Usurer.³⁰

The Scriptural source for the Jonah material has been identified as the Bishop's Bible, a recent translation currently in use officially in the Church of England.³¹ In addition, the name Rasni apparently was taken from Josephus' history of the Jews, a work subsequently translated by Lodge.³² Some critical opinion suggests that the actual character of King Rasni is based on Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine.³³ Thematically,

²⁹ Thomas Lodge, *An Alarum Against Usurers*, in *A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage-Plays*, by Thomas Lodge, of Lincoln's Inn. To Which Are Added, by the Same Author, *An Alarum Against Usurers; and The Delectable History of Forbonius and Prisceria* (London: The Shakespeare Society, 1853), p. 44.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 65. See Sisson, pp. 151-152.

³¹ Law, "A Looking Glasse and the Scriptures," pp. 34-41. Margaret Mary Cotham has closely examined the dramatic text to locate all Biblical quotations, paraphrases, and allusions. Cotham, "Greene and Lodge's A Looking-Glass for London and England" (M.A. thesis, University of Texas, 1928), pp. 7-84, 98-104.

³² Paradise, p. 154.

³³ Boas, p. 168; C[harles] F[rederick] Tucker Brooke, *The Tudor Drama: A History of English National Drama to the Retirement of Shakespeare* (Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), p. 247. Lily B. Campbell finds this Marlovian source possible but dubious. Campbell, pp. 247, 250.

the didactic interests of Lodge and Greene may have been drawn generally from contemporary preaching and pamphlets.³⁴ Naomi E. Pasachoff discusses several sermons exploring the relationship between individual sin as embodied in Jonah and the larger social dislocation, and cites writings on the nature of the commonwealth which relate ideologically to both the personal and the corporate sinful states. To a considerable degree the content of *A Looking-Glasse*, according to Pasachoff, could have been inspired by John Ponet, Protestant bishop exiled during the reign of Queen Mary and author of the *Shorte treatise of politike power* of 1556.³⁵

Opinions vary widely as to the dramatic and theatrical viability of the play. Gayley, for example, holds that ". . . the *Looking-Glasse* is well constructed."³⁶ Wynne, on the other hand, argues: "Devoid of any proper plot, the play merely brings together various incidents to exhibit such social evils as usury, legal corruption, filial ingratitude, friction between master and servant."³⁷ While some critics feel the playwrights' castigation of corruption at the level of the head of state to be their most important or interesting moral theme, others would agree with Kenneth Muir's assessment: "The episodes of the subplots concerning usury . . . corruption, drunkenness, and adultery are a more relevant mirror of London vice than Rasni's flamboyant sins; and these scenes,

³⁴ Roston, pp. 96-97.

³⁵ Pasachoff, pp. 65-74, 82-91.

³⁶ Gayley, p. 407. A similar assertion is made by Law, "*A Looking Glasse* and the Scriptures," pp. 33-34.

³⁷ Wynne, p. 151.

mostly in prose, are written with much greater vigor and some humour."³⁸ It should be noted at least that many of Oseas' denunciations of contemporary vices are rooted in the Old Testament prophetic tradition with its emphasis on both social justice and mercy. The diatribe at the end of Act One, Scene Three, may serve as example.

Where hateful usury
Is counted husbandry;
Where merciless men rob the poor,
And the needy are thrust out of door;
Where gain is held for conscience,
And men's pleasure is all on pence;
Where young gentlemen forfeit their lands,
Through riot, into the usurer's hands;
Where poverty is despis'd, and pity banish'd,
And mercy indeed utterly vanish'd:
Where men esteem more of money than of God;
Let that land look to feel his wrathful rod:
For there is no sin more odious in his sight
Than where usury defrauds the poor of his right.
London, take heed, these sins abound in thee;
The poor complain, the widows wrong'd be;
The gentlemen by subtlety are spoil'd;
The ploughmen lose the crop for which they toil'd:
Sin reigns in thee, O London, every hour:
Repent, and tempt not thus the heavenly power. (p. 95)

The several plots are tied together thematically as the ills of the city specified by Oseas are revealed at all levels of the social, political, and economic order. Parallels between the levels are made evident, as when king's councillor Radigan rejects his parents in Act Three, Scene Two, followed by the Smith's apprentice Adam beating his master in Scene Three.³⁹ The dramatic action of the play as a whole may be summarized in terms of Lily B. Campbell's scheme. The audience is first introduced to three sets of characters enmeshed in vice. Then Jonah's individual sin

³⁸ Kenneth Muir, "Robert Greene as Dramatist," in Richard Hosley, ed., *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 1962), p. 47.

³⁹ This parallelism is noted by Blackburn, p. 166.

and repentance are portrayed. And finally the three sets of characters are seen in their respective acts of repentance.⁴⁰

A rehearsal of the plot will most usefully reveal both the sins inveighed against and the relationships among the several groups of characters. In Act One, Scene One, Rasni enters, having been victorious against both King Jeroboam of Jerusalem and "Great Jewry's God," in the company of his vassal kings. Rasni boasts of the splendors of his city and of his own person, and his subjects call him "god on earth." (pp. 82-83) Despite warnings against incest, Rasni decides to marry his sister Remilia, who has likened her brother to the Roman deities. At the same time he conceives a notion to seduce Alvida, wife to the King of Paphlagonia. In Scene Two the prophet Oseas is brought in by the Angel to observe what is going on in Nineveh so that he may report the wickedness to the Jerusalemites. Adam and his fellow ruffians enter, clowning and seeking the ale-house, and Oseas delivers his first warning to London. In Scene Three the Usurer is seen bilking both gentry and peasants, and Oseas relates these practices to contemporary England.

The opening of Act Two, Scene One, serves to reveal the vanity of Remilia, who is struck dead before the marriage to Rasni can be consummated.⁴¹ Rasni thereupon goes off with Alvida, and Oseas provides his commentary. In Scene Two the Usurer bribes the judge and the lawyer hired by both Thrasybulus and the peasant farmer Alcon. Their cases against the Usurer are preremptorily dismissed. Oseas comments. In

⁴⁰ Campbell, p. 249.

⁴¹ Wynne points out the use of the "inner below," presumably at the rear of the stage, when Rasni "draws the curtains" to discover his sister's dead body. Wynne, p. 275.

Scene Three Adam and his cronies enter drunk, and the Second Ruffian kills the First Ruffian in a fight over a girl. In a parallel situation, Alvida poisons her husband in order to make herself available to Rasni. Oseas makes the point:

Where whoredom reigns, there murder follows fast,
As falling leaves before the winter blast. (p. 114)

The first scene of Act Three opens at a Judean seaport with Jonas complaining about the waywardness of Israel. The Angel presents God's call to Jonas. The prophet objects that this commission will result in his own people giving in to even greater sins, and will ". . . publish to the world my country's blame." (p. 117) Jonas then goes off with the merchants and sailors, and Oseas suggests that from Jonah's example one may learn how not to behave as a prophet. In Scene Two Radigan refuses to aid his impoverished family or their friend Thrasybulus. Rasni supports his underling's attitude. Radigan's mother Samia delivers a curse and Radigan is swallowed in flames. Rasni is advised against concern for the incident as a portent, and Oseas tells of the coming of Christ to right the many wrongs done by the powerful at the expense of the weak and poor. In Scene Three Adam and his master's wife are caught in adultery. Adam beats the Smith, and Oseas chastises servants who rebel against their masters.

In Scene One of Act Four the merchants and seamen tell the Governor of Joppa of their misadventures at sea, though with no mention of the swallowing of Jonas by a fish. Oseas praises the ready conversion of these pagans, warning London and other "western cities," those ". . . whom long persuasions cannot win," to begin to heed their preachers (pp. 131-132). Scene Two finds Jonas on the shore near Nineveh. Jonas makes

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reference to his prayer from the fish's belly, incorporating in his present speech to God the imagery of the psalm in the book of Jonah. The Angel delivers the second call, which Jonas accepts, and Oseas calls attention to his proper prophetic obedience and zeal. In Scene Three Alvida attempts unsuccessfully to seduce the King of Cilicia. Rasni hears reports of "ghosts" crying woe upon his city. A hand bearing a burning sword appears from a cloud, but Rasni again fails to heed the omen. Oseas comments. In Scene Four Adam encounters a man in devil's garb, and, refusing to be deceived, beats him.⁴² The peasants Alcon and Samia, their younger son Clesiphon, and Thrasybulus, all having been reduced to thievery, sell their stolen goods to the Usurer. Jonas enters crying repentance and coming destruction, and the five characters on stage immediately confess their guilt. The boy Clesiphon strikes the one positive note, pointing out that their desperate situation can be employed to lead them to true repentance. Oseas delivers his final call to repentance, first to Nineveh and then to London, and is then taken by the Angel back to Jerusalem where he is to preach on the lessons provided by the Ninevites.

Act Five begins with Rasni and his court carousing. Adam enters to relate how he beat the devil, and joins in the merriment. Jonas appears with his words of warning, whereupon Rasni is convinced and issues his edict that sackcloth and ashes and fasting shall be the order of the day in his kingdom. In Scene Three Jonas issues his warning to the western world at large, and then seats himself to watch the end of Nineveh. Within one speech by the prophet the plant grows, Jonas becomes angry at

⁴² Dickinson calls attention to the tradition represented in this scene. "A famous comic trick in the early plays. Adam is a late figure of the Vice type." *A Looking-Glass*, p. 141, n. 1.

God's staying his hand and explains this to have been the reason for his reluctance to carry out his task to begin with, and the plant dies. The Angel carries on the exchange with Jonas to establish the lesson of the plant, and adds that Jonas should observe the true contrition of these Ninevites. The Angel commands Jonas now to proclaim God's mercy. Jonas, in full agreement, leaves to carry out this new assignment. In Scene Four the King's Searchers find food and drink hidden on Adam, and take the man away to be hanged. In Scene Five Jonas brings his message of peace and forgiveness to the court. Rasni announces his intention to marry Alvida. The Usurer and Thrasybulus restore their respectively ill-gotten gains. Rasni proclaims a new period of fasting and declares: "Let Israel's God be honour'd in our land." (p. 163) Finally Jonas, in a curtain speech, points out that England is more favored by nature than was Assyria and yet London is more filled with sin than was Nineveh. And he implies that only the virtues of England's queen have thus far stayed the much-deserved wrathful judgment.

The remaining seven "Jonah" plays to be considered in the present section all appeared during the decade from 1967 to 1977. The first, Colin Hodgetts' musical *Jo Jonah*, is subtitled "A folk dramalogue in four movements."⁴³ "The theme of the play," according to the author,

is Man's responsibility towards the poor and hungry of the world. It is a call for unselfish action on a national scale and for a more imaginative and understanding approach to under-developed nations.⁴⁴

Though this theme is carried through the four "movements" of the play,

⁴³ Colin Hodgetts, *Jo Jonah: A Folk Dramalogue in Four Movements* (Oxford: Religious Education, 1967). The play was first performed at the St. John-at-Hackney church. Hodgetts, Introduction, p. viii.

⁴⁴ Hodgetts, Introduction, p. vii.

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as world need is contrasted with the comfortable bourgeois life of the industrialized nations, each movement with its own headnote and introductory song constitutes an independent episode only loosely connected to the others. Dialogue segments are short, leading into or interspersed with the stanzas of the musical numbers. The songs are largely in a folk idiom which seems ill-fitted to the satirical thrusts at and commentary upon contemporary urban attitudes and mores. This is particularly true of those songs borrowed rather than composed by the author. Sentimentality at times becomes the prevailing mood of the piece, as when in Movement One alternating lines of dialogue and sung verses tell of the death of George and his family, representing the third world.

Though setting, properties, and costumes are minimal in order to facilitate production in a sanctuary or hall without a stage, Hodgetts has endeavored to maintain a high degree of theatricality through use of slide projections, folk songs, dance, mime, and taped sound. The playwright recommends that, except for certain specified "live" speeches, all dialogue be on tape so that ". . . all the words will be heard, no matter how bad the acoustics of the building are, and . . . the actors can concentrate on acting because they don't have to strain to remember words." The effect of all of these devices he considers less that of a "play" than that of "total theatre."⁴⁵ He calls also for masks to be worn by all actors except the Preacher.⁴⁶ The play employs a Narrator and a large cast to represent the world's poor, the ship's passengers, the Ninevites/Asians.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Hodgetts, end notes, p. 47.

Movement One is designated: "Jonah is troubled by his conscience but decides to ignore it." It opens with the "Old Fish Song."

When he heard the Lord speaking old Jonah said, "No,
I'm a true hard-shell Baptist and so I won't go.
The Nineveh people are nothing to me
I couldn't care less if they die or go free."

Then Jo Jonah is introduced by the Narrator as

. . . an ordinary man, a very ordinary man. He lives, just as
other ordinary men live, in a similar house in a similar street.
(p. 1)

As Jo Jonah is working in his office in London, two Lawyers enter and Jo Jonah discovers that he is both judge and accused at his own trial. He becomes convinced that he should share what he has with people in under-developed countries and offers fifty pounds to alleviate poverty and suffering. When informed that his offer is only tokenism, Jo Jonah decides to leave town for a vacation.

Movement Two treats the theme:

Jonah tries to escape from his conscience but the usual escape routes are abhorrent to him. He rejects them and in turn is rejected. (p. 15)

The ship is an ocean liner embarked on a pleasure cruise. The depiction of sins which the "Jonah" playwrights for the most part reserve for a Nineveh scene Hodgetts transfers to the sea voyage. Jo Jonah is tempted by contemporary modes of escape from responsibility: gambling, casual sex, alcohol, drugs. But

. . . Jonah remains unsatisfied, seeking. He finds their pleasures repulsive. (p. 21)

The storm comes, the passengers pray, and Jonah ends up in the sea.

Movement Three is titled:

Jonah comes to grips with his standards. The whale helps him to rebuild himself. (p. 24)

Hodgetts in this act introduces one of the several talking whales of

"Jonah" drama. The whale in this instance functions as the author's mouthpiece, leading Jo Jonah through what Hodgetts refers to as "the catechism." (p. 24) The rehearsal of Jo Jonah's personal history leads to a recital of the ten commandments, now perverted to express contemporary social values. As each commandment is stated, a dancer moves forward with a large white whale rib. Thus is formed the belly of the whale, which Jo Jonah eventually identifies as the ". . . prison of my past." (p. 27) "The preacher turns the pulpit light on," and helps Jo Jonah perceive that when faced with the conflict between cultural demands and what one knows is just and honorable "It's easier to get rid of your principles." (p. 26) As Jo Jonah rejects the false values the dancers and ribs depart. Jonah's prayer for deliverance is rendered as a sung version of Psalm 129. The protagonist is finally freed from the whale and deposited on dry land. The whale explains:

I am not a prison, Jonah, your past is the prison. I am a womb,
You are here to be reformed so that you may be reborn. (p. 28)⁴⁷

The Narrator helps Jo Jonah establish the right values and goals, and the protagonist is now ". . . free for the future" and ". . . can face the challenge he had to turn away from at the beginning of our story." (pp. 31-32)

"Jonah takes action which leads him to love" is the headnote for Movement Four. The final portion of Hodgetts' "Old Fish Song," introducing this movement, makes reference to Nineveh. It is soon apparent to the audience that the scene is actually modern London. The materialistic standards of Jo Jonah's society are emphasized through the particularly

⁴⁷ On the mythic tradition in which the belly of the fish symbolizes a womb, see pp. 66-67, n. 8.

non-dramatic device of a lengthy recital of statistics by the prophet. Halfway through the act, however, the "Ninevite" crowds are revealed to be impoverished Asians. Whereas initially Jo Jonah in fleeing from God's command had been attempting to escape responsibility for existing mission needs, in this act he takes up that responsibility but in the form of imperialism through charity. As he withholds aid in order to coerce the recipients to adopt his political and cultural standards, a child dies at his feet. He is then in a position to receive his final lesson, delivered by Asian 2.

We need food. We don't need conditions. Development is not something you do for us, even if you devote your life to doing it. It means a working relationship between rich and poor, between those who give aid and the people who receive it. We are human beings. We need love. You cannot love on condition. Love is a response to a situation. (p. 43)

In the preface to his three one-act Old Testament plays, collected under the title *From Nineveh to Now*, Gordon C. Bennett states:

From the first time someone said to me, "that play was worth a dozen sermons," I've been intrigued by the power in drama to share the gospel. Since then I've invested a good deal of time in message plays. . .⁴⁸

In an essay in *Christianity Today* the author specifies the type of "message" he is interested in communicating. "I've spent a chunk of my life exploring the church-theater dimension, and I've worked out ways of using drama to convey a message about God and man, love, sacrifice, justice, redemption, and resurrection." Bennett here also specifies that the intended result of his dramatic messages is that ". . . of provoking self-reflection and self-improvement."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Gordon C. Bennett, *From Nineveh to Now: Three Dramatic Fantasies Based on the Old Testament* (St. Louis: Bethany, 1970, 1971, 1973), Preface, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Gordon C. Bennett, "The Refiner's Fire: Church and Theater," *Christianity Today* 18:16 (May 10, 1974), p. 20.

In his introduction to *So Why Does that Weirdo Prophet Keep Watching the Water?* Bennett refers with admiration to Wolf Mankowitz's "Jonah" dramatization *It Should Happen to a Dog*.⁵⁰ Bennett's use of such devices as a Nineveh newspaper and costuming which is suggestively both Biblical and modern, along with the designation of Jonah as an insurance salesman, suggests borrowings from Mankowitz's comedy which Bennett admits ". . . prompted me to stage another version . . ."⁵¹ Bennett employs puns and attempts to keep much of his dialogue humorous; however, his play lacks the genuine wit of Mankowitz and is not primarily a comic dramatization.

With the exception of Scenes Six and Eight, the ten scenes are quite brief. Staging is simple, to ensure an uninterrupted flow of action, facilitated through lighting area changes. The play begins after Jonah's prophecy has been delivered to the Ninevites. The earlier part of the story is subsequently presented in flashback, the necessity for which is not entirely clear. Like Hodgetts, Bennett is concerned with social, political, and economic reform as the necessary expression of a more personal "repentance." But Bennett's focus is less narrowed than is Hodgetts' to a specific situation such as the wealthy nations' relationship to the "third world."

In Scene One two Ninevites are rejoicing over the saving of their city and over Jonah as their savior. They cannot understand why the

⁵⁰ Gordon C. Bennett, *So Why Does that Weirdo Prophet Keep Watching the Water?*, in *From Nineveh to Now*, pp. 11-38. The play was originally produced at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, in April 1969. Bennett, *Weirdo Prophet*, Preface, p. 10.

⁵¹ Bennett, *Weirdo Prophet*, Introduction, p. 13. Mankowitz's *It Should Happen to a Dog* is discussed in chapter five.

prophet sits and pouts. In Scene Two Jonah is reading the newspaper weather reports, hoping that God perhaps still intends to punish the city. In Scene Three the two Ninevites try unsuccessfully to entice Jonah to enjoy their seaside amusements. In Scene Four Jonah informs the audience that he is watching for his whale. He briefly recounts his call by God and his flight, employing an anachronism reminiscent of but rather heavier than those of Mankowitz:

If you remember the story of Jonah, you know it's a classic case of disobedience. The preachers all use me to illustrate the point. (p. 19)

Jonah's narrative leads into the flashback, which begins with Scene Five. On the ship, where the crew has been battling the raging storm, Jonah convinces the Captain that he must be thrown overboard.

Scene Six takes place in the belly of the whale, identified vaguely as possibly hell or ". . . maybe . . . purgatory." (p. 27) Jonah here encounters Adam Smith and Eve Jones who have been playing an eternal game of cards with an unidentified and non-speaking Dealer. Adam reveals that he was an early atomic scientist, motivated by monetary reward and refusing to take seriously ethical implications of his work; Eve that she was similarly motivated by wealth and fame. Their pursuit of such goals represents the contemporary eating of the apple of knowledge of good and evil. They remain in the whale and at the unending game of cards because they ". . . like having it both ways . . ." (p. 25) The point is clarified at the end of the scene, when the "purgatory" is identified as contemporary life.

ADAM: Ambivalence is my middle name. There's always the big battle going on inside, and I've come to the point of not caring who wins. This is the house of indifference. We like to eat our cake and have it too, and no longer do we reach for the Alka-Seltzer.

JONAH: So this is the gray ghetto, where light is never too bright. Dullsville incorporated. Population three--or three million.

EVE: (*brightly*) It's not so bad, really. You have to adjust.
(pp. 27-28)

In Scene Seven Jonah is addressed sarcastically by the Voice:

"Jonah! O Minor Prophet Jonah!" (p. 28) The Voice persuades Jonah that he must hereafter be obedient. In Scene Eight Jonah brings his warnings to the King, who invites the prophet to witness the "festival of obeisance" to the several gods of Nineveh. Bennett's stage directions read:

The whole sequence will suggest a ritualized burlesque on man, his idols, and his times. KING and SERVANTS may take up props (e.g., wine bottle, jewelry box, and rifle) that relate symbolically.
(p. 31)

The deities celebrated are Bacchus, the apotheosis of drink and sex; Hermes, of business enterprise and commercial Machiavellianism; and Mars, of war and military predominance. Jonah nevertheless convinces the King that he and his subjects must ". . . make a turning." (p. 34) In Bennett's version of "Jonah," it is the King who now voices the universalist implications of the Biblical source:

We shall repent of our evil ways and beg your God for mercy. And we shall thank him for extending his salvation to the pagans of Nineveh. We shall have to revise our opinion of your God, Mr. Jonah. We all thought him rather snobbish, you know, chosen people and all that. "How odd of God to choose Jews." But now he smiles on us too.

Jonah, however, is angry at this repentance "in nothing flat," largely because ". . . I don't even get a chance to preach my complete sermon entitled 'The Demise of Nineveh,' or 'Watch Out Lest You Drown in Your Own Bathtub, Babylon!'" (p. 35)

Though without explicit indication of the fact, Scene Nine appears

to begin at the point in the story where the flashback had commenced.⁵² A Messenger endeavors to convince Jonah that he should not spend his days being gloomy, but rather rejoice and celebrate life. The lesson of the withering plant is undergone, and Jonah learns that his preaching mission is to continue. In Scene Ten Jonah explains that he is watching for the whale in order to bring the message of salvation--now identified as available through "God's Son"--to Adam, Eve, and the Dealer.

In his preface to *Six Prophets for Today* W. A. Poovey explains that his purpose in dramatizing each of six "minor" prophets ". . . is to let a congregation see the prophet as he speaks to the twentieth century." He further suggests specific ways in which the one-act, single-scene dramas may be used:

Each play can serve as an introduction to a study of an individual book. Because of the material covered, the plays can be used as discussion starters. Or each play can stand alone and be used to convey a message which is always greater than any single book of the Bible.

He employs the term "message" repeatedly in discussing his work.⁵³ Elsewhere Poovey argues that drama ". . . can be used to substitute for or to augment the sermon." The effectiveness of such a procedure, however, requires more than simply the presentation of the play.

Of course there should be a followup . . . Discussion can follow during a coffee hour after the service. A midweek meeting can

⁵² Some ambiguity remains in this regard. On the basis of Scene Two, in which Jonah still hopes that the destruction will come, Scene Nine must take up the story past the point of the flashback interruption. But on the basis of Scene Four, in which Jonah announces that he is looking for the whale, Scene Ten represents the "present" story's continuation.

⁵³ Poovey, p. 8.

afford opportunity for discussing the implications of the drama. Even a sermon on the same subject the next Sunday can prove valuable.⁵⁴

In his *Jonah--The World's Greatest Miracle* Poovey calls for a bare stage, with Jonah and the Heckler in modern dress and the other characters in either modern dress or Biblical costumes.⁵⁵ A Chairman ". . . seated somewhat removed from the action" introduces the two "speakers," Jonah and the Heckler, who appear at reading stands. "JONAH and HECKLER can read their parts from the stands but it would be better if other parts were memorized." (p. 9) The effect is that of a lecture begun by Jonah and interrupted by both the Heckler and brief bits of staged action. Although Poovey comments, "Jonah can tell us a lot about race relations . . .," such a theme is not developed in the play.⁵⁶ In a speech by the Heckler near the conclusion of the play the universalist or supraracial note is perhaps hinted at, but the reference is equally to the notion that the Ninevites should be pitied in their innocence.⁵⁷

Don't you realize that God also made those people who lived in Nineveh? Did you ever stop to think there were children in that city, children who had never done you any harm? And probably people who never took part in the cruelty that made you so bitter? (p. 23)

At the outset of the play Jonah and the Heckler establish the points of opposition, Jonah claiming to be ". . . part of the greatest miracle

⁵⁴ W. A. Poovey, "Preaching and Drama," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20:4 (November, 1968), pp. 376-377.

⁵⁵ W. A. Poovey, *Jonah--The World's Greatest Miracle*, in *Six Prophets for Today*, pp. 9-23.

⁵⁶ Poovey, *Six Prophets for Today*, Preface, p. 7.

⁵⁷ "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" Jonah 4:11, Revised Standard Version.

recorded in the Bible . . ." and the Heckler insisting that Jonah's story is a series of fabrications (p. 11). Jonah relates the background of his call, and then introduces Thedus, the ship's captain. Thedus begins to narrate the incident at sea. The entrance of his wife Cora enables him to conclude his story in dialogue fashion, though Cora's contributions to the conversation are on the order of : "I'm so sorry. But at least you're safe." (p. 15) Thedus makes no reference to Jonah's being swallowed by the fish, commenting only that ". . . somehow I have the feeling he didn't drown . . ." He informs Cora that they will henceforth worship the God of Israel, and forbids her to install in their home an idol representing this deity who does not ". . . allow men to make images of him." (p. 16)

Jonah resumes his narrative, pointing out that both fear for himself and hate of the Ninevites who might actually repent and thus be saved were the cause of his disobedience.

I was either a dead man or a traitor to Israel. And that wasn't much of a choice. (p. 12)

Later, after the city is spared, Jonah adds that he was convinced from the beginning that

. . . you can't depend on God to do the right thing. Just when you want him to be stern to other people, he turns soft . . ." (p. 21)

Jonah introduces two Ninevite women who enter to chat about their city, the prophet, and the king's apparent alarm at Jonah's pronouncements. After the city has been spared, Dova returns to thank Jonah. Upon the prophet's informing her that he now hates her people more than ever, the woman replies: "God have mercy on you, Jonah." The Heckler makes a rather cryptic reference in passing to Jonah's attitude toward the plant,

an incident which has been neither spoken of nor portrayed. In Jonah's concluding speech the "suspense" created by Jonah's having consistently refused to define the "greatest miracle" of which he is a part is relieved. Poovey has directed the audience's attention away from the fish, the sudden cessation of the storm, the withered vine, and the mass conversion of a pagan city as serious "miracles," and now reveals the real miracle to be the love of God. "That's the greatest miracle in the Bible," declares Jonah, "that God loves me and all the other sinners in the world." (p. 23)⁵⁸

John J. Debrechini's musical *Jonah of Joppa* follows the method of the story-telling treatments in presenting sequentially the events of the Biblical account.⁵⁹ Certain episodes have been expanded slightly to allow the introduction of extra-Biblical characters and humorous dialogue. While the comic quality pervades the opening portion of the play, however, during and subsequent to the ship scene the tone becomes markedly more serious. The two major exceptions are the introduction of the citizens of Nineveh and the closing dialogue between Jonah and the Angel. And the original songs retain, for the most part, a sprightly, Broadway-

⁵⁸ That the general theme had been for some time on the author's mind is indicated in his earlier essay in the *Lutheran Quarterly*.

Jesus cried out from the cross: "Father forgive them . . ." Does modern man face the same challenge, the necessity of forgiveness? Does man find it hard to echo the words of Jesus? How can man be moved to forgive? Drama can show this problem very well.

Poovey, "Preaching and Drama," p. 378.

⁵⁹ John J. Debrechini, *Jonah of Joppa: An Original Musical Play* (1977, typescript). Book and music are by Debrechini. The young people of the Wyckoff Reformed Church (Wyckoff, New Jersey), who performed the play in 1977, are credited with composition of the lyrics. Also available to the present writer was a cassette recording of the original production, reflecting some slight variations in the text.

musical style. The setting consists simply of a ladder, on which the Angel is perched at the beginning of the play, "a few props," and two signs reading respectively "Nineveh" and "Tarshish." Costuming is not specified, though the Angel is to wear a hard hat with wings "similar to Mercury." The Angel "also eats celery throughout."⁶⁰ A Narrator is employed to recite incidents which the author has elected not to depict on stage. The chorus, in addition to singing, represents the crowds in Scenes One and Four and the seamen in Scene Two.

Scene One takes place in the marketplace of Joppa. Taking a possible cue from Wolf Mankowitz, Debrecini introduces Jonah as a travelling salesman.⁶¹ His hats, a recent invention of his own, have never been seen before by the people of Joppa. Jonah delivers a successful pitch and his hats become a much-desired item. The show's first song identifies Jonah as:

. . . not a pious man, never went to the temple to pray;
He'd rather spend his time with girls and wine
And let the rabbis pray.

The Angel comes to Jonah with God's call, in a dialogue again somewhat reminiscent of that by Mankowitz in his corresponding scene. Scene Two takes place on the ship, and the incidents at sea are handled with dispatch and economy. A brief Scene Three depicts Jonah in the belly of the whale, a situation presented primarily through description by the Narrator. After the chorus has sung "Repent, Repent You Sinner" the Narrator explains:

⁶⁰ Undated note to the writer from the playwright.

⁶¹ On this and other possible Mankowitz influences identified below, see the discussion of *It Should Happen to a Dog* in chapter five.

Realizing that he could not flee from God and what God wanted him to do . . . Jonah got on his knees and prayed for forgiveness. He promised God that if he was given another chance . . . the chance to stay alive . . . he would go to Nineveh and do God's will.
(p. 12)

Jonah's song "Anybody Care?" then simply repeats these two motifs of a plea for deliverance and the promise of obedience.

Scene Four takes place in Nineveh. The Ninevites' song "We Love to Eat" extols the pleasures of gluttony, drunkenness, and avarice. Jonah enters singing "A New Life You Must Find," an amplified version of "Repent, Repent You Sinner." Immediately upon delivering his message Jonah retires to the mountainside to await Nineveh's destruction. When the King enters to investigate the source of his city's sudden disquiet, therefore, it is left to the Angel to apprise him of the state of affairs in his kingdom. In a sudden shift of mood--but perhaps with no more abrupt a transition than occurs in the Biblical book of Jonah with the King's declaration of repentance--the Ninevites sing "Lord, Forgive Your Children Made." The Narrator then continues the story through the sparing of the city. Jonah refuses to accept this outcome of the Ninevite repentance and resolves still to wait for the judgment as predicted. Jonah and the Narrator in dialogue rehearse the episode of the vine, and the Angel draws from it the customary lesson.

ANGEL: How can you get so excited about a simple plant? You didn't plant it or water it, did you?

JONAH: No.

ANGEL: Well, why then do you care if it is destroyed?

JONAH: Because I love plants.

ANGEL: You mean . . . like God loves people? Even the people of Nineveh? (p. 20)

In their duet "Forgive Today" Jonah stubbornly refuses to accept the Angel's arguments. Following the song, however, Jonah admits: "You know,

you're right . . . after all, these people never did me any harm . . . so why should I be mad if God forgives them?" The final exchange between Jonah and Angel may again be inspired by the Mankowitz dramatization.

JONAH: . . . I'm tired of sitting here . . . I want to get back to being a salesman.

ANGEL: In that case, guess what I fished out of the lake for you?
(Angel hands Jonah his suitcase with some hats)

JONAH: That's great . . . (opens suitcase and takes out hat)
They're a little soggy.

ANGEL: Too bad they weren't waterproof . . . you know . . . like raincoats?

JONAH: Like what?

ANGEL: Like raincoats . . . oops!

JONAH: That's a great idea . . . raincoats and rainhats . . . that will surely be ahead of its time. An original . . . right from THE CREATOR (saying it looking up). (p. 23)

The finale is a reprise of the chorus of "Once There Was a Man," the song which introduced Jonah in Scene One, with new verses recapitulating the entire course of events. Though the audience is presumably to view the moral as drawn from both the Ninevites and Jonah, Jonah's case has been much more detailed. The concluding lines of "Once There Was a Man" summarize the drama's point, similar to that expressed by Poovy in his *Jonah--The World's Greatest Miracle*:

God wants the world to know
His name is love
Forgiveness is the way. (p. 24)

Jim Rose's *The Fish Who Went Manning* again follows the series of Biblical incidents in the manner of the story-telling treatments of the

book of Jonah.⁶² Like Debrechini, Rose employs humor and even farce. But the story-telling and the comedy are intended to serve the purpose of delivering a message. The emphasis, like that of Hodgetts, is on the Christian's responsibility in the area of missions. The presentation is largely narrative, the main character essentially delivering an occasionally interrupted monologue.

The ostensible setting for Rose's dramatization is a church missions conference. The consensus of the group appears to be that demands at home are such that time and resources should not be spent on foreigners, who are unlikely to appreciate the help or listen to the gospel in any case. Agreement has been reached that the conference itself is a waste of time and extremely boring, when an ill-clad, wet figure appears. The intruder announces that he has something important to impart which is of relevance to the conference.

Oh, did you develop a world strategy for missions?

No, I destroyed one . . .

After the stranger has thus introduced himself he lapses into Yiddish dialect. He tells of God's command that he preach repentance to the Ninevites. As his conversation with the Almighty continued his excitement mounted. "I'm ready! I'm ready!" Then when he learned of the destination to which he was to carry the message, he was taken aback: "I'm not so ready anymore." He wondered if perhaps the "voice" was not that of the Lord after all, but the result of his own indigestion. He

⁶² Jim Rose, *The Fish Who Went Manning* (1977, cassette tape). The drama was presented in the spring of 1977 by a youth group as part of the worship service at the North West Bible Church in Dallas, Texas. The author played the leading role in the performance. For information regarding the production the present writer is indebted to Raymond Western, a member of the original cast.

complained that the Ninevites were "terrible people," and that in any case God could not be interested in Assyrians when he was the particular God of the Jews. Then it occurred to the man that, if he ran away, this God of a certain people within a certain geographical boundary could not follow him. He booked an economy passage on a ship bound for Tarshish. During the description of the storm at sea one of the conferees identifies the stranger as Jonah. Jonah describes as his first real shock that not only did the pagan sailors begin praying to his God, ". . . but worse yet he started hearing them." Finally the lots were cast, Jonah was identified as the troublemaker, and he was thrown overboard.

In the belly of the fish Jonah in desperation "prayed all the psalter" and any other prayers he could think of. The fish became sick, and vomited Jonah forth. Once again in the water, Jonah discovered that he could stand up, and perceived that he was near the shore not far from Nineveh. Again God issued the command. Jonah preached, and the citizens of Nineveh repented. Jonah thereupon retired to a hillside, hoping that God might change his mind once more and wreak vengeance upon the Ninevites. Jonah tells his present-day audience that his anger was aroused because the Assyrians were every bit as nasty and undeserving as the Angolans or Cubans. At his campsite Jonah built a shed which, since he was a prophet and not a carpenter, collapsed in a day. Then the lesson of the plant is given, and Rose here elaborates the analogy, stressing that as God created the people of Nineveh so did God love those people. The contemporary relevance of the lesson is detailed in a kind of sermonette with which Jonah concludes his presentation to the missions conferees. "It is not an option with you; it is the command of God." Those attending this conference ". . . need to have the heart of God . . ."

in expressing concern for all peoples. Christians have, in addition to Jonah's lesson in God's love, the Christ whom God wants made available to all the world. The conferees readily concur, and the piece ends with a vocal solo emphasizing a Christological understanding of divine forgiveness.

The final two dramas in the present group are intended not only to impart moral or ethical truths but also to inspire members of the audience to a decision or action. This is not to suggest that the writers considered above have no interest in affecting behavior. But whereas the playwrights discussed above appear to rely upon the force of the argument or clarity in stating the case, the dramatists now to be considered also seek to evoke an emotional response.

In his modernization of the Jonah story David Campton works exclusively with parallels to the incidents recorded in the Bible; however, the miracles have no counterparts. Each of the events of the Biblical Jonah's career becomes a kind of simile for an episode in this contemporary retelling of the story. Campton's *Jonah* is written as a long one-act drama, though the author indicates a point at which an intermission may be taken if desired.⁶³ Dialogue alternates between prose passages and short stichomythic exchanges. The rhythmic contrast is marked, with the prose speeches more reflective in content and tempo and often serving to reveal character, and the rapid-fire free verse stichomythy frequently building in intensity, affording the characters the opportunity to speak from a more abstract point of view. An example of the latter style is

⁶³ David Campton, *Jonah; A Play* (London: J. Garnet Miller, 1972). The play was commissioned by the Chelmsford Cathedral Arts Council for production in the cathedral in November, 1971.

the cathedral cleaning women's commenting not simply *as* themselves but also *on* themselves in response to Jonah's call to ". . . turn from your wickedness . . ."

SECOND CLEANER: We all have our little faults.

FIRST CLEANER: But we'd rather not have them brought up.

SECOND CLEANER: Not here, of all places.

. . .

SECOND CLEANER: I don't quite follow.

FIRST CLEANER: I'd rather not follow.

SECOND CLEANER: If we followed, we might be upset. (p. 29)

Campton's Jonah shares with Robert Frost's Jonas Dove a passionate commitment to and identification with the principle of justice.⁶⁴ Late in the play after the prophesied holocaust has failed to occur Jonah says, "I worshipped Justice," to which the Grey Figure replies, "It might have been better to have worshipped God." (p. 60) Jonah's impatience with the ethical shortcomings of humankind has made him a misanthrope.

This is a wicked world. I'm not a man given to pronouncements. I avoid public meetings. What you do with your own lives is no concern of mine. And if my neighbor chooses to drive down to Hell, I'll not bar his way. I believe in Justice. Sooner or later the wrong-doer will be punished. Not perhaps by the man-made legal system, which is a flimsy, cobbled up piece of machinery at best; but at the end by God. (pp. 9-10)

After he has received his commission and delivered his denunciations, a megalomania colors his desire to watch his contemporaries violently destroyed. And he reveals himself as an egomaniac in his reaction to the sparing of the people.

I am immovable. God may vacillate, but here I stand. A rock.

⁶⁴ See the discussion of Frost's *A Masque of Mercy* in chapter six, pp. 137-144.

He asks the Grey Figure the meaning, for him personally, of this betrayal of his prophetic utterance.

JONAH: A rebuke?

GREY FIGURE: A reminder.

JONAH: That I am the one singled out for punishment--the only one from that crawling dungheap. Was this vast charade staged merely for my benefit? The resources of Heaven mustered to crush one maggot? Kill me then. Grind me underfoot. If you have a thunderbolt to spare, hurl it in this direction.
(pp. 60-61)

Jonah is nonetheless not primarily a character study, nor an explanation of the inadequacies of a strict justice. Both the personality of the prophet and his myopic devotion to justice are employed by the dramatist finally to vindicate the merciful ways of God and to emphasize their implications for human attitudes and behavior.

The setting is a church sanctuary. The service having concluded, most of the congregation is leaving. Jonah stands apart, commenting dourly on the actions of a Drunk; a Boy in amorous pursuit of a willing Girl; two Businessmen engaged in clandestine speculation; a Dowdy Woman enviously touting the physical virtues of her companion, a Grand Lady; and a Violent Man who stalks and murders a second killer. A Grey Figure appears to Jonah to inform him that he is to warn the people of their imminent doom. Jonah, however, doubts that God will actually deliver such a judgment.

Such things don't happen these days. Not like Gomorrah. No. He desires at least some proof of the Grey Figure's authority. "A tiny miracle" would do (p. 13). Otherwise Jonah would prefer simply to continue complaining about the state of humankind. Jonah argues that he is ". . . not the man to sway multitudes," and insists that he will

emigrate rather than accept the commission. The whale is referred to only at this point, and jokingly, and is dismissed by both Jonah and the Grey Figure.

FIGURE: What has been commanded has been commanded.

JONAH: Would God resort to direct action? Have one swallowed by a whale perhaps, and spewed up in the appointed place. I won't do it.

FIGURE: God's ways can be more subtle. (p. 18)

The Grey Figure then arranges that Jonah observe the results of his refusal to carry out God's orders, in what Campton refers to as "the hallucination scene."⁶⁵ *"A trumpet wails like a siren,"* as both a heralding of the Last Judgment and a reminder of war-time air raids (p. 18). Rumbings are heard, the building shakes, and flames flicker on the walls. The characters whom Jonah had observed earlier return seeking sanctuary. People outside are described burning and dying horribly. Jonah is accused of knowing what was coming and failing to give warning. Left to himself again, Jonah hears a Voice which informs him that he alone has survived. Jonah is certain that justice has been served, but finds his present situation less than desirable. The Voice points out that there may well have been a few other just persons in the city, who because of Jonah's reluctance to seek them out are now destroyed along with the wicked. Jonah begins to crumble. "It was bad enough being one just man among all the unrighteous, but it's worse being without the unrighteous." The Voice continues ironically to repeat "Justice." Jonah in his loneliness finally cries out, ". . . take me, too . . . Don't leave me here." (p. 27)

⁶⁵ Campton, Notes, p. 5.

Jonah is awakened by the Cleaners, realizes that he has experienced only a dream or vision, and immediately begins to call: "Repent."

Jonah's wife and two children hurry in, embarrassed by his behavior.

Jonah quizzes his family as to whether they have been ". . . pure in thought, word, and deed." (p. 30) They reply that they are guiltless of the kinds of major sins associated with the Old Testament commandments.

MISS JONAH: We haven't robbed any widows or orphans.

YOUNG JONAH: Or worshipped false gods.

MISS JONAH: Or blasphemed.

YOUNG JONAH: Or lied.

MISS JONAH: Much.

YOUNG JONAH: Lately.

MISS JONAH: And we honour our father and mother.

But Jonah turns these ethical imperatives into contemporary peccadillos.

I mean the straying eye, the murderous impulse, the furtive gesture, the convenient deception, the undetected surrender to temptation. When did you last steal a ride without paying? or come home late and lie about the traffic? or claim first class expenses for a second class journey? or take the credit for your junior's ideas? When did you glimpse a skirt riding high, and speculate . . . ?
(pp. 31-32)

Jonah at first is able to convince only the Drunk to take seriously his prophesied judgment. Then he virtually pummels the Violent Man into a state of fear, and finally all of the characters grow nervous and take up the chant:

Repent. Believe. Turn to the Lord. (p. 38)

Jonah insists that all that can be done is to prepare to die well.

Alone, Jonah points out that he has done as instructed, and suggests that God can now proceed with the destruction. Voices are heard singing the hymn "Praise my Soul, the King of Heaven," and Jonah discovers that

everyone except the Drunk is behaving righteously. Then Jonah wonders what he is to do next, since doubtless the people in a short time will backslide. Furthermore, they are going to want to know when they may expect the end, and Jonah has no answer to this question. If Jonah cannot provide the answer the people will disbelieve his prophecy altogether, and will turn against him. The Violent Man overhears Jonah's address to God and is convinced that the prophet is a fraud.

That the widespread penance is somewhat calculated is demonstrated in the citizens requesting that Jonah pass on to the Almighty word of their improved behavior. A delegation arrives having raised funds for a new stained glass window depicting scenes of God's deliverance of peoples and individuals.

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: A reminder.

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: For us, of course.

SECOND BUSINESSMAN: But perhaps, also . . .

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: For Him. (pp. 47-48)

They request Jonah to take charge of the unveiling of the window. His family expresses the pride they now feel in him. Jonah is not at all inclined to take part in this ceremony and its celebration of God's mercy. But the Violent Man raises the doubts about Jonah's credentials, asking whether his refusal to unveil the window is ". . . because it is a monument to your deceit?" (p. 51) So Jonah capitulates, and is further goaded into announcing the time of the destruction. "At noon on Thursday week," he says, the scheduled time of the unveiling (p. 53). Jonah now informs the Grey Figure that the destruction must occur at the moment he has been forced to specify, or the converts will be lost.

At the appointed hour the people process to a recitation of Psalm

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39. Jonah unveils the window and the sanctuary is flooded with multi-colored light. When the destruction fails to occur the people leave, after thanking Jonah. "For putting in a word to--you-know-who." (p. 58) But Jonah refuses to leave, complaining: "God uses Jonah as his fool." He can feel only humiliation, self-pity, and indignation over ". . . crimes unpunished, sins condoned." The Grey Figure asks whether he cannot be glad that children and small animals have been spared. Jonah replies:

Justice is blind. I worshipped Justice. (p. 60)

He asks to be killed. He insists that God's mercy is simply weakness, and asks for the destruction at least of the stained glass window which celebrates that weakness. The Grey Figure offers Jonah a stone with which he himself can break the window. But Jonah hesitates. It is, after all, his window--"The Jonah Window." He offers a variety of excuses for his inability to engage in this act of vandalism. And Campton then makes of this incident the Biblical lesson of the vine. The Grey Figure points out: "You cannot break one piece of glass, and yet you expect God to obliterate a city." (p. 62)

The final exchange is between Jonah and his family. The "message" of the play emerges as the admonition to look forward to the future rather than back at past errors.

JONAH: I assumed an authority that did not belong to me. I am guilty of forgery and false pretenses. If this is my punishment, I accept it.

MISS JONAH: We wish you wouldn't worry so much about punishment.

YOUNG JONAH: Punishment always means looking back to what has been done.

MISS JONAH: We'd rather look forward to what might be done.

They steer JONAH towards an exit.

YOUNG JONAH: It's amazing what a touch of forgiveness can do.

JONAH stops and tries to look back to where the GREY FIGURE has disappeared.

JONAH: He . . .

MISS JONAH: No, don't look back. Look forward.

YOUNG JONAH: That's right. Come on.

Together they lead JONAH out.

The emotionally charged scenes throughout the play, and in particular Jonah's passion and vehemence, together with the tone of the closing dialogue suggest that impelling the audience to a change in attitude and behavior is as important as the more intellectual process of "teaching" the lesson of forgiveness and its implications for behavior. Campton's *Jonah* is thus at least as "inspirational" in intent as it is didactic.

Marion Fairman begins her *In the Belly of the Fish* with a short passage of verse, followed by a breezy television interview with Jonah, and concluding with a longer poetic passage intended to excite as an emotional response the conviction that through faith in God one can find true freedom.⁶⁶ The belly of the fish becomes a metaphor for the universal human experience of bondage until such time as obedience to God results in one's being set free by God. The metaphor is further extended to embrace the New Testament motif of "the sign of Jonah," as Christ's death and return from the dead are seen as the certainty of God's turning death into life, despair into faith.

Both *In the Belly of the Fish* and *The Ruined Garden*, the latter dealing with Adam and Eve, are intended to be performed within a worship service in place of the sermon. The relevant Scripture lesson (for *In the Belly of the Fish* Jonah 1:1-5, 12-17; 2:1-10) is to be read. Both

⁶⁶ Marion [A.] Fairman, *In the Belly of the Fish*, in *The Ruined Garden and In the Belly of the Fish* (Downers Grove, IL: Contemporary Drama Service, 1971), pp. 7-14.

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dramas call for a chorus of from four to twenty individuals dressed in robes, a leader in a gown, and two players in modern dress. Properties are few and simple; in the "Jonah" play only a newspaper is used (p. 7; and see *The Ruined Garden*, p. 1).

The play opens with the Leader at the pulpit as though beginning to deliver the sermon. His speech is at the outset in rhymed iambic verse, but shortly shifts into an unrhymed free verse form. The latter, except for occasionally recurring iambic passages, remains the poetic convention in the play. The Leader's two short stanzas introduce the theme of man as fleeing and afraid. Jonah is revealed crouched in a ball because the belly of the fish does not allow room for him to extend himself to his full length. A woman appears ". . . at lectern or on a raised platform to one side" to conduct a "Person to Person" television interview with Jonah (p. 8). The interview scene is in prose. The conversation is for the most part superficial, dealing with such matters as the properties of fish blubber, the location of television cameras, the peculiarities of the fish which is apparently ". . . constructed for the express purpose of swallowing man," and the fact that Jonah and the fish appear to ". . . feed on each other." (p. 10)⁶⁷ Jonah eventually explains that he was simply journeying to Tarshish when this unexpected incident occurred, whereupon the Woman points out that according to the newspaper he had been instructed to go to Nineveh. Nineveh, Jonah replies, is a crowded and crime-ridden city and no fit place to live. As has been noted, the woman and Jonah are to be costumed in modern dress, and the newspaper

⁶⁷ Fairman has based this conversation on Dostoevsky's story "The Crocodile," as is revealed in her essay in *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature*, p. 76. See Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Crocodile," in William Phillips, ed., *The Short Stories of Dostoevsky* (New York: Dial, 1946), pp. 463-504.

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suggests a contemporary setting. But the single direct reference to modern times is an opaque one, as Jonah suggests that he may write a book about his life in the belly of the fish. "Everyone else in the twentieth century has." (p. 11)⁶⁸ Finding the interview difficult, the Woman ends it abruptly and leaves, as Jonah cries to her to remain and not leave him alone.

At this point the Chorus takes over to generalize upon the theme of solitude and fear. The Leader is assigned a verse passage which stresses both our reluctance to show human beings themselves "stripped naked" and our guilt if we fail to take on that responsibility. "Forgive us, Lord/if we should send each other away, empty-handed." (p. 12) Jonah finally prays, and the Chorus explains:

Now is the meaning plain!
At the point of no return
In the belly of the fish
We grope blindly;
Bump against ourselves
Until we agree to accept,
To accept God without condition. (p. 13)

The Leader reads the Biblical line telling of Jonah's deliverance onto dry land, and Jonah exults in his freedom. The Chorus then rather abruptly asks for "a sign." The Leader introduces the passage from Matthew 12:39-40 specifying Jonah as a "sign" pointing to Christ. In alternating lines the Chorus and the Leader together draw the lesson that God indeed came in the flesh to humankind to demonstrate the nature

⁶⁸ The reference seems a private one on the part of the playwright. In her essay "In the Belly of the Fish," published at close to the same time as her drama with that title, Fairman discusses a variety of novels, stories, and dramas which she believes to express a Jonah-in-the-belly theme. Fairman, "In the Belly of the Fish," in *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature*, pp. 67-83. A number of the ideas suggested in her short play will be found explored in this essay. See especially pp. 67-68, 73-75, 82-83.

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of death and life.⁶⁹ The congregation is left with a visual reminder of the theme as Jonah remains

. . . in outstretched position with head thrown back until end. He may exit during the prayer or benediction following the play.
(p. 14)

The moral-lesson play, on the whole, affords greater insight into the writer's particular moral stance than into either the Biblical source or its contemporary relevance. Dramatic coherence and genuinely theatrical effectiveness tend to give way to contrivance for the sake of didactic clarity. An emotionally-charged or "inspirational" tone does not appear, in itself, to affect this pattern, as is evidenced in Fairman's short play. Campton's *Jonah* will engage an audience through qualities in the playwriting quite apart from either the moralizing or the "inspiration." The effectiveness of Lodge and Greene's *A Looking-Glass* is the result of the authors' working knowledge of theatrical, rather than simply didactic, devices and conventions.

⁶⁹ In another literary borrowing, Fairman has given to her Chorus the designation of one's release from the belly of the fish, upon recognition of the truth of God, as an ". . . escape./Not from truth--/But from despair;/ . . . a narrow escape/Into faith." (p. 14) The line is from Christopher Fry, "Comedy," in Robert W. Corrigan, ed., *Comedy: A Critical Anthology* (Boston, etc.: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), p. 755. See Fairman, *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature*, p. 81.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Comic Treatments of Jonah

Certain strains of Biblical interpretation provide a warrant, assuming one be needed, for a comic treatment of the Jonah story. Edwin M. Good in his essay "Jonah: The Absurdity of God" discusses the book of Jonah as a satire. Assuming the book to be post-exilic, Good maintains that in holding Jonah up to ridicule the author may well be protesting the Israelites' prevailing intense materialism and xenophobia. The mood of the work is ironic, and the comic literary devices employed include incongruity, exaggeration, and the ludicrous.¹

¹ Good, pp. 39-55. Good cites two commentators, Lods and Stinespring, who have suggested that the writer's purpose may have been satirical. Good, p. 41, nn. 3, 5. His reference is first to Adolphe Lods:

The curious book of Jonah is a satire, as generous as it is witty, directed against the exclusiveness of certain Jews who were shocked at God's patience with heathen nations.

The book of Jonah is an amusing satire directed against those who desired the annihilation, rather than the conversion, of heathen nations . . .

Lods, *The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism*, trans. S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937), pp. 15-16, 334-335.

Good's second reference is to W. F. Stinespring:

The book of Jonah presents a satire . . . like that of the earlier prophets. A broadminded Jew ridicules his own people, represented by the rebellious prophet, Jonah, for their lack of missionary zeal, prejudice against foreigners, and their failure to understand a God of love.

Stinespring, "Irony and Satire," in George Arthur Buttrick et al, eds., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 78.

Good finds no other commentators who have perceived the book of Jonah as satirical, and none who has seen it as ironic. John Mauchline, however,

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A second view of the book of Jonah as comic, though certainly not excluding the elements of irony or satire, emphasizes rather what

though without employing the term, implies an irony in Jonah's fleeing out of distaste for the Ninevites and the possibility of their salvation, and entrusting " . . . himself for this purpose to a group of the heathen whom he has so thoroughly despised"; and in these heathens' attempt to spare Jonah his drowning, and their sacrifice to the prophet's god. And again, in 4:24, Jonah " . . . contrasts the mercy and the love of God with his own selfishness and churlishness" without realizing what he is saying. Mauchline, pp. 43, 44. Scholars after Good appear to have followed more readily this line of thought. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* considers Jonah's conversion of the heathen, both at sea and at Nineveh, "ironical." Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University, 1962, 1973), p. 1120. The commentary in *The Jerusalem Bible* reads:

The book is intended to amuse and instruct . . . All the characters of this story are likeable, the pagan sailors, the king, the populace, even the animals of Nineveh, all except the only Israelite on stage and he a prophet! . . . the story is told with undisguised irony . . .

Alexander Jones, gen. ed., *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), p. 1141.

Leslie C. Allen avers that the " . . . literary tone is that of parody or satire," and that Jonah is a "ridiculous figure. . . . Behind him must stand a group of people whose mouthpiece Jonah is or whom Jonah caricatures . . ." He also agrees with Good that Jonah's request that he be allowed to die is a "subtle piece of ironic satire." Allen, p. 51. Millar Burrows affirms that Jonah is a satirical work, with Jonah made to appear ridiculous at every point in the narrative. Burrows, "The Literary Category of the Book of Jonah," in Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed, *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1970), pp. 95-96. B. Davie Napier considers the work "winsome, imaginative . . . slyest, deftest, most tongue-in-cheek, most charming and humorous . . ." Napier, p. 366. Elias Bickerman provides some historical perspective on the issue, citing commentators at the time of the Enlightenment basically hostile to Biblical literature:

. . . from Bayle's Dictionary (1696) to Voltaire's *La Bible enfin expliquée* [the philosophers] . . . made fun of Jonah's whale. Shaftesbury (1711) facetiously likened the unwilling prophet to a pettish truant boy, and Diderot (1746) opined that in his time Jonah would be sent to an institution.

Bickerman, p. 19. For a compact retelling of the Jonah story emphasizing the kind of irony perceived by Good, see Mary Ellen Chase, *The Bible and the Common Reader* (New York: Macmillan, 1946, 1952) pp. 236-240.

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has been called "the story's prototypical Yiddish humor."² Such interpretation is found most fully developed in D. F. Rauber's "Jonah--the Prophet as Shlemiel." Rauber cites many of the same humorous incidents as does Good, and speaks of the writer's technique as employing the devices of wit, irony, satire, outrageousness, parody, burlesque, incongruity, and exaggeration.³ But the fundamental difference in this second approach has to do with the comic *focus*. In Good's view, the prophet Jonah is seen more "objectively," as part of the ironic scheme of persons and events. God, who possesses the perspective to appreciate the humor, might be said to be the protagonist. In Rauber's view, however, Jonah is subject as well as object of the humor. The reader is more conscious of Jonah as initiator of the action rather than merely its passive vehicle. There is even room--though the Biblical narrative itself may not directly explore this possibility--for Jonah's wry appreciation of the humor in his own situation.⁴ And Jonah can emerge, in this view, as a man capable

² Thayer S. Warshaw, *Teaching the Book of Jonah as Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Institute on Teaching the Bible in Literature Classes, 1974, mimeographed), p. 13, n. 2. John Paterson, treating the book as essentially a universalist tract, calls attention to the distinctiveness of its moments of humor:

. . . There is a quiet lambent humor pervading the story, and it is not pushing matters too far if we interpret the story with a touch of Semitic humor. For the book of Jonah is an illustration of Hebrew humor. The Hebrews could really laugh, and what the writer wanted here was to laugh a ridiculous attitude out of court.

There is "a gentle humor" in God's method of dealing with his prophet, according to Paterson, as when God imparts a lesson through the use of a shady plant, worm, and hot wind. Paterson, pp. 275, 278-280.

³ D. F. Rauber, "Jonah--The Prophet as Schlemiel," *The Bible Today* 49 (October, 1970) pp. 31, 33.

⁴ While bad luck can be ". . . attributed to the disfavor of God, . . . the *shlemiel* knows somewhere that he himself stands behind the wings as the stage manager of his own destiny. He knows, with Heraclitus, that a man's character is his fate." Theodor Reik, *Jewish Wit*

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of insight, shrewdness, and compassion, capable of eliciting from the reader sympathy and even admiration. Necessarily, the allegorical thrust of the work (Jonah as a type for a xenophobic Israel) is diminished in this interpretation.

Rauber stresses, first, the highly intellectual character of the sort of Jewish humor which he feels the book of Jonah exemplifies.

Borrowing two categories proposed by Leo Rosten, he posits that

" . . . Jonah . . . illustrates the theme of 'reason gone mad,' while the Lord represents 'reason made mischievous.'"⁵

In all of his courses of action

. . . Jonah appears . . . fully as the man who is out of step with everyone else, the man who never gets the word. He is a *shlemiel*--a born loser. If he had been at Pearl Harbor, he would probably have thought it a fireworks display.⁶

(New York: Gamut, 1962), p. 41. The capacity for self-irony as a basis for typical Jewish wit is discussed in Edmund Bergler, *Laughter and the Sense of Humor* (New York: Intercontinental Medical Book Corporation, 1956), pp. 110-113.

⁵ Rauber, p. 31. The reference is to Leo Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. xxiv. Rosten sees Sholom Aleichem as epitomizing the latter, Groucho Marx the former. Bergler, taking issue with a view of Jewish humor as highly rational and logical, states: " . . . the opposite is true: the purpose of the Jewish joke is reducing reason to absurdity." Bergler, p. 112.

⁶ Rauber, p. 32. Rosten offers the following definitions of the *shlemiel*:

1. A foolish person; a simpleton . . .
2. A consistently unlucky or unfortunate person; a "fall guy"; a hard-luck type; a born loser; a submissive and uncomplaining victim . . .
3. A clumsy, butterfingers, all-thumbs, gauche type . . .
4. A social misfit, congenitally maladjusted . . .
5. A pipsqueak, a Caspar Milquetoast . . .
6. A naive, trusting gullible customer . . .
7. Anyone who makes a foolish bargain, or wagers a foolish bet.

The *shlemiel*, nevertheless, is always to some extent responsible for his

But Jonah is rescued from being *only shlemiel*. His "reason" may be "mad," but it is reason nonetheless. Jonah should have perceived Nineveh's "virtual orgy of repentance" as proof of his being "suddenly transformed from born loser into the biggest winner of all . . ." ⁷ Instead he is vexed. He holds up to Yahweh the unreasonableness of the present circumstance.

Jonah's argument goes something like this: "You gave me a commission as a denouncing prophet, calling upon me to preach destruction upon this city. But I knew, I knew from the very beginning, that you would renege. How did I know? I was absolutely convinced of your enormous mercy and your love. This being so, I realized at once that you were setting me up to be a fool and a liar. Really, Lord, you are a great trial to a man. But, you did issue the commission of destruction, and I did carry it out, although under protest. Now, the very least you can do is be faithful to your word."

Jonah is, after all, not only *schlemiel* but "*mensh*--a real man." ⁸

The comic treatments of Jonah are confined to a three-decade period, having made their appearance between 1920 and 1950. The comic dramas largely antedate the scholarly *interpretations* of Jonah as satire or comedy, only two of which were published before the 1960s and 70s. ⁹

own situation, as Rosten carefully distinguishes the type from the *nebech*, defined as:

An innocuous, ineffectual, weak, helpless or hapless unfortunate. A Sad Sack . . . A nonentity; "a nothing of a person." . . . A *nebech* is more to be pitied than a *shlemiel*. You feel sorry for a *nebech*; you *can* dislike a *shlemiel*.

Rosten, pp. 344, 261. See also Hirschel Revel, "Shlemiel and Shlimmazel," in Isaac Landman, ed., *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9 (New York: Krav Publishing House, 1969), p. 511, for further background on the term *shlemiel*, here defined as " . . . one who handles a situation in the worst possible manner, or is dogged by an ill luck that is more or less due to his own ineptness"; and Reik's analysis in *Jewish Wit*, pp. 99-101.

⁷ Rauber, p. 33.

⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

⁹ The relatively brief suggestion made by Lods in 1937 and the account by Chase first published in 1944. See note 1, above.

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The relatively brief Jonah-as-comedy era was ushered in by A. P. Herbert, through his short *The Book of Jonah (As almost any modern Irishman would have written it)*.¹⁰ The play is a piece of burlesque intended for the reader rather than for production. There is no intent here to explore the Biblical source, but rather the book of Jonah serves Herbert as a vehicle for whimsical commentary on the Irish character and on the British government.

In Herbert's play Jonah becomes Michael Flannigan Joner who as a postal office employee travels for the government. Joner returns from his sojourn in the whale and rescue from an uncharted island, to find that a statue of himself as a martyr has been erected and that his wife is about to remarry. Confronted by the loss of both Mrs. Joner's government pension and the possible revenues from sightseers come to view the statue, it is determined that Joner shall turn a profit through the telling of his whale story.

At the beginning of Hammond B. Gayfer's *The Subsequent History of Mr. Jonah* a narrator (The Ancient One) summarizes the events of the Biblical story.¹¹ Otherwise, the play does not deal with these events. Rather, as in A. P. Herbert's dramatization, it presents their hypothetical aftermath. Mrs. Jonah has resolved to divorce her husband. The issue this time is not that she had believed him dead, but that she believes him a liar and a good candidate for lawsuit on the grounds

¹⁰ A[lan] P[atrick] Herbert, *The Book of Jonah (As almost any modern Irishman would have written it)*, in *The London Mercury* 3 (1921), pp. 602-605.

¹¹ Hammond B. Gayfer, *The Subsequent History of Mr. Jonah: A Farce in One Act* (New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, London: Samuel French, 1936, 1938).

of desertion and probable infidelity. The one-act play, then, concerns the Jonahs' divorce proceedings. The focus of the play is not on Jonah's prophecies but on whether or not he was actually swallowed and subsequently spewed forth by a whale/fish/leviathan. The Judge grants the divorce, but without alimony. Jonah leaves with both the Little Blonde Juror and the great load of ambergris deposited with him on the shore.

The play is little more than a series of loosely-connected jokes. The language tends to be inflated presumably for comic effect. Stereotyped characters and stage dialects abound.

Lisl Beer's puppet play *Jonah and the Whale* frankly exploits the farcical possibilities in the Jonah narrative.¹² The henpecked Jonah gives as his excuse for not going to Nineveh that he must finish making the sewing box for his wife Mehitabel, who upon learning of Jonah's call from the Lord hides the prophet in a flour barrel. On the ship to Tarshish Jonah experiences intense sea-sickness during the storm, and is thrown overboard. The third scene introduces the Whale as a talking character.¹³ Jonah complains that the Whale's insides are dark and lonely; the Whale complains that Jonah tickles. The scene ends with Jonah deposited on shore.

¹² Lisl Beer, *Jonah and the Whale: an Original Play for Hand Puppets* (Boston: Bruce Humphries, 1961). The play was first produced in 1949.

¹³ James Bridie, on whom see below, pp. 122-132, in his stage and radio versions appears to have been the first dramatist to present a talking whale. The device was introduced earlier, in non-dramatic literature, in Robert Nathan's novel *Jonah*, where the whale converses with God and with Jonah, pp. 178-179, 197-201. The character Leviathan speaks in L. V. Snowman's "closet drama" *A Second Chapter of "Jonah,"* published in 1924. This treatment is discussed in chapter three, pp. 57-60.

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In the final scene Jonah returns home, whereupon Mehitabel begins beating him with a rolling pin. The Lord intervenes in Jonah's behalf, and Jonah ends up boss of his house. He resolves to go to Nineveh after dinner to carry out his appointed task. The play itself thus contains no Nineveh scene. The mood of the play is that of pure whimsy and farce, with no intent to explore the "meaning" of the Biblical work or to provide anything other than entertainment for the contemporary children's audience.

The first fully comic treatment of Jonah intended for stage production was Scottish playwright James Bridie's *Jonah and the Whale* in 1932.¹⁴ It is Bridie's work that comes closest to realizing in

¹⁴ Bridie, *Jonah and the Whale*. Murray Roston considers Bridie, if not quite the first playwright to employ humor in Biblical drama, at any rate the first successful one. Roston cites the earlier *Judith* by Arnold Bennett in 1918 as somewhat anticipating Bridie in this regard. Roston, p. 248.

James A. Michie in his "Educating the Prophets" discusses Bridie's humor, irony, and satire. Though Michie does not specify the version to which he is referring, the plot summary makes clear that he is dealing with Bridie's third version, *Jonah 3*. Michie, "Educating the Prophets," in *Modern Drama* 11:4 (February, 1969), pp. 429-431. Michie stresses the continuity between the Biblical writer's view and that of Bridie:

Humour, varying from the boisterous to the oblique, from the gently mocking to the astringently ironic, is the powerful solvent of spiritual complacency, ignorant and illiberal narrow-mindedness, and obdurate egoism. It is a humour that stems ultimately from compassion. This . . . was a quality which Bridie shared with the Old Testament author . . . Both obviously hated smug exclusiveness and intolerance; both disliked men whose religion separated them from other people; and both esteemed humility.

Michie, p. 429.

Roston lists a number of Bridie's humorous devices, though without indicating any particular precedent in the Biblical story. Roston, p. 279.

Eric Linklater offers an entertaining portrait of the dramatist as embodying in his own behavior the kind of comic outlook he evidences in his plays. Linklater, "James Bridie," in *The Art of Adventure* (London: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 25-43. Linklater affirms Bridie's ". . . prevailing

dramatic form Good's thesis concerning the Biblical source as ironic and satirical. Bridie, however, does not present Jonah as the prototype for a jingoistic Israel so much as a representative of fallible humankind in general. Early in the play Jonah explains to the visiting commercial traveller Bilshan that the prosperity of the town is the result of his never ceasing to " . . . wrestle with it and intercede with Yahweh for it . . . ," a matter largely of suppressing the people's manifold vices (p. 12). The people are not unappreciative of his importance and of his signal efforts on their behalf.

HASHMONAH: Jonah, the son of Amittai, has no soft side.

SHUAL: A fine soul. An excellent soul. We are very proud of him.

JOSIBIAH: He has done some great work in this parish and in others.

interest in the old contest between Good and Evil . . .," and suggests that the typical critical cavil at his dramatic looseness or inconclusiveness stems from a failure to appreciate his method. In the context of discussing the dramatization of Jonah, Linklater insists that

. . . an argument is the basic structure of many of his plays. They often resemble an intellectual wrestling-match, and his typical wrestlers are agile, brawny, and urbane. But in addition to the principal or basic argument there is always a company of little arguments, of lightweight wrestling-matches, for his conception of dramatic dialogue is a perpetual contest of opponent ideas or rival wits. His characters toss their ideas into the ring, and there they grapple and throw each other about in the liveliest manner, until they are succeeded by another pair. It is exhilarating to listen to a Bridie play in much the same way as it is exhilarating to watch a nimble bout of catch-as-catch-can. Sometimes, indeed, the very act of listening seems to become an athletic experience.

Linklater, pp. 35, 38. If James Bridie's drama appears paradoxically to draw simultaneous praise for its trenchant satirical seriousness and damnation or dismissal for its frivolous superficiality, the cause may be illuminated in the playwright's own observation that

. . . if you want to insult humanity, you must insult it in comedy. Not in a tragedy; it wouldn't be decent.

Quoted in Linklater, p. 43.

HASHMONAH: The taverns are empty. The meetinghouses are full.
The old practice repentance and even the young people
have grown modest and thoughtful . . . (p. 9)

The touch of irony in this rather conventional ritual of praise for the prophet, however, becomes fully revealed when at the end of the first act the townspeople express their great relief at the departure for Nineveh of this stern keeper of their morals.

It is with sarcasm that the Whale, appearing first to Jonah in a dream, refers to his importance and renown not only in Gittah-Hepher but even throughout the entire province of Zebulun! (p. 30) But Jonah's repute is not only parochial, it is based on oratorical show and a degree of sham sustained by his parishioners. The girl Euodias tells him ingenuously:

. . . when Josibiah speaks we all know what he's talking about, but we never know what you're talking about. . . except, of course, when you're talking about sin . . . and even then you tell us about a lot of sins we never even heard of.

. . . it's marvellous to hear you speak, Jonah. I think if you only recited the alphabet it would make us all cry. (p. 17)

Bilshan slyly suggests that Jonah's vaunted gifts are quite familiar in his trade under the label "salesmanship."

Before the first act is over, however, the audience is allowed to glimpse Jonah's anxieties and self-doubts--his humanness. Bridie instructs the actor playing Jonah, to ". . . convey, without extravagance of gesture, that Jonah is a tormented man, seeking contact with his God." (p. 19) Euodias learns that Jonah is having second thoughts about going to Nineveh, and offers him the supreme insult "Cowardly Custard." She suggests that he has no special power to strike anyone dead and is no good as a prophet, to which Jonah replies:

Yes. That's true. I can't. And I'm no good at all. (p. 19)

On board ship he maintains for a time for the benefit of Bilshan the pretense that he is not Jonah the prophet, but then forsakes the protective pose and makes full confession of his cowardice. (pp. 25-28)

When he finally arrives in Nineveh in the third act, Jonah is a changed man. Having discarded his travelling clothes to appear "once more in seemly rags" (p. 45), he delivers in strictly no-nonsense fashion the message of doom. The lessons Jonah has to learn are not at an end. But we do not again see him either exuding self-importance or running from responsibility. He has perhaps, in Rauber's terms, become not *shlemiel* but *mensh*.

In his final lines in the play Jonah recognizes three truths which he has been forced to confront. First, the universalist lesson has come in his realization of *God's* having spoken to *him* through such unlikely messengers as the atheist commercial traveller Bilshan, the pagan Ninevite women Eshtemoa and Shiphrah, and the young girl Euodias. "And the only time [the Voice of God] almost spoke to me directly was through that noisy, boring, smelly whale." (p. 61) Second has been the uncomfortable lesson that ". . . Yahweh may have a sense of humour"--an idea for which Bridie has already prepared his audience in Miss Huppelfeather's speech at the conclusion of the prologue:

. . . I have chosen the tale--
 Perhaps you know it--of Jonah and the Whale.
 Jonah, you know, grew angry with his God.
 The Eternal Father thought the thing so odd
 That He sat back among his seraphim
 And with unspeakable majesty laughed at him.
 That sunny laughter shining through the years
 Of hatred, murder, misery and tears
 Illumines still the queer old story. You
 Perhaps may sit and laugh a little too
 At Jonah and all prophets. They are men.
 Perhaps the Lord will laugh at them again. (p. 3)

Third, Jonah has learned that he is, after all, "only an ordinary man."
(p. 61)¹⁵

Bridie, as is typical in his Biblical dramas, employs a variety of anachronisms in "modernizing" his story. Occasional Yiddish expressions occur in the dialogue. At the opening of the first act Josibiah is telling two girls the tale of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." But in his more sustained anachronisms the playwright's purpose is satirical rather than merely playful. In the first act the character Jonah is an unmistakable parody of a contemporary cleric, pompously adopting a sagacity which is filtered through a fatuously pious humility. The prophet complains to the sentry about a nail protruding from the town's gateway.

JONAH (*with a very formidable gentleness*). I think I spoke about this before. I am fallible, I may be in error. But I think I spoke about this. (p. 9)

In being introduced a moment later to the stranger Bilshan, Jonah adds the invariable professional philosophic profundity:

It is always a pleasure to meet a wanderer; though what are we all but wanderers, if one looks below the surface of things? (p. 10)

The conversation turns immediately to a discussion of reality as objective or subjective, at which point Jonah evinces his readiness for formal debate, dropping his "humility" pose, and proving quick to take insult. A second example of the more sustained anachronism is the denunciation of Nineveh which takes place in the context of a women's literary club

¹⁵ In his autobiography Bridie comments on his conviction that the human individual may not be, in the overall scheme of things, of extremely great importance, and that the universe is not necessarily ordered for humankind's advantage or comfort. Bridie, *One Way of Living*, pp. 132-133.

meeting, to which the visiting prophet has been invited to speak on the topic "The Approaching Doom." (p. 47)¹⁶

In the character of the Whale Bridie introduces his most whimsical element. First speaking to Jonah in the latter's dream in Scene One of the second act, the Whale sounds rather fearsome and ominous. He proposes the thesis that, from a God's-eye view, prophets such as Jonah are predominantly a subject for mirth. In the second scene the Whale appears more personable in his address, though Bridie calls for the voice to bellow "from a dozen amplifiers in the auditorium." (p. 36) The Whale rambles on about the wonders of the world encountered in his travels, incidentally propounding the atomic theory of matter. Unable any longer to endure his three-day thirst, he ingests a mighty drink of water and in an instantaneous change of scene deposits Jonah on shore.

The difference in perspective between man and woman is hardly a novel theme in drama or in literature more generally. Bridie's own serio-comic version of the theme can be seen recurring and evolving through his plays. As a playwright Bridie is frequently likened to George Bernard Shaw. That comparison may often be rather too uncritical, but in terms of this particular thematic interest some similarities may indeed be observed. Bridie depicts his heroines as enterprising, enigmatic to the male view, optimistic, and displaying a concept of life which accepts and even celebrates its apparent paradoxes. The heroes, by contrast, tend to be more parochial in vision and loyalty, more rigid in belief and behavior.

¹⁶ Bridie names the women's society the Semiramis Club. Semiramis and her husband Ninus were the legendary founders of Babylon. In his radio play, *The Sign of the Prophet Jonah*, which does not include the women's club scene, Bridie names the ship *Semiramis*.

Jonah and the Whale illustrates Bridie's nature-of-Woman motif, to be more completely realized in such later Biblical comedies as *Susannah and the Elders* and *What Say They?*¹⁷ *Susannah* may serve to illustrate the maturation of this motif. Susannah, greatly appreciative of life and enthusiastic in cultivating varied friendships, is tricked into a compromising situation by two elderly and lecherous Babylonian judges whom she has affectionately regarded as her "uncles." To protect themselves, the judges manage to have Susannah accused of wanton behavior. The prophet Daniel, sternly nationalistic and legalistic, through his shrewd insight into the old men's natures and his courtroom adeptness, saves Susannah's life and reputation. Daniel admonishes her hereafter to avoid situations which can lead to such trouble, and to "go home and pray." (p. 63) Susannah wins the real contest, which is between herself and Daniel. She refuses to set aside her belief in the essential goodness of humankind or her determination to live her life in a joyful and affirmative fashion. She leaves Daniel staring into space, no longer entirely assured that God speaks always unequivocally to and through him.

In *Susannah and the Elders* and *What Say They?* a woman is the protagonist. In *Jonah and the Whale*, however, Jonah is the central figure. The germ of Bridie's life-affirming but somewhat inscrutable woman is in

¹⁷ Both plays appear in Bridie's *Susannah and the Elders and Other Plays* (London: Constable, 1939). *Susannah and the Elders* is a dramatization of the Old Testament Apocryphal book of Susannah, *What Say They?* a considerably disguised and modernized adaptation of the book of Esther. Bridie's tongue-in-cheek "A Lecture on Women" appears in *One Way of Living*, pp. 194-209. This piece in its concluding paragraphs takes up what Bridie depicts as the horror of women in self-organized movements or societies. His description of the phenomenon may furnish some insight into the ladies' club scene of *Jonah and the Whale*.

Jonah and the Whale seen in two secondary female characters. The rapid repentance of the Ninevites is as remarkable in the play as in the Biblical account. But of particular interest is the change in Eshtemoa, cultural bellwether in Nineveh and chairwoman of the ladies' society. Unwilling to adopt less than civilized manners, she faces the city's crisis with a thoughtful courage. She alone ". . . has not been afflicted with the sackcloth epidemic . . ." (p. 55) To Jonah's insistence that she should occupy her final hours with more important matters than dressing smartly Eshtemoa replies: "It takes generations of living among important people to realize that nothing is very important." (p. 57)

Euodias, a young girl in Jonah's home town, similarly refuses to adopt the somber, retiring attitude urged upon her by the town elders. ". . . I mean if we all minded our own business, wouldn't we die of being sick and tired of the horrible dullness of it?" (p. 5) As Jonah departs ostensibly to carry out his Ninevite mission, the final line of Act One is Euodias' "Oh, hello! They're dancing! Wait for me, I'm coming!" (p. 23)

It is from the young, winsomely impudent Euodias that Jonah has actually derived the courage to make his initial decision--short-lived, of course--to go to Nineveh. Had Euodias been permitted to accompany the prophet as she had requested, one imagines that Jonah's ignominious episode at sea might have been avoided. Euodias manages to turn up in Nineveh, with both her means of travel and her purpose left to the audience's conjecture, working as a cleaning maid in the women's society meeting hall. She is thus on hand to accompany Jonah to the place chosen for his vigil over the doomed city. At the end, still full of faith in Jonah when he himself lacks it, she offers comfort and support.

As has been pointed out above, however, this is Jonah's and not the woman's play. Euodias finally is unable to accept Jonah's claim to be no more than an ordinary mortal or the highly unorthodox notion that God can laugh.

For Bridie an attitude of rigorous, moralistic sobriety, seen characteristically as part of the male temperament, is generally a subject for ridicule. But the playwright is equally disdainful of a kind of opposite, hedonistic position. In *Susannah and the Elders* the Greek tourist Dionysos, devoted to the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh, is shown to be an extremely shallow individual. The same judgement in *Jonah and the Whale* is rendered the commercial traveller Bilshan.

Although Bridie has followed in sequence the events of the Biblical narrative, adding characters and scenes to suit his comic and satiric purpose, he has made a number of relatively minor changes for dramaturgic or theatrical reasons. For example, Jonah makes the decision to journey to Nineveh on his own without hearing any direct call from God. (pp. 14-15) Thereupon he almost immediately has second thoughts (p. 17), and before long is giving Euodias excuses for the necessity of his remaining in Gittah-Hepher. (pp. 18-19)

Bridie does include Jonah's psalm of deliverance, which no more than paraphrases the Biblical version. It is delivered, however, not from the belly of the whale but after Jonah's deposition on the shore. (pp. 59-60)¹⁸

¹⁸ Roston believes that Bridie has retained the psalm from the Biblical source to mark a major transformation in the central character, as Jonah becomes less a comic and more a tragic figure.

From the moment he accepts his fate as a prophet, Jonah is no longer the ridiculous figure of Gittah-Hepher but the inspired man of God . . . the thanksgiving prayer . . . dignifying Jonah, . . . restoring him to something of his traditional sanctity.

Roston, pp. 281-282.

In 1942 Bridie wrote his radio drama *The Sign of the Prophet Jonah*.¹⁹ Though some lines and bits of action from the earlier stage work are employed, the radio version is shorter and its humor is limited to the Whale's droll observations and to occasional segments of dialogue. The play's conclusion lacks the three lessons Jonah has had to learn in the earlier version. Rather the note finally struck appears that of the Biblical book of Jonah, an affirmation of the unqualified mercy of God.

Later in 1942 Bridie wrote what he referred to as ". . . a war-time version of my earlier play *Jonah and the Whale*."²⁰ Although the same title was used in production, he published the new version as *Jonah 3*, since it was indeed his third dramatization of the Jonah story.²¹ The number of characters is greatly reduced; and whereas the original *Jonah and the Whale* had been constructed in three acts of two scenes each, the later version consists of six scenes with no act divisions. Scenic requirements are considerably simplified. The result is a faster-moving drama, with the additional locales providing a heightened sense of action.

Referring to the two previous versions, Bridie says of this third dramatization: ". . . I was tempted to combine the two plays in a way

¹⁹ James Bridie, *The Sign of the Prophet Jonah in Plays for Plain People* (London: Constable, 1944), pp. 277-298. Gerald Weales briefly treats both the structural and the thematic differences between *Jonah and the Whale* and *The Sign of the Prophet Jonah*, p. 83.

²⁰ Bridie, *Plays for Plain People*, Author's Note, p. 220.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 219-276. Roston, p. 281, mislabels Bridie's radio version *Jonah 3*. Winifred Bannister mentions a fourth version ". . . prepared later, for television . . . called simply *Jonah* [which] keeps fairly closely to the final stage version, *Jonah 3*." In discussing similarities between *The Sign of the Prophet Jonah* and *Jonah 3*, it should be noted, Bannister implies an erroneous chronology with respect to the radio version. Bannister, p. 88.

which will make stage performance more practicable."²² Such combining is precisely the method he has used. Large sections of both *Jonah and the Whale* and *The Sign of the Prophet Jonah* are set virtually unchanged next to each other, with linking dialogue or action provided as necessary. The ironic satire of *Jonah and the Whale* is thus retained, but its focus tends to be restricted to Jonah himself. The effect is made more "serious" through the inclusion of much of the radio drama. At the conclusion of the new version Jonah evinces much more bitterness, and seems less inclined to accept the picture of himself which he has been forced to view. Although the polarity between Prophet and Woman is suggested, the theme is much less pronounced than in *Jonah and the Whale*.

The one Jonah play which could well be considered a dramatization of Rauber's thesis--the prophet as *shlemiel*--is Wolf Mankowitz's short one-act, six-scene, two-character *It Should Happen to a Dog*.²³ The comic tradition reflected in the play is clearly Yiddish, as is the dialogue. Isaiah Sheffer discusses the contemporary "Jewishness" characterizing Mankowitz's play and Clifford Odets' *The Flowering Peach*:

Both Odets' Noah and Mankowitz's Jonah B. Ammittai [*sic*] resemble the Yiddish writer Sholom Aleichem's immortal character Tevya the Dairyman in that they engage in conversations with God that are meant to show a relationship at once intimate and long suffering,

²² Bridie, *Plays for Plain People*, p. 220.

²³ In volume with four other plays, including *The Mighty Hunter* which also employs a Biblical figure as one of the two characters. Wolf Mankowitz, *Five One-Act Plays* (London and New York: Evans Brothers, 1956), pp. 46-56. Mankowitz's play does not, of course, draw directly on Rauber's article, as the latter was published in 1970. Rosten unaccountably views *It Should Happen to a Dog* as "adapted" from the respective treatments of Jonah by Herbert and Bridie. Rosten, p. 281, n. 2.

a relationship in which the browbeaten little man is not afraid to take the Lord to task and to scold Him for His irritating and impossible demands, like building an ark, or going to preach against Nineveh.²⁴

The playwright has made similar comments concerning his central character. In a prefatory note Mankowitz recalls the Old Testament manner of depicting the prophets:

. . . Jonah is somewhat familiar in his manner of address to the Almighty . . . a greater intimacy exists between Prophets and their source of instruction than does for the rest of us.²⁵

Jonah B. Amittai appears as a travelling salesman. He flees, he rationalizes his behavior, and he is able ultimately to appreciate the joke on himself. He is buffeted about by God, usually after he has put his foot in his mouth. An example is Jonah's assertion that he surely would have gone to Nineveh if he had not become trapped in the whale, just before he is vomited ashore at the foot of that very city. No buffet of God's, moreover, is ever sufficient to suppress Jonah's wry observations on the turn of events.

In *It Should Happen to a Dog*, called by the author a "serio-comic strip,"²⁶ Mankowitz employs numerous anachronisms. This device he shares with Bridie, though here the anachronisms tend to be not only more

²⁴ Isaiah Sheffer, "A Survey of Major Recent Plays," in Edward D. Coleman, comp., *The Bible in English Drama* (New York: The New York Public Library and KTAV Publishing House, 1968), p. x. (The 1968 edition of Coleman's work is a reprint of the 1931 edition, with the addition of Sheffer's essay.) Sheffer does not feel, however, that the dialogue of either Odets or Mankowitz is the equal of that of Aleichem. Sheffer, p. xi, identifies Mankowitz's Jonah as "a Jew from London's East End." It might be noted that Mankowitz himself was born in that district of London. See John Metcalf, "Wolf Mankowitz," *Atlantic Monthly* 198:4 (October, 1956), p. 88.

²⁵ Mankowitz, p. 46.

²⁶ Ibid.

abundant but more frequently for the sake of the quick joke. Among the many examples are Jonah's list of wares, his complaint that he must travel by ship because air flight has not yet been invented, and the Tarshish newspaper. The staging is simple, requiring only a coat-stand from which props can be hung, and a means for achieving thunder and lightning effects. Costuming is to consist of a mixture of modern and Biblical garb. The second character, Man, appears successively as a Sailor, the King, and an Angel. It is suggested that he may also set and remove all of the properties.

In the final scene a palm tree (the coat-stand) appears, bearing coconuts with zippers and a copy of the *Tarshish Gazette*. Then the tree disappears, and Jonah complains. The Angel helps Jonah find the lesson: as the tree is to him, so much more may that city be to God.

Then Jonah raises the question: God must have known how all would turn out. The Angel agrees.

JONAH. Then what does he want of my life? What's the point of this expensive business with whales and palm trees and so on?

The Angel, however, cannot answer this question, and instead complains of the vicissitudes of his own job. "It *should* happen to a dog."²⁷ It is left to Jonah to draw the conclusion: "We are the dogs of God." (p. 56) Such lines appear to make the point that God's ways are ultimately unfathomable, but that humankind from its finite position should not fret about that fact. Mankowitz's own comments would appear to support this view.

²⁷ Sheffer suggests that this exchange between Jonah and the Angel is in the manner of a vaudeville routine. Sheffer, p. xi.

As to the message of the story--"Why should I not spare Nineveh?" This is, one hopes, how God feels about Man--unlike Man who is less tolerant of himself.²⁸

Neither the mystery nor the mercy of God's ways, nevertheless, seems the "point" of this play so much as does the farcical victimizing and justifying of the prophet as *shlemiel*. Just before the curtain falls Jonah asks the Angel for a lift home, and they agree to stop in at Tarshish on the way:

ANGEL. . . . Did you hear that young Fyvel opened a café espresso bar on the High Street?

JONAH. I read it in the paper. He's a clever boy.

²⁸ Mankowitz, p. 46.

CHAPTER SIX

Adaptive Treatments of Jonah

Certain playwrights have employed the figure of Jonah in the context of developing their own particular theses or perspectives on human nature, society, political circumstances, or whatever situation happens to be of personal interest. The plot of the book of Jonah may or may not be followed. In any case, the Biblical source serves as a vehicle for the expression of ideas not necessarily related to the intent of that source. Whereas both the interpretive and the didactic treatments have as a premise what the playwrights at least take to be a possible legitimate "meaning" of the story as originally written, the writers in the present category find Jonah simply familiar enough to be useful in the presentation of the chosen themes. The primary "content" or dramatic focus is derived from sources other than the Biblical work itself. As Sister Mary Jeremy Finnegan, referring to the two "masques" of Robert Frost, states simply and well: ". . . although the characters are Biblical, they are living outside of Biblical times."¹ Or as Clarence K. Sandelin says of the writings of Robert Nathan: "Nathan's fantasy at its best is a displacement by which he makes Biblical myth and metaphor serve his interest in contemporary secular life."² Furthermore, unlike the didactic dramatizations this group of plays tends to avoid moralizing at least at

¹ Sister Mary Jeremy Finnegan, "Frost's Masque of Mercy," *Catholic World* 186 (February, 1958), p. 358.

² Sandelin, p. 149. On this and the following page Sandelin discusses this "displacement" in Nathan's novel *Jonah*.

the more obvious levels. Like the comic treatments, the six plays in the present group cover a relatively short span of time, all having been written during a period from the 1940s through the 1960s.

The earliest work in English of this type might be considered Robert Frost's *A Masque of Mercy*, written in 1947.³ A dramatic poem in one act, *A Masque of Mercy* was like *A Masque of Reason*, derived from the book of Job two years earlier, not intended for stage performance. The play does, nevertheless, illustrate well both the importance of non-Biblical sources for the dramatist's treatment of the subject and the function of the dramatist's own personal questions or vision in determining the theme. As "masques" the two Frost dramas do not call for the spectacle associated with the court entertainments of Elizabethan, Jacobean, and for the most part Restoration times. Rather they recall the debate between characters which represent certain philosophic points of view in a work such as John Milton's *Comus*. Frost's plays have been claimed to draw upon ". . . the Platonic dialogue, the Puritan allegory, and the closet drama . . .," "Horatian conversation," and "a Scholastic philosophy."⁴

³ Robert Frost, *A Masque of Mercy*, in *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930-1949), pp. 609-642. While Guenter Rutenborn's *The Sign of Jonah* was produced in Germany in 1946, the first performance in English translation was not until 1957. The George White adaptation, the version of the play to be considered here, was produced three years later.

⁴ Respectively, Lawrence McMillan, "A Modern Allegory," *Hudson Review* 1 (1948), p. 105; Reuben A. Brower, *The Poetry of Robert Frost: Constellations of Intention* (New York: Oxford University, 1963), p. 208; William G. O'Donnell, "Parable in Poetry," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 25:2 (Spring, 1949), p. 296. W. R. Irwin also cites the Platonic dialogue, ". . . though there is no Socrates-figure . . . no genuine dialectic, and no Platonic myth." Irwin, "The Unity of Frost's Masques," *American Literature* 32:3 (November, 1960), p. 304.

A Masque of Mercy is set in a bookstore managed by My Brother's Keeper, addressed normally as Keeper, and his wife Jesse Bel (the Biblical Jezebel). With them is Jesse Bel's sometime psychiatrist Paul. Just at closing time there enters the fourth character, Jonas Dove--bearing the name literally, that is, "Jonah Jonah" or "Dove Dove"--who is a fugitive from God.⁵ The city upon which Jonah has been called to pronounce doom, seen here as in many of the other Jonah dramas as representing civilization more generally, is identified as New York. Jonah is fleeing because he ". . . can't trust God to be unmerciful" and make good his threats--the complaint, indeed, of the Biblical Jonah at the conclusion of the Nineveh adventure (p. 614). Jonah is very much the legalist, insisting on immediate retribution by God commensurate with humankind's viciousness:

I don't see how it can be to His interest
This modern tendency I find in Him
To take the punishment out of all failure
To be strong, careful, thrifty, diligent,
Anything we once thought we had to be. (p. 624)

Paul points out that Jonah's attitude, however, has led him to greater interest in the doom itself than in its causes (p. 621).

If Frost's Jonah retains recognizable connections with his Biblical counterpart, the remaining three characters provide "answers" to Jonah which clearly reflect the poet's own assessment of contemporary culture. Keeper reveals a succession of philosophic stances, all within a generally "liberal" frame of reference. He is, somewhat superficially, a

⁵ The fugitive theme is emphasized early in the play through Jonah's reference to Francis Thompson's poem "The Hound of Heaven" (p. 610), while Paul comments on the matter in calling attention to the repetition in the character's name: "Ah, Jonah, Jonah--twice--reproachfully." (p. 612) Reginald Cook gives interesting brief descriptions of the four characters in his *Robert Frost: A Living Voice* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1974), p. 191.

Marxist. He is a poet and hence "a star-crossed lover." (p. 629) He is a secularized Christian, appropriating Christian doctrine when it is useful and prepared to "simply turn away from" it when it is not (pp. 632-633). He is tolerant of all points of view: "Live and let live, believe and let believe." (p. 636) He confesses to a caution in his commitments and convictions which he believes allows them to remain intact as he asserts that if

. . . you see too bright a gate
 . . . you will come to with a foolish feeling.
 When a great tide of argument sweeps in
 My small fresh water spring gets drowned of course.
 But when the brine goes back as go it must
 I can count on my source to spring again
 Not even brackish from its salt experience. (p. 633)

But in the final speech of the play, referring to Jonah and to himself, Keeper realizes:

We both have lacked the courage in the heart
 To overcome the fear within the soul
 And go ahead to any accomplishment. (p. 642)

While not agreeing on the poet's intended implications, many critics appear to find in these three lines--with their crucial categories of "fear," "courage," and "accomplishment"--the essence of Frost's concern in *A Masque of Mercy*.

Jesse Bel drinks a good deal, and has been seeking unsuccessfully the reality and the meaning of love. She recognizes that the problem ". . . may be lack of faith . . .," but is nevertheless ". . . only languidly/Inclined to hope for much." (p. 635) Paul is the New Testament missionary and letter-writer ". . . who theologized/Christ almost out of Christianity." (p. 615) He is an advocate of "mercy" both as a practical matter of attempting to remedy social and economic injustice, wherein the Christian's goal is close to that of Keeper the revolutionist, and as that divine forgiveness necessary to redeem the individual when

Our lives laid down in war and peace, may not
 Be found acceptable in Heaven's sight.
 And that they may be is the only prayer
 Worth praying. (p. 642)

Paul holds a distinctly Niebuhrian view of the Sermon on the Mount as intended to convict us of our inadequacy rather than to furnish a realizable model for living.

KEEPER An irresistable impossibility.
 A lofty beauty no one can live up to
 Yet no one turn from trying to live up to.

PAUL Yes, spoken so we can't live up to it
 Yet so we'll have to weep because we can't. (pp. 631-632)⁶

A Masque of Mercy is replete with satiric or ironic thrusts at, for example, the institutional church as a substitute for reading the Bible (p. 610), a religious superficiality which moves easily from polytheism

⁶ Compare the passage cited with such statements by Reinhold Niebuhr as:

Jesus admits that the ultimate possibility of human life is beyond the capacity of sinful man . . . Man as sinner is not unmindful of the ultimate requirements of his nature as free spirit. He knows that any particular historical concretion of law is not enough . . . and . . . he is not ready to meet these requirements once they are defined.

Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*: vol. 1, *Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 288.

Again, *A Masque of Mercy*'s theme of uncertainty and despair attending all human efforts, as expressed later in the same speech by Paul--

Here we all fail together, dwarfed and poor.
 Failure is failure, but success is failure.

--may be compared with Niebuhr's "The freedom of the self is such that no rule of justice, no particular method of arbitrating the interests of the other with those of the self, can leave the self with the feeling that it has done all that it could." Niebuhr, p. 295. Frost's view of the impossibility of perfect justice is resonant generally with Niebuhr's insistence, as revealed in a variety of the theologian's writings, on the relativity of the Biblical ethic. For Frost the inevitable injustice can be redeemed only by "mercy"--whether or not such mercy is indeed a reality. Similarly, for Niebuhr the contradiction between the demand of justice and fallible human nature can be resolved only by "love." Niebuhr, *Ibid.*

through trinitarianism and unitarianism to deism (pp. 614-615), and a kind of "fire insurance" as ". . . the discovery that loss from failure/ By being spread out over everybody/Can be made negligible." (p. 624) At times Frost's dialogue is simply punning, as when Keeper defines "analyst" as one "Who keeps our bookstore annals" (p. 616), or when he asks Jonah: "Have you any grounds,/Or undergrounds, for confidence in earthquake?" (p. 619) The incidental barbs and puns, however, do not ultimately cloak the poet's serious philosophical purpose. Whereas the earlier *A Masque of Reason* explored the enigmatic nature of justice, *A Masque of Mercy* goes on to treat the "mercy-justice contradiction." (p. 615)⁷ Jonah finally is convinced by Paul's assurance of the availability of mercy, and accepts the invitation to undergo a purgation in the bookstore cellar. Before he can descend, however, the cellar door is slammed in Jonah's face.⁸ Jonah fades from the others' hearing and, presumably, dies because in throwing himself upon the divine mercy he has altogether

⁷ See especially the exchange between Jonah and Paul, p. 626. William G. O'Donnell argues that Frost's two masques are quite dissimilar. O'Donnell, p. 270. Other critics have perceived an integral thematic and structural relationship. See in particular Irwin, pp. 302-312, and Brower, pp. 220-221. This unity is also suggested by Finnegan, pp. 357-361. John R. Doyle, Jr., proposes that the two plays are not "consecutive" but nevertheless "complementary." "Some Attitudes and Ideas of Robert Frost," *English Studies in Africa* 1 (September, 1958), p. 183. This article is essentially reproduced in Doyle's *The Poetry of Robert Frost: An Analysis* (New York: Hafner, 1962), with *A Masque of Reason* and *A Masque of Mercy* discussed on pp. 241-250.

⁸ Frost sent to Louis Untermeyer three versions (two in 1921 and one in 1942) of a poem on descending a stairway into a dark cellar, wearing monk's habit; and, in the final version, ending ". . . spread out in the figure of a cross." Frost's accompanying comments make clear that he is thinking both of his end as a poet and of his death. *The Letters of Robert Frost to Louis Untermeyer* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), pp. 130-131, 136, 331. Anna K. Juhnke cites the third "cellar" poem as demonstrating Frost's identification with his character Jonah, although what is at stake in her view is not conventional "salvation" but rather "selfsalvation" in which the poet is concerned with ". . . keeping what he is . . ." Juhnke, "Religion in Robert Frost's Poetry: The Play for Self-Possession," *American Literature* 36:2 (May, 1964), p. 163.

given up his own substance, which is his "sense of justice." (p. 639) The final note struck, in concluding speeches respectively by Keeper and Paul, is that there must be mercy if there is anything because we can never be convinced that we have acted justly. But critics have been unable to agree upon Frost's own attitude with respect to his play's dénouement.

Frost's own point of view has been identified variously as that of Keeper, Jonas, and Paul.⁹ Frost has been regarded as castigating science and technology, and as questioning the possibility of revolutionary or legislative social reform.¹⁰ Rationality and irrationality have been held to constitute the poet's paramount concern.¹¹ The quality of

⁹ Finnegan believes Keeper may be Frost. Finnegan, p. 359. Cook concurs, pp. 192-193. Doyle suggests that Jonas is, in part, Frost. Doyle, p. 181. Peter J. Stanlis claims that ". . . Frost's own ideas . . . are about equally divided between Paul and Keeper . . ." Stanlis, "Robert Frost's Masques and the Classic American Tradition," in Committee on the Frost Centennial of the University of Southern Mississippi, comp., *Frost: Centennial Essays* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, n.d.), p. 463.

¹⁰ Peter J. Stanlis declares that *A Masque of Mercy* reveals Frost's suspicion of New Deal politics, that Keeper is ". . . epitomized by Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose New Deal administration sought to 'homogenize mankind.'" Stanlis, "Robert Frost: Politics in Theory and Practice," in Jac Tharpe, ed., *Frost: Centennial Essays II* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1976), p. 78. See also Stanlis' "Robert Frost's Masques and the Classic American Tradition," in *Frost: Centennial Essays*, pp. 461-463; and Lawrance Thompson, *Robert Frost: The Years of Triumph, 1915-1938* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), pp. 656-657, n. 14. Harold H. Watts denies that Frost is ever either serious about or adept with social concerns. His essay concludes with a discussion of the two "masques." Watts, "Robert Frost and the Interrupted Dialogue," *American Literature* 27 (March, 1955), pp. 69-87. This essay is reprinted in James M[elville] Cox, ed., *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 105-122. John T. Hiers sheds helpful light on Frost's views of science, technology, and the proletarian revolution, in his "Robert Frost's Quarrel with Science and Technology," *The Georgia Review* 25 (Summer, 1971), pp. 182-205.

¹¹ Roberta F. Sarfatt Borkat maintains that both plays demonstrate the inescapability of unreason, since mercy as opposed to justice can be conceived in no other way, and that therefore for Frost the universe holds no comfort. Borkat, "The Bleak Landscape of Robert Frost," *The Midwest Quarterly* 16 (1975), pp. 453-467. Irwin argues that *A Masque of Reason's*

human *courage* is held by many commentators to be Frost's emphasis, with *accomplishment* alternatively considered of equal or of little importance.¹² The divine mercy, again depending on the particular interpreter's view, may or may not exist as a palliative for one's lack of accomplishment or a justification of one's courage.¹³ Thus the degree to which Frost shares a Biblical or Christian perspective, and the meaning of his Jonah's demise, remain open critical questions.¹⁴

Job and *A Masque of Mercy*'s Jonah are embarked on the same quest " . . . to find, if possible, in God a conformity with human reason." Irwin concludes that *Mercy*, answering the question raised in *Reason*, demonstrates that such conformity is not to be perceived; but he feels that for Frost this discovery need not be cause for despair. Irwin, p. 309.

¹² Doyle insists that "courage and accomplishment" are equally Frost's emphases. Doyle, p. 182. Marion Montgomery, on the other hand, feels that for Frost courage alone is of significance, regardless of any "accomplishment." Montgomery, "Robert Frost and His Use of Barriers: Man vs. Nature Toward God," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 57 (Summer, 1958), p. 352. Montgomery's essay is reprinted in Cox, pp. 138-150. Stanlis cites courage but feels that what is at stake is not ". . . the pagan virtue, physical courage [but] the Christian virtue, spiritual fear . . ." which is to be understood as the realization that we may never be able to measure up to expectations. Stanlis, "Robert Frost's Masques and the classic American Tradition," p. 465. Cook views *A Masque of Mercy* as emphatically humanistic, and believes the emphasis to be on the courage to act. Cook, pp. 193-194. Watts' essay will be found helpful generally concerning Frost's view of the person of action.

¹³ Montgomery believes that Frost wrote neither "masque" with cynicism, and that he intended both to uphold human courage and to justify the ways of God. Montgomery, pp. 343-347, 352-353. McMillan finds *A Masque of Mercy* upholding a New Testament concept of mercy. McMillan, p. 107. And Stanlis states:

It advocates living the trial by existence with daring and faith, on the highest level of which man is capable, and in the assurance that when this is done the rest belongs to heaven.

Stanlis, "Robert Frost's Masques and the Classic American Tradition," in *Frost: Centennial Essays*, p. 465. O'Donnell feels that the play is intended to illuminate ". . . a mercy from God, not from man . . ." and to suggest that such a mercy is available. O'Donnell, p. 279. Other commentators, as has been suggested above (nn. 10, 11) find courage--with or without accomplishment--to be its own sole justification.

¹⁴ According to Irwin *A Masque of Mercy* ends in ". . . an unorthodox synthesis in which peace and truth reside in a faith which is beyond the

Without attempting to resolve the several dilemmas which have attended the dramatic poem's reception, enough has no doubt been said to indicate that Robert Frost's own philosophic concerns significantly inform his treatment of the Jonah theme. William G. O'Donnell perhaps summarizes as well as can be done the poet's overriding preoccupation: "In Frost's poetry the radical isolation of the individual has always been taken as a basic experience, something that everyone must face in one form or another."¹⁵

A similar claim might be made for Robert Nathan, author of the 1952 two-act drama *Jezebel's Husband*.¹⁶ As Sandelin suggests: "The sense of

purview of reason." Irwin, p. 304. O'Donnell feels that Frost's ideas in this play ". . . are Christian in a traditional sense." O'Donnell, p. 271. Stanlis characterizes both "masques" in terms of a "religious orthodoxy." Stanlis, "Robert Frost's Masques and the Classic American Tradition," p. 465. O'Donnell perceives a synthesis between Keeper and Paul, with Keeper at least considering the validity of Christian belief. O'Donnell, p. 280. Dorothy Judd Hall discusses Frost's own "Old Testament Christianity" in relation to *A Masque of Mercy*. "An Old Testament Christian," in Jac Tharpe, ed., *Frost: Centennial Essays III* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1976), pp. 321-325. See also Lawrance Thompson and R. H. Winnick, *Robert Frost: The Later Years, 1938-1963* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), pp. 130-141. Irwin finds in Jonah's death a "purgatorial surrender" in which it is the old being which dies. Irwin, p. 310. O'Donnell agrees that Jonah ". . . must die to self" O'Donnell, p. 274. See also Cook, p. 192, and especially O'Donnell, p. 278. Anna K. Juhnke disputes the presence of a divine "saving" of Jonah, arguing that Keeper and Paul abandon any notion of help beyond themselves in favor of the truth that one must save oneself--though Frost delivers this message with certain ambiguity. Juhnke, pp. 161-163. For Borkat, Jonah dies short of attaining his goal, but having achieved a kind of victory in learning ". . . the truth about justice and mercy." Borkat, p. 456. Brower declares that Jonah at the end of the play acquires the courage to accept not salvation but failure. Brower, pp. 222-224. George W. Nitchie understands that Jonah's death is to be viewed as an affirmation, but argues that Frost himself is ambiguous as to whether this constitutes salvation in a doctrinal sense or defeat. Nitchie, *Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1960), pp. 169, 176-183.

¹⁵ O'Donnell, p. 277. O'Donnell suggests that this motif, sounded unambiguously in *A Masque of Mercy*, can be read from the play back into Frost's earlier poetry.

¹⁶ Robert Nathan, *Jezebel's Husband* in volume with *The Sleeping Beauty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953). *Jezebel's Husband* received its premier production in the summer of 1952.

alienation is common in twentieth-century literature, yet the very frequency with which Nathan treats this topic identifies it as his private burden."¹⁷ Like Frost, Nathan in his drama employs humor in the service of his serious intent. Indeed, as Sandelin points out: "Nathan elects to treat [the] human condition as comic, and the crisis and resolution of his play approach farce." This critic goes so far as to identify *Jezebel's Husband* as ". . . a situation comedy based on that old battle of the sexes also treated, but seldom with more humor, by James Thurber."¹⁸ *Jezebel's Husband* might in fact be compared more closely to James Bridie's *Jonah and the Whale* than to Frost's *A Masque of Mercy*. Nathan's humor tends to the ironic and occasionally the satiric. In Nathan's play, as in Bridie's, considerable sympathy is elicited for Jonah with his human feelings and disappointments. Nathan's tone, however, is less brittle than is Bridie's, his mood more marked by pathos and pain. Bridie has perceived the comedy inherent in the Biblical story and has embellished it with his comments on contemporary civilization. Nathan, rather, begins with his assumptions about human nature and existence, adapting the Biblical character to his point of view. Nathan brings to his treatment of the human condition his typically compassionate humor, but the admixture of pathos is stronger than in Bridie.¹⁹

¹⁷ Sandelin, p. 129. A further comparison with Frost is perhaps invited by Sandelin's characterization of Nathan as opposed to the ". . . urban, industrial, commercial and hedonistic forces at work in modern society." Sandelin, p. 131.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 88, 157.

¹⁹ Robert Tapley in his essay "Robert Nathan: Poet and Ironist" discusses the mingling of humor and tenderness in Nathan's writings. Tapley, "Robert Nathan: Poet and Ironist," *The Bookman* (October, 1932), pp. 607-614. See also Edith McEwen Dorian's summary comment in "While a Little Dog Dances--Robert Nathan: Novelist of Simplicity," *The Sewanee Review* (Spring, 1933), p. 140. Sandelin in a discussion of Nathan's

Jezebel's Husband deals with a Jonah in his fifties, at a time considerably after his Ninevite adventure. The social ambitions of his wife Jezebel have led Jonah to accept a comfortable life in their palace, where he devotes much of his time to domestic horticulture and no longer hears the voice of God. He appears content to rest on the success of his earlier patriotic prophecies under King Jeroboam II,²⁰ the fame derived from the sojourn in the whale and the miraculous wholesale conversion of the Ninevites, and his subsequent low-profile acquiescence in current political policies. The sophistication of the court enters Jonah's home in the persons of the King's chief councillor and two female retainers. Their commission to secure from Jonah a "prophecy" concerning Israel's continued prosperity, at a time when the Assyrian threat is troubling the populace, is supported by Jezebel at the promise of land and a royal title. Jonah's childhood sweetheart Judith--now widowed and the mother of five children--appears, troubling Jonah with thoughts of his early prophetic idealism. But he learns the difficulty of returning to the innocence of youth, in no small part because of his real attachment to the honors which can be bestowed upon the politically-attuned as opposed to the "true" prophet.²¹ The prophet Micah, here a young man again reminding Jonah of his own early days in the profession, comes with his

novels comments that ". . . folly and fraud seem to be tolerated by the patience of his sad exposition, and half-excused by his painful laughter." Sandelin, p. 50.

²⁰ Nathan utilizes the tradition that this Jonah is the same prophet who, as recorded in II Kings 14:25, counselled Jeroboam in his war with Syria.

²¹ Nostalgia for a lost youth is with Nathan a recurring theme. See *The Sleeping Beauty*, pp. 158, 184, 198, 203, where--as for Jonah in *Jezebel's Husband*--the month of April symbolizes this time of relative innocence and simplicity and the blossoming of adolescent love.

fiery denunciation of the Israelites and seeking access to the King. When Micah begins to harangue the local citizens with their coming punishment at the hands of the Assyrians, Jonah stops him with a party-line speech promising peace and security. Since he no longer receives messages from God, Jonah can serve only to prevent a fruitless stirring up of the people.

The Assyrians do invade the country, and prove rather more civilized than pictured by the Israelites. Tiglath Pileser himself attempts to persuade Jonah to become his court prophet. Beginning to return to his former self, Jonah declines, pointing out that Jezebel has for years suggested the nature of his prophetic utterances. The Assyrian king then offers the position to Jezebel, and as they prepare to leave, it is becoming clear that Jezebel will dominate Tiglath Pileser as she has Jonah. Jonah rescues Micah from despair, advising him to remain with his own people with a message of future comfort and reconciliation to God.²² At this point Jonah realizes that he is once again hearing the voice of God. He resolves to return to his true prophetic calling, promising Judith that they will be able to see each other on ". . . week ends and holidays." (p. 112)

The story of Jonah clearly held Nathan's fascination for a considerable period of time. His drama of 1952 is to a large extent a sequel to his 1925 novel *Jonah*, treating the prophet's youth and concluding with the Ninevite mission. Characters and thematic interests of the novel recur in the play.²³ In the novel Jonah appears as a popular young

²² Nathan thus makes Jonah responsible for the famous peace passage of Michah 4:3-4.

²³ A number of details are also carried from the novel into the play. The official substitution of an eagle feather for Jonah's less

prophet advocating, unlike such gloomy forecasters as Amos and Hosea, wars which prove both relatively easy and profitable. That early reputation and its cause are alluded to in the play. In *Jezebel's Husband* Jonah explains to Micah that he ran away from God when called to preach in Nineveh largely because God had allowed him to lose his girl. In *Jonah* that incident is depicted; and Jonah is seen subsequently, full of fire and determination, accepting the call in order to impress Judith who will doubtless hear of his fearless exploit. In the drama the Israelites, particularly Councillor Azariah, epitomize a blindly nationalistic vanity. Similarly in the novel chauvinism and the notion of the "holy war" are satirized. The universalist theme which many scholars find in the Biblical book of Jonah is emphasized in Nathan's novel. Here religious parochialism is satirized on two levels: just as the Israelites tend to think that Yahweh is exclusively their God, so Jonah feels Yahweh should be in a special way his personal deity and arrange affairs so that Judith could be his. By the time of the play Jonah himself has learned the lesson (specifically during his three days inside the whale) and is able to perceive the Israelite view as myopic.²⁴

It is perhaps easier to categorize Nathan's *Jezebel's Husband* as a modernized or adaptive treatment of Jonah than to identify specifically the author's particular "theme" or "point." Although ironic and satiric

impressive-looking angel's feather occurs in both works. In both works Judith sings the "Sharon Song" (*Jonah*, p. 46; *Jezebel's Husband*, p. 53). A song delivered by Jonah's mother in the novel (pp. 144, 146) is sung by Jonah in the play (p. 53). Other details are changed somewhat, as in Judith's uncle Prince Ahab in the novel becoming her father in the play.

²⁴ Nathan's own disdain for viewing God through restrictive sectarian lenses is expressed in his "On Being a Jew," *Scribner's Magazine* 93:6 (June, 1933), p. 372.

barbs are to be found in the play, Nathan's primary interest appears to be not in society so much as in the individual human being caught between the desire for purity of motive on the one hand and the reality of worldly success on the other. Critics find that Nathan's protagonists tend to be unable to resolve life's quandaries, and that the reader or audience is left with questions. Sandelin, for instance, regards Jonah, Jezebel, and Judith as the significant characters in the drama, and suggests that ". . . these three define the basic situation of all mankind in their efforts to acquire spiritual grace, mundane power, or mortal love without understanding in the least the cost and complications that might be involved." Sandelin goes on to claim that ". . . the play presents typically inept human beings floundering bravely or brashly in the familiar toils of human experience; our real pleasure comes from recognizing the small aspirations and follies which are the dimensions of ordinary life."²⁵ In addition, critics tend to discuss Nathan's thematic interests in terms of his works as a whole, finding a variety of preoccupations and insights emerging in full focus or to a slight degree depending upon the particular piece of writing. One suggestion regarding *Jezebel's Husband*, for example, is that the play is one of many works in which love between man and woman is seen to be at the same time wondrous and disappointing, with neither party ever able to change the other to suit his or her expectations.²⁶

Sandelin's comment on a later Nathan play, *Juliet in Mantua*, may perhaps be taken as a reasonable characterization of other works, including

²⁵ Sandelin, pp. 88, 89.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 135-136.

Jezebel's Husband:

. . . the unheroic nature of its characters, and the sadly comic situation in which man forever blunders through the mystery of his existence . . . suggest the courage, patience, and wisdom of the Judeo-Christian heritage--happily illuminated by candid Jewish wit.²⁷

Richard McBride's *From Out the Whale's Mouth* was produced non-professionally in San Francisco in 1961.²⁸ The play is written in free verse, and employs a chorus, appearing first as the sailors and subsequently as the Ninevites, as well as a Scene Setter who narrates the opening of each scene. The drama seems rather static, partly because major events are only described by the narrator, but more particularly because of the author's greater interest in exploring ideas and lyrical language than in exploring character and its motivation.

The play begins with Jonah at Joppa seeking passage to Tarshish. For no stated reason, Jonah is simply fleeing from God. He muses on the mystery of the universe, raising contemporary philosophic questions about the existence, the interest in human affairs, and the comprehensibility of a deity. The chorus of seamen engages with several characters, including the ship's Captain and Jonah, in poetic warnings about the sea with a hint of a man being swallowed by a fish. After the Scene Setter describes the storm, the seamen expound further on this theme and end in a bloodthirsty cry for a sacrifice to propitiate the gods. The Voice of God calls to them the name "Jonah," and they decide to ask that traveller the meaning of these occurrences. Jonah again engages in a poetic flight for a time, and then suggests that he be thrown overboard. The Captain is reluctant, but Jonah insists.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

²⁸ Richard McBride, *From Out the Whale's Mouth* (n.d., typescript).

In the interior of the whale Jonah complains that he has been too pious a practicing Jew to have to suffer such vicissitudes as are his. The Spirit of Festive Nineveh suggests as a compelling reason for Jonah's not preaching to the Ninevites that they don't want him.

The reformers never know
How the sinners feel.
That's why, so often, they fail. (p. 37)

Indeed, Jonah asks himself, why should he wish to spoil anyone's fun? The Spirit of the Sacrificed Jonah offers Jonah a justification of his situation reminiscent of God's answer to Job. Having earlier alluded to "my ancestor Job," Jonah now hears from his Spirit

. . . that it is unthinkable
To think about the unknown.
It's been here all the time.
Before anything we know or dream
It began forming on itself. (p. 41)

This Spirit proposes that Jonah should not question God's command, but simply do what he is told. Jonah's *being*, according to this spirit, will reside in his *doing*.

Let God make an individual of you,
Instead of dying a nonentity. (p. 41)

The Spirit of the Captain accuses Jonah, because he fled God, of having placed the Captain in a position of cowardice. Finally the Voice of God reissues the call to preach at Nineveh. Jonah decides that the mission must be undertaken, even though he cannot understand its purpose.

As Jonah preaches, the crowd mocks him. Together Jonah and his Ninevite chorus raise, without resolving, questions about the meaning of truth and the nature of God. Jonah recites a brief history of humankind, beginning in the Garden of Eden--where McBride typically but erroneously perceives sexuality to have been the sin of Adam and Eve. Here, as elsewhere in the play, the author appears to explore an idea with serious

intent, only to call into question whether that idea is being entertained at all seriously, with such lines as:

And children came so fast then:
 Bastards damned from birth,
 For there were no churches
 To join this first bed-bound pair. (Act II, p. 54)²⁹

Jonah concludes his sermon by informing the people that their destruction is inevitable, but then, paradoxically, instructing them in what they must do to be saved.

As the Ninevites come to Jonah and his Assistant to be outfitted in sackcloth, the audience learns the self-serving nature of their motives. The King sees the new regimen and his new image as a source of power. His megalomaniac outburst suggests an Orwellian *1984* society, with planned warfare to keep the citizenry blindly obedient, flavored with the tortures of the Inquisition. The Politico seeks to be where the action is, on the side of the majority. The Woman, representing the poor, and rather confused about the proceedings, asks:

Is this religion different
 From my--hope--
 My breakfast tomorrow? (p. 76)

Jonah and the Assistant find dealing with the Common Woman distasteful.

The Assistant cries:

We measure them now
 For sackclothes
 And religion:
 And what next?
 Will we measure them for chains?
 And will they thank us for that, too?
 O Life! (pp. 82-83)

²⁹ The second act ends with pages numbered 54 through 62; the third act opens with this pagination repeated. References to these pages will, therefore, be identified by act as well as page number.

A bit later, in the Epilog, Jonah reflects on the religious reformation he has wrought as more or less in the "opiate of the people" class:

Their thanksgivings
Ring in my ears,
And they'll remember me only
Till another magician comes along, wand-waving . . . (p. 84)

In the Epilog Jonah finds that the entire affair is still without meaning as far as he is concerned. He recalls what the Ninevites either selfishly or mindlessly made of his pronouncements. He doubts the veracity of what the Spirits told him in calling him forth from the whale. He concludes that he would have been better off remaining in the whale, where he might have been rewarded by fame and a better chance, as a martyr, of knowing God. Like all men, he feels, he only lacked the courage to choose that better way.

Some of the verse of *From Out the Whale's Mouth* seems weak or hurried. Jonah, for example, speaks of being ". . . swallowed/By this gluttonous grabber . . ." (p. 35) Later he complains ponderously: ". . . Now tears are forming in that region/Behind my eyes." (p. 39) And the Spirit of the Captain refers to that moment ". . . When you were sacrificed/To calm the qualm . . ." (p. 42) Of questionable effectiveness as an image, again, is Jonah's

As the windings of the whale's intestines
Are many,
So are the misfortunes
That fall on my poor head. (p. 34)

Nevertheless, a dominant motif does emerge, by way of variations on a permanence-impermanence theme. The portion of Jonah's sermon devoted to the history of the human race depicts a tumultuous succession of finite beings, institutions, events, and emotions. There follows suddenly a castigation of the Ninevites for their sins. The impression is,

however, that the insane "history" somehow justifies the Ninevite apotheosis of pleasure. Jonah's Assistant suggests that a people's fear is inevitably of disorder and change. Jonah points out that human beings, however, insist upon change as an antidote to boredom. And he goes on to predict for Nineveh a truly major transformation, into ". . . A complete new world . . ." (Act III, p. 56) The prophet is proved incorrect. He observes: "The King seems a new person." (p. 63) But the King soon reveals that he has abandoned none of his worldly interests and ambitions. The Politico confides that ". . . each movement/Changes my appearance . . ." (p. 66) Again, the change is superficial, or illusory, and a matter of calculated policy. Finally, the poor people welcome change. The Woman says:

I do not know whom to thank,
 And I do not know what
 To be thankful for.
 But that there is
 Some great change
 I feel sure. Yes
 Things hurry along
 So quickly now
 That the dark god-cloud
 Seems less angry today
 Than yesterday.
 Life in Nineveh
 Seems different already,
 And there will be a time later
 To see if
 The change is
 Good or bad. (pp. 77-78)

Yet, as Jonah observes in the Epilog, nothing at all in Nineveh or anywhere has changed. Looked at broadly, existence is a mad rush of transformations, births and deaths. Juxtaposed with this vision is the narrower perspective revealing that neither human nature nor human conditions really change at all. McBride characteristically makes no attempt to resolve the paradox.

In his *Jonah*, produced off-Broadway during the 1965-1966 season, T. J. Spencer likewise employs the Biblical narrative as a vehicle for the exploration of contemporary ideas and shibboleths.³⁰ Spencer, however--like Wolf Mankowitz--makes more direct use of anachronisms than does McBride. At Joppa, for example, the peddler Ezra speaks of "franchise," "consignment," and "a dormant market opportunity here." (I-1-4)³¹ The ship's Captain concludes at one point that the rumors of a city's pending destruction were started by real estate brokers.

. . . They've done that kind of thing before. They panic people into selling their property at a low price and then pay through the nose to get it back when the panic's over. (I-2-5)

Upon learning that Jonah is a prophet, the ship's Captain--whom Spencer makes a Hebrew--refers to him as "Reverend." After much haggling, Jonah finally manages to gain passage by signing on board as an assistant chaplain. Shortly before the presumed destruction of their city, the Ninevites decide to end the monarchy and become a republic, in order to demonstrate some sense of freedom and independent thought in the face of dire threats. As already implied in these instances, Spencer supplies his play with humorous incident more directly and regularly than does McBride. The business between the Captain and Bos'n over drawing funds for the crew is close to farce.

BOS'N: Sir: request permission to draw petty cash from ship's company funds.

CAPTAIN: What for?

BOS'N: So the men can get a drink, sir. They've never sailed before without being paid first.

CAPTAIN: Of course, good idea, Bos'n.

³⁰ T. J. Spencer, *Jonah* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1966, typescript).

³¹ As Spencer repaginates each scene, page references will be given as found in the script.

BOS'N (Writes on a piece of paper and hands it to the Captain):

There you are, Captain: requisition.

CAPTAIN (Signs the paper and hands it back to Bos'n): All right,

Bos'n. (Writes on another piece of paper and hands it to Bos'n, too) There's the purchase order.

BOS'N (Signs the paper and hands it back to Captain): There you are, sir.

CAPTAIN: Thank you, Bos'n (Hands him a purse) There's the money . . . (I-1-14)

Later, at sea, Jonah proposes that God really can't afford to take time off from Israel to bother with Nineveh, and rationalizes that:

. . . I am serving God best by sailing to Tharsis and preparing my arguments to change his mind. There isn't much point to his *having a staff* down here, after all, if he's not going to follow its *recommendations*. (I-2-13)

Spencer's *Jonah*, like McBride's *From Out the Whale's Mouth*, begins at the seaport of Joppa, here with much bustling activity and a variety of incidental characters. In general *Jonah* moves well, revealing a keen sense of action on the part of the playwright. The major characters who appear at various stages in the course of the drama represent opposing points of view, philosophies of life, courses of action. First, the Captain espouses what he refers to several times as "faith in reason and order." By this he means essentially that things ought to be done as they have always been done, as evidenced comically in his reluctance to approve new--even if more efficient--methods of loading his ship's cargo.

Jonah first appears as simply an Old Man, who angrily seizes and throws into the sea pagan idols being peddled by Ezra. Jonah, Ezra, and the Port Agent are all trying to get on board the Captain's ship, the latter two because they have heard that God has sent someone to destroy a city and assume that the city in jeopardy is Joppa. Jonah finally reveals his identity as a prophet, though without yet identifying himself as the God-appointed messenger in question. Jonah is pictured as not only a loyal Israelite but one who fancies that he knows better than God

himself the course of action the Almighty should pursue. In addition to prophesying Jeroboam's successful war he had in fact badgered the king into the affair, resorting finally to stirring up the people to demand war. Jonah claims that he is fleeing precisely in order to *ensure* the destruction of Nineveh. He suspects that God may be becoming more catholic in his tastes and that he might be in danger of repenting his decision and wasting his love on the Ninevites. ". . . A new image--or else a new policy. In either case he's wrong." (I-2-12)³² Later, at Nineveh, Jonah changes his mind and believes that the city will be destroyed after all, even though he has now preached repentance. "Oh, I'm sure of it now. I had a sign . . . A good extermination of the heathen is just what the world needs. I can hardly wait!" (II-2-4) The sign to which he refers is the withering of the vine, which Jonah takes as a foreshadowing of the desolation of Nineveh.³³

Ezra, who gets on board by taking the position of First Mate, functions not so much to provide a distinct alternative philosophy as to serve generally as the pagan foil for Jonah's Hebrew parochialism. Ezra does, however, speak of his Philistine father whom he remembers as an advocate of achieving world peace through the institution of large-scale international credit.

³² Jonah does mention, more traditionally, his reluctance to be proven ". . . the prophet of a do-nothing God." (I-2-12) Spencer also suggests the New Testament identification of Jesus with Jonah in specifying that Jonah is from Galilee, where "a common saying" is: "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword." (I-1-20)

³³ To achieve this irony, Spencer has reversed the order of the withering of Jonah's plant and the discovery that Nineveh is not to be laid waste. Then, as comic comment on Jonah's anger at the sparing of the Ninevites, the playwright subsequently has the prophet's *hut* suddenly collapse.

Once it is revealed that Jonah is himself that much-discussed har-binger of doom, the Captain, assuming the threatened city now to be Tharsis, resolves to turn back. As an alternative, it is suggested that Jonah be thrown overboard. The Captain, faced with such desperate measures to fend off the divine wrath, begins to wonder whether God really is as he had imagined the symbol for reason and order. The storm gathers. It is Zorgo, the non-English-speaking heathen chaplain, to whom the message comes that there is a sinner on board. And it is Zorgo who proposes (through his interpreter, the Bos'n) that lots be cast to identify the culprit. Jonah accepts his fate. And the second scene of Act One ends with Zorgo's startling line, suddenly in English (i.e., Hebrew): "The Lord is merciful; praise the name of the Lord!" (I-2-21)

In the fish Jonah finds two fellow prisoner-travellers. One is Ulysses, the other an incoherent, violent madman whom Ulysses has named Thersites. Ulysses is much more content than is Jonah to accept his circumstances and to deal constructively with the situation within the limits imposed by reality.

You will forgive me if I do not agree that I am here either because of my own sin or for your salvation. The only fact is that I am here. What I *make* of that is important, not what I think it *means*. (II-1-8)

Ulysses and Jonah engage in a debate over whether man creates himself as Ulysses believes, or owes his origin to and derives his purpose from a higher power, as Jonah views the matter. Although Ulysses clearly maintains the position of a kind of existentialist positivist, he does substitute the *poet* for either God or fate as the being responsible for one's situation. Jonah's actions further reveal his nationalist superiority complex. He argues that Thersites should be summarily judged as unworthy and executed for the sake of his safety. Then a "righteous

slaughter" motif is sounded as Jonah, deciding to resume his holy mission, is willing that the other two be abandoned to die in the fish which he has caused to go into convulsions in order that he be spewed forth.

The final scene (Act Two, Scene Two) takes place at Nineveh after Jonah's proclamation has been made. The Captain and other members of the ship's crew have arrived to deliver the prophecy, belatedly, and incidentally to sell a large quantity of sackcloth. They are accompanied by the convert Zorgo, who has determined to carry out the task left unfinished by Jonah. Ulysses enters, intent upon convincing the Ninevites to cease listening to prophecies and behaving in a servile manner. Thersites, no longer mad, has also been saved, and turns out to be Ezra's long-lost father, Zachary the businessman. Four major positions are now represented. Jonah insists that the Ninevites must repent, even though they are to be destroyed. Zorgo is convinced that if the people repent they will be saved. Ulysses advocates defying God and turning to more productive pursuits than prayer and penance. Zachary, still believing that ". . . they will have made the first step toward a great new world order," wants the Ninevites to pay up their old promissory notes which he holds. All but Zorgo are disappointed at the outcome. Zorgo, the one-time heathen, resolves now ". . . to bring the word of the God of Mercy to all peoples, everywhere." (II-2-16)

Spencer's *Jonah* thus ends on the universalist note which has been found to be common to many of the dramatic treatments of the Biblical story. Even Jonah finally learns the lesson, though his last speech expresses dubiety:

You raised me up as your prophet: a special man, leading a special people. And behind my back you give it out that one man is just like another in your sight. All right; so be it. It's a good idea. But who's going to believe it? (II-2-27)

The 1965-1966 off-Broadway season saw productions of two Jonah plays. In addition to Spencer's was that by Paul Goodman, originally written in 1941 and revised for production at The American Place Theatre.³⁴ Goodman's treatment is to a large extent comic. "Among the books of the Bible, Jonah is unique as the only comedy . . .," according to the playwright.³⁵ The 1941 version of the play carried the subtitle *A Biblical Comedy with Jewish Jokes Culled Far and Wide*. Indeed, Goodman's play may be compared with Wolf Mankowitz's *It Should Happen to a Dog*. Yiddish expressions are employed, and Jewish jokes told. The humor at the beginning of both plays is similar, with Jonah complaining to himself about the petty annoyances of everyday life. Mankowitz's title appears as a line early in Goodman's play: "It should happen to a dog to be a prophet of the Lord of Hosts . . ." (p. 134) In Mankowitz's play Jonah's plant bears a zippered coconut, in Goodman's a watermelon with spigot and glasses. And Goodman's Jonah appears equally to fit the definition of the *shlemiel*. Like Mankowitz's protagonist, Goodman's Jonah makes all the wrong choices; yet the Angel is able to say of him: "I love this old mixture of humility and a little absolute skepticism." (p. 140) Among the more farcical elements of Goodman's play are Jonah's violent struggle in Act One to keep the Angel out of his house, and the stage effects for Act Two which begins with the ship already at sea and the storm in full force. The storm, however, is only around the ship itself, and this is

³⁴ Paul Goodman, *Jonah*, in *Three Plays*, pp. 131-198. The earlier version appeared in *The Facts of Life* (New York: Vanguard, 1945), pp. 201-261. Scene Two of Act Five of the 1965 version does not appear in the original. Otherwise, aside from cuts in certain speeches, the changes are essentially in words and phrases. Occasionally speeches in the 1941 version are of help in clarifying Goodman's thought, and these passages will be cited where appropriate.

³⁵ Goodman, *Three Plays*, p. 199.

depicted by ". . . a tilting cartoon front that the actors play behind."
(p. 146)

Goodman's purpose, nevertheless, does not appear primarily comic. Discussing his play *The Young Disciple*, Goodman comments: "My purpose is not to teach, nor move, certainly not to please, but to shake your assurance. This is the High Boring Style."³⁶ If this observation characterizes Goodman's attitude in *Jonah* as well, the frequent breaks in dramatic action and desultory introduction of ideas may be deliberate. But the result is confusing, as the reaction of critics attests.³⁷ Confusing, seemingly gratuitous and unconnected, for example, is the brief shipboard discussion of death and evil, which Jonah suddenly interrupts to tell a joke.

Especially curious are the frequent New Testament or Christian references. On three occasions Jonah calls out "in the name of the Father and Son." (pp. 156, 169, 193) The pagan sea captain employs "The Mother and the Son" in a curse, while the Ninevite King calls upon "the name of the Mother and the Baby" in prayer. (pp. 148, 188) The Angel calls forth the plant "in the name of the Holy Ghost . . ." (p. 194) Such language has been prepared for in part, perhaps, in an exchange in Act One between the Angel and Jonah.

³⁶ Paul Goodman, *Five Years: Thoughts During a Useless Time* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1966), p. 24.

³⁷ Martin Gottfried's observation on the production can serve as an example of this reaction.

Jonah was impossible . . . It was . . . shabbily constructed, hooking music and dance into a script that provided no hooks . . . The entire business was effete, amateurish as only the far left can be, and terrible (to give you an example of pure leftism, Goodman insisted on amateurism as an *aesthetic*).

A Theater Divided: The Postwar American Stage (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1967, 1969), pp. 73-74.

ANGEL: . . . There will one day be good news (*He whispers in Jonah's ear. They talk unintelligible words*)
 JONAH (*Passionately*): When? If not now, when?
 ANGEL: All in good time. (p. 138)

But Goodman neither makes a point of the anachronism nor clarifies an attitude toward the Christian view of the messiah.

Goodman appears equally interested in and favorably disposed toward Jonah and the Ninevites. And he is disinclined to show dissatisfaction with God's attitude or procedures. Thus, while an examination of the text does reveal some definition of the respective positions represented by these figures, there is no real conflict between opposing points of view.

In his preface to the 1941 version of *Jonah* Goodman discusses his dramatic method and Biblical interpretation.

The difficulty in the BOOK OF JONAH is the motivation for Jonah's flight: the reason given in IV,2 must of course be accepted: "Was not this my saying?"--that Nineveh would be spared--"*therefore* I fled." But what on earth does it mean? Are we to take it as simple pique at having been made a fool of? This would hardly be a Jonah for the canon! Perhaps, more deeply, Jonah disapproves of God's repenting? But why then does he flee rather than criticize?--Indeed, *many* interpretations are given by the theologians to explain the passage; and what I have tried to do, as usual, is to incorporate as many of them as possible into a *system*, using especially contrary motives, as charity and aggression, as a means of psychological exploration.³⁸

One notes here particularly the intent to systematize varied interpretations and "contrary motives," which may help account for the play's ambiguities. Goodman's dramatic perspective is different for Jonah, the Ninevites and God. If the exploration of Jonah is "psychological," that of the Ninevites is not. The Ninevites are treated sociologically, with

³⁸ Paul Goodman, *The Facts of Life*, p. 203. This preface is appended in a condensed form to the 1965 version as "Comment on *Jonah*," in *Three Plays*, pp. 199-200.

no apparent concern for individual character motivation. The Angel of God, at the same time, represents a transcendent view not fully open to human understanding.

Jonah is clearly intended to stand out as a character from other figures on the stage, as indicated in Goodman's instruction: "Assign the actors double or triple roles as much as possible, to create the effect of a few character-types and JONAH." (p. 132, N.B.) In his "Comment on *Jonah*" the author explains the purpose of this device. "For indeed Jonah meets the *same* people in every situation, on the ship, in the whale, and in Nineveh."³⁹ Jonah's responses to his situations are as varied as the situations themselves. The sixty-five year-old prophet complains to the Angel that he will be the loser whether or not Nineveh is destroyed, since in the one case he will be regarded as a destroyer and in the other as a fool and a liar. He cherishes a philosophy of non-commitment which normally saves him from this kind of circumstance.

Because I have no confidence that what I say will come to good-- because I know, in fact, that the reverse is true--I have perfected a thousand ways of keeping quiet. I can show that many more things have to be taken into consideration. When I am hard pressed-- because people really need to *know*--I often lapse into silent sympathy . . . At least, when I don't commit myself to it, they can't say that the inevitable calamity has been my doing. (pp. 138-139)

The corollary to Jonah's position of non-commitment is his belief that prophesying should be avoided unless a clearly constructive result is likely. True, Jonah initially objects simply to the fact that all his prophecies are required to be full of doom.

. . . did you once give me some *good* news to cry out? Not *me*, especially, why should *I* be honored? but *was* there once some good news? . . . I'm not thinking of anything splendid, but just for

³⁹ Goodman, *Three Plays*, p. 200.

once an encouraging word--for instance, that the war *won't* break out, or that a politician will do a sensible thing, or maybe that Jessie will have twins and there won't be a plague. (p. 137)

But later the prophet insists on the *utility* of delivered prophecy.

If I *believed* in the destruction of Nineveh, that great city, wouldn't I hurry to the ends of the earth--and in the right direction--to cry it out? But where is any difference between that Nineveh yesterday and tomorrow? They've been going at it at the same clip for years--I know the whole story; does he think I lived in Gath-Hepher all my life, just because I talk with a provincial accent? Take it from me, prophecy won't do any good. The fact is that such threats, especially when they turn out fatally, are just what they thrive on. I'm a plain man, and to tell the truth, I never make a prediction unless I see a use for it. Some allowance has to be made for unexpected bad luck. (pp. 142-143)

In the fish Jonah has what are presumably two visions of the world and himself. As a tailor he is commissioned to make a pair of trousers for the Angel. When the Angel complains about the two weeks' wait, after God had after all made the entire earth in half that time, Jonah suggests that the Angel compare the quality of the two products. Jonah next appears as a young boy about to undergo surgery which seems simultaneously to be a trial.

This is really a remarkable case; did you ever before see a lad with too much savvy to act out what he himself believes in--because he has a keen suspicion as to what *that's* worth . . . Therefore, he acts on the negative principle of not allowing himself to be pushed. (p. 160)

Later the Angel chides: ". . . you intellectuals, who try to persuade other people, you first have to persuade yourselves." (p. 165)

Jonah's prayer from the belly of the fish is similar in spirit and imagery to the Biblical psalm, except for the note of sarcasm which Goodman injects: "It was you who cast me there and said *Swim! Swim!* My hands were tied behind my back: You said *Swim! Swim!*" (p. 162) His outcry leads to the reappearance of the Angel, with whom Jonah carries on a subtle debate concerning the appropriateness of his running away and against whom Jonah holds his own rather well.

In Nineveh Jonah is easily accepted by the people. He is flattered by the citizens turning his forecast of destruction into a popular song. When he finds the King despondent, with the presumed end of Nineveh near, Jonah attempts to cheer him up with a joke. When it is seen that the destruction has not occurred the people rejoice, some praising and some taunting the prophet. The mortified Jonah cries out the traditional plea that God take his life, and later indicates his displeasure at the loss of his plant. The Angel puts to him the customary "Doest thou well to be angry . . . ?" and briefly delivers the usual moral--with, however, a subtly comic emphasis on the Ninevites' inability to ". . . discern between their right hand and their left." Jonah finally conveys through a smile that he has seen the point, and the Angel adds a final interjection: "*Nebich?*" (pp. 197, 198) The word *nebich*, according to Rosten, has typically a range of meanings.⁴⁰ Goodman, who employs the term throughout the play, has earlier defined his use of it in Jonah's explanation to the Captain:

. . . it means that this big deal that you have is as *nothing* compared with a little secret that *I* know; so really there is no need for me to feel the burning resentment that I do feel; and anyway, I have my own ideas about the value of that little secret, such as it is. (p. 152)

So the joke is, in a sense, on the Ninevites. And Jonah is privileged to share in appreciation of the irony of the human condition.

The King, the one citizen who is said to think too much, after having imported for his people everything of possible excitement which foreign cultures have to offer, now fears that there remains nothing new of interest. Upon Jonah's arrival, it occurs to him that "Doom!" may be

⁴⁰ Rosten, pp. 260-262.

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the needed novelty. Furthermore, he reflects, the prophecy could be true. He therefore resolves upon a course of corporate repentance, using essentially the Biblical proclamation, and appoints Jonah chairman of a committee to attend to arrangements.

Later, on his knees praying, the King confesses that he is really not at all sure why Nineveh should be destroyed. In dialogue with the Angel he asks what God can possibly accomplish through such a measure, as opposed to allowing human beings to understand their sins and work the matter out on their own. The Angel gives only the cryptic answer: "You really don't have an inkling of what it means to be damned, do you?" And the last word is the King's: "No--frankly--I don't." (p. 190)

In his preface to the 1941 version of *Jonah* Goodman identifies himself as ". . . one of the playful Ninevites . . ." ⁴¹ In his "Comment" on the 1965 version, speaking of this ". . . guileless and rather child-like society . . .," he claims: "The mores of Nineveh I have simply borrowed from the principle of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees: Private Vices are Public Benefits*." ⁴² Indeed, in Act One the Angel in describing Nineveh echoes Bernard Mandeville's subtitle: ". . . the Ninevites are honest enough to admit the relation between their private vices and their public benefits." (p. 141)

Mandeville's ". . . central thesis concerning the social and economic utility of men's moral imperfections" ⁴³ no doubt provides the key to Goodman's puzzling simultaneous condemnation and approval of the

⁴¹ Goodman, *The Facts of Life*, p. 204.

⁴² Goodman, *Three Plays*, p. 200. The comment appears in different form in the 1941 preface, *The Facts of Life*, p. 204.

⁴³ Richard I. Cook, *Bernard Mandeville*, Sylvia E. Bowman, ed., Twayne's English Authors Series, no. 170 (New York: Twayne, 1974), p. 128.

Ninevite culture. In Mandeville's argument ". . . vice is the foundation of national prosperity and happiness."⁴⁴ Thus while individual human self-serving may be considered "wrong," its contribution to a more enjoyable corporate life may be regarded as a benefit. "Since you will be wicked in any case . . . whether your country is prosperous or not, you might as well be wicked and prosperous." Nevertheless, this view is to be maintained ". . . always with the proviso that all this happiness is wicked; that, if it were only possible, it would be better to abandon it."⁴⁵ Mandeville's position is more solidly justified, according to Richard I. Cook, in his perception that our "morals" are essentially hypocritical and our "virtues" maintained largely as a matter of social convention.⁴⁶

Goodman's Ninevites have dispensed with social convention. The King, in the 1941 *Jonah*, explains the idea of individual freedom as public policy:

. . . the idea was to substitute *interior* imperialism for the *exterior* imperialism. Interior imperialism within the soul of each man. I mean, the idea was to go to the extremes in the soul and exploit them--the extremes of unbridled feelings and instincts and any notion that happened to pop in to your minds . . . for my own territory I reserved the exploitation of the extreme of moderation. (p. 243)⁴⁷

The policy leads to what the King understands to be a reasonable manner of dealing with the world which God has created. He complains to the Angel:

⁴⁴ F. B. Kaye, Introduction to Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Benefits* (London: Oxford University, 1924), vol. 1, p. xlvii.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 1-1i.

⁴⁶ Cook, *Bernard Mandeville*, pp. 117-123.

⁴⁷ The speech in the 1965 version lacks this explication. See Goodman, *Three Plays*, p. 174.

. . . if I could see what it is that my people are to repent of . . . do you think we would not accept the consequences? What kind of people do you think we are? . . . Is it our little experiments, always within the possibilities of the natural world, that the Creator of the natural world has found to condemn? (pp. 189-190)

For Goodman, then, the Ninevite society is close to his vision of the ideal. He in fact declares that the Empire City, as Nineveh is called in his play, ". . . might be, all things considered, the best option for our own Empire City."⁴⁸

Finally, as the third party in the dialogue, God accepts the Ninevite solution to the problem of how to live well while insisting that because of human finitude that solution cannot be considered the last word. Responding to the King's query, quoted above, as to how God could condemn his people who merely deal honestly with existence as given them, the Angel in the 1941 version states:

This reasoning is not satisfactory. You make a false abstraction from the people committing these acts--which is the real topic--and argue about the actions themselves, which are what they are. . . . But *you yourself* have said that in these little experiments, as you call them, *you have come to a pause*.

. . . .

It is not your wisdom that will save you tonight, but the fact that such a perfect fool cannot but be innocent at heart. . . . You

⁴⁸ Goodman, *Three Plays*, p. 200. For a discussion of the good and humanly fulfilling society see Paul and Percival Goodman, *Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1947, 1960); especially the "Conclusion," pp. 218-224, in which the Goodmans emphasize cultural openness, equality of the availability of experience, and human as opposed to social engineering values. In *Growing Up Absurd* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1956, 1960) Paul Goodman explains what he sees to be wrong with our present technological and depersonalized society. See also his preface to *The Society I Live in Is Mine* (New York: Horizon, 1962), pp. vii-x; *Like a Conquered Province: The Moral Ambiguity of America* (New York: Random House, 1966, 1967); *Utopian Essays and Practical Solutions* (New York: Random House, 1950, etc.); *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative* (New York: Random House, 1970); and the "decentralist" argument of *People or Personnel: Decentralizing and the Mixed System* (New York: Random House, 1963, 1964, 1965). *The Empire City*, a kind of novel-cum-social-commentary published prior to the earlier version of *Jonah*, suggests both Goodman's critique of society and Mandeville's social theory. Goodman, *The Empire City* (New York: Macmillan, 1942, 1946, 1959).

have not come to even an inkling of what it means to be damned.
(pp. 254-255)⁴⁹

Guenter Rutenborn's title, *The Sign of Jonah*, alerts the playgoer to the fact that Jesus' reference to Jonah in the New Testament is at least as important to the dramatic action of the play as is the Old Testament book of Jonah.⁵⁰ Rutenborn in fact quotes Luke 11:29-32 as a headnote to the script. White quotes the passage from the Revised Standard Version:

. . . he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here." (p. 5)⁵¹

⁴⁹ Compare the 1965 version in which Goodman gives the final word not to the Angel but to the King: "No--frankly--I don't." (p. 180)

⁵⁰ Guenter Rutenborn, *The Sign of Jonah: A Play in Nine Scenes*, trans. George White (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960). This second English version of Rutenborn's drama, to be considered in the present study, is really an *adaptation* for the off-Broadway stage. The earlier translation by Bernhard Ohse and Gerhard Elston, withdrawn from circulation upon publication of the White version and presently unavailable from any source, followed more closely the German original. Tom F. Driver, who finds the White much the inferior work, compares the two versions in "Metaphor into Simile," *The Christian Century* 77:43 (October 26, 1960), pp. 1250-1251. *Das Zeichen des Jona* was first produced in East Germany by a church group in 1947, and then played between 500 and 1,000 performances professionally in West Berlin and on tour. The Ohse and Elston English version was given three performances at Union Theological Seminary in New York in May of 1957, and subsequently was produced by American church groups. The White version opened on September 8, 1960, at the Players' Theatre in New York, for 53 performances. "The Sentencing of God," *Time* 69:19 (May 13, 1957), p. 72; Bauland, pp. 212-213. While historians of the modern German theater by and large ignore Rutenborn, Bauland places the pastor-dramatist in impressive company: "Among the most promising [of new German-language dramatists] are: Karl Wittlinger, Herman Gressieker, Guenter Rutenborn, Rolf Hochhuth, and Peter Weiss." Bauland, p. 210.

⁵¹ See also Matthew 12:39-42 and 16:4.

The Stage Manager calls attention to the fact that the author has "inserted a motto at the head of this script" as a sign for the people of the twentieth century (p. 85).⁵² The time is the period immediately following the Second World War, although the dramatic occasion is the final judgment referred to in the Luke passage. While the play's characters allude to incidents of the book of Jonah, that book does not provide the plot. Rutenborn employs other Old and New Testament sources as well. The actress who plays the Ninevite Queen also appears as the Queen of the South (or Sheba) whose visit to King Solomon is recorded in I Kings 10:1-13. And her initial entrance, in costume suggested by the description in Revelation 17:4, is as the Queen of Babylon. Another important source is the narration in Daniel 3 of the casting of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego into the furnace of fire.⁵³

Tom F. Driver characterizes Rutenborn's one-act, nine-scene drama as

⁵² Rutenborn sees the sign of Jonah, employed by Jesus, as

. . . of a double kind. Just as His utterances were directed to the heathen, so His gospel, too, should be preached to the heathen after His own people have rejected it. Jonah's confinement in the fish becomes a prophetic prototype of Him who on the third day rose from the dead.

Because Jonah preached to a great city, it seemed obvious to quote him when I made the decision to preach to a metropolitan city (by request) through the medium of the theater.

Guenter Rutenborn, "The Book of Jonah," in *The Word Was God: Book by Book through the Book of Books*, trans. Elmer E. Foelber (New York, Edinburgh, Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1959), p. 148.

⁵³ An interesting comparison can be made to Olov Hartman's use of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, the Queen of Babylon, and the fiery furnace--again intended to have contemporary application--in his liturgical drama *The Fiery Furnace*, in *Three Church Dramas*, trans. Brita Stendahl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), pp. 143-145. Hartman's liturgical *Prophet and Carpenter* will be treated in the next chapter.

. . . in part a well managed allegory and in part an intriguing piece of symbolism. I mean allegory both in its broad sense of "speaking about one thing while supposedly speaking about another," and in the narrower sense of a work that has characters who represent abstractions. The Man in the Street, the Woman in the Street and the Queen of the South are straight allegorical figures. They represent all citizens and their governors at the court of last judgment. The other figures--Jonah, the Judge, the archangels--are not sustained allegorical figures in that sense. They are symbolic figures, and like many good symbols each of them represents more than one thing at a given moment and at different times.⁵⁴

While Driver's differentiation of the allegorical from the symbolic is helpful, the characters of the play are not neatly separated into two types. All, for example, at one time or other reveal themselves as German citizens recently under the Nazi regime. A more apt characterization of Rutenborn's approach both to history and to dramatic character and incident might be as *parable*, rather than as allegory, symbol, or analogy. William Stringfellow in his essay "Do We Need a New Barmen Declaration?" well expresses Rutenborn's method, though making no reference to Rutenborn or *The Sign of Jonah*. Stringfellow is addressing what he feels to be a tendency toward overly facile comparisons between the Germany of 1934 and the United States of 1973:

I do not imply that there are no appropriate comparisons to be ventured or no significant similarities to be noticed. But I find that history "repeats" itself as parable, rather than analogue, and that the edifying similarities are topical rather than eventful, having to do with perennial issues embodied in changing circumstances from time to time instead of with any factual duplication transposed from one time to another.⁵⁵

Topical similarities are precisely those revealed by the characters of *The Sign of Jonah* as they step in and out of various Biblical roles, become themselves using their real names, become ex-Nazis or ex-victims

⁵⁴ Driver, "Metaphor into Simile," p. 1250.

⁵⁵ William Stringfellow, "Do We Need a New Barmen Declaration?," *Post American* 3:3 (April, 1974), p. 12.

of the Nazi regime. Biblical incidents confront the actors with "perennial issues" in such a way that they cannot bear to explore further the meaning of events of their own time, and call for a different script to play. If Rutenborn's drama has specific reference to post-war Germany, his parabolic, dialectic method has provided relevance for performance in later times and other countries. In his *The Word Was God* Rutenborn makes clear his understanding of the process:

As regularly happens in matters of faith, the Word of the Bible becomes one's own affair. Surrealistic technique permits this kind of equating on the stage without further ado.⁵⁶

The perception of the relevance of history, Biblical and secular, as parabolic makes possible the considerable force of irony in *The Sign of Jonah*. In the opening scene, endeavoring to convince Jonah to begin the play despite Jonah's conviction that everyone in the audience will have forgotten yesterday's atrocities, the Judge tells of his experience in a train wreck.

We were able to remain calm . . . because we had been conditioned by our experiences during the war. So you see, the memories have remained alive. (p. 15)⁵⁷

There is both theological and, in temporal terms, chronological irony in the condemnation of God at the climax of the trial. Driver succinctly summarizes this action:

The conclusion the investigation leads to over the protest of Jonah is that none of those present is guilty . . . except God himself. Once they think of it it seems obvious that God is guilty, for it is he who has fashioned men and institutions as they are. The witnesses therefore sentence God to suffer the punishments men suffer: pain, humiliation, loneliness and death. The Judge and the angels depart to deliver the sentence. In the silent interval

⁵⁶ Rutenborn, *The Word Was God*, p. 148.

⁵⁷ In Rutenborn's original, it should be noted, Jonah begins immediately with his lengthy self-introduction to the audience. The preparatory scene between Judge and Jonah has been added by White.

that follows . . . the audience becomes aware of one of the most astounding of all ironies: that they who are guilty pass sentence upon their Judge, but that the Judge, who is innocent, is willing to accept the verdict and the sentence of the guilty. And one thing more: he is not only willing to do this, he has already done it.⁵⁸

For Rutenborn history has a mid-point in the event of Christ, and the time after that point is qualitatively different from the time before. As in the passage quoted from Luke, ". . . something greater than Jonah is here." Rutenborn's parabolic use of a variety of contemporary and Biblical moments and persons is informed by Jesus' prophetic reference to Jonah and the Ninevites. The shifting back and forth between the Biblical and the contemporary enhances the understanding of both, without suggesting repetition. Time is not cyclical, with events repeating themselves. But neither is time simply linear. The play has no division into acts; does not observe the "unities" of time or place or even action; in fact has no real plot but rather presents a succession of statements, questions, challenges.⁵⁹ Dramatic time, like historical time, is dialectical, with each resolution or synthesis becoming a new thesis to be questioned or attacked, a new crisis to be addressed. A variety of tensions is maintained through the working of Rutenborn's dialectic: the tension between ideas (who really is guilty?), between Biblical and contemporary character, between actor and role, between stage and the real world, between a realistic style and natural dialogue and a theatrical style and poetic dialogue.

⁵⁸ Driver, "Metaphor into Simile," p. 1250.

⁵⁹ Peter Bauland in *The Hooded Eagle* comments: "The play is . . . an analysis of a Biblical play by modern men rather than the play itself." Bauland, p. 212. This observation, however, fails to take account of the dynamic tension which is created through the juxtaposition of Biblical and modern.

The further tension between player and audience is created in part through what is now the familiar device of characters emerging from the audience to join those on stage. But Rutenborn creates ambiguities even here. The first three witnesses--Man in the Street, Woman in the Street, and Queen--indeed step onto the stage from the auditorium, presumably representing the men and women in the audience. But they are so costumed that there is little question that they are "plants." Later, however, the Merchant rushes forward to interrupt the proceedings. He is not costumed theatrically, never assumes a role other than that of German businessman Ernest Tiemann, and remains standing apart from the other characters through the remainder of the performance. While the Merchant's representation of the audience is more consistent, the character's name nevertheless is not the same as the actor's name listed in the program, and the theatrical is still in tension with the "realistic."

A tension within audience members themselves is created by Rutenborn's theatrical realization of what Driver has termed the "dialectic of justification by faith."⁶⁰ Are we ourselves, finally, the judges or the judged? Our guilt has been removed by the one we have accused, who has already submitted to the sentence. But, paradoxically, since we do not admit our guilt, that guilt cannot be removed. The dialectic is not terminated as at the end of the play we are faced with two possibilities. No doubt we are all at the same time both guilty and innocent. We can, furthermore, *become* guilty or innocent. Perception of the perennial issues presented in history and Scripture will be needed for the right choice.

⁶⁰ Lecture delivered at Union Theological Seminary in 1960.

As previous critics have noted, Rutenborn's dialectical technique owes a considerable debt to the theory and practice of Bertolt Brecht.⁶¹ Driver finds the Brecht-inspired dialectic peculiarly appropriate for a distinctively Protestant drama, arguing that Rutenborn's theology dictates his use of the dialectical approach.

⁶¹ Peter Bauland calls attention to Rutenborn's place in the tradition of expressionist theater generally, commenting in regard to contemporary German-language drama that ". . . in the main the manifestations of the technique are . . . restrained and selective, as in the work of Dürrenmatt, Frisch, Rutenborn, Gresseiker, and Wittlinger." As immediate sources for Rutenborn's dramatic method Bauland cites Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, and Thornton Wilder. Bauland, pp. 94, 212. Driver lists as major influences on Rutenborn Brecht, Pirandello, and George Bernard Shaw. Driver, "Metaphor into Simile," p. 1250. Elsewhere Driver argues, more specifically, that ". . . Pirandello looked upon truth and illusion with the same bifocal vision with which Pastor Rutenborn looks upon guilt and innocence." Then, turning to Brecht, Driver avers that his use of

. . . dialectic gives him a positive-negative attitude toward the stage itself. The audience is constantly being swept away by the action on the stage, then forcibly reminded of its presence in the theatre. One's total self and the self which would like to be "lost in the play" are brought into dialogue. . .

Tom F[aw] Driver, "Thesis for a Playwright Still in Hiding," in Finley Eversole, ed., *Christian Faith and the Contemporary Arts* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1962), pp. 143-144. Driver's essay appeared earlier in a somewhat expanded form in *Motive* 18:7 (April, 1958), pp. 2-4. The discussion of *The Sign of Jonah* is, however, unchanged in the version published in the Eversole anthology.

A dialectical movement has been noted by one scholar in the book of Jonah itself. "The thesis of Jeremiah and the antithesis of the prophet Jonah are reconciled and surmounted in a so-to-say Hegelian synthesis by the author of the book, who . . . wrote a parable for Jerusalem . . . to show that God's mercy saves even the worst sinners." Bickerman, p. 44.

One other dramatist in the present group has been identified as employing a dialectical approach. In his analysis of Robert Frost's *A Masque of Mercy*, O'Donnell finds that: "The religious ideas in the poem [are] expressed with a dialectical subtlety . . ." O'Donnell's essay is largely an exploration of this dialectic, which he considers to end in a synthesis of ideas. O'Donnell, pp. 269-282. In *The Sign of Jonah*, however, the dialectic serves more comprehensively as a dramatic technique, governing not only ideas but also events, the identity of characters, and stagecraft.

Now the Protestant playwright . . . must affirm the very tradition, the very faith, the very law, over against which he would stand in judgment . . . Even when he addresses an audience of churchgoers, most often he confronts persons whose awareness of the great Christian tradition is vague. He must therefore teach them the law in the same breath that he proclaims to them freedom from the law. He must make them religious and redeem them from religiosity in the same moment. In short, he must speak with a Yes and a No. He must . . . become dialectical.⁶²

In the carrying out of the play's dialectic Brechtian devices abound. After his opening debate with the Judge Jonah, pretending to become aware of the audience for the first time, addresses it directly. Voices from the audience call out questions and complaints, interrupting Jonah's narration. Raphael begins the proclamation of Judgment Day with a recitation from Goethe's *Faust*, to be halted by Jonah who contemptuously accuses him of classicism. When the actress playing the Queen takes exception to being called by her own name when accused of attempted murder, the Judge in a lesson on the nature of acting offers proof that the one "behind all these masks" is necessarily culpable (pp. 38-40). Rutenborn even at times makes fun of his own theatrical tradition and stage devices, as when characters become confused over what is happening or who they are, or when Jonah announces that the customary modern practice of employing slide projections, in this case to depict the crucifixion, will not be followed in this production. Most significantly, the pervasive Brechtian influence is in the presentation of historical events for observation and comment, by audience as well as by acting company.

Within the dialectical frame, the actual succession of incidents in the play is relatively simple. Rutenborn's Jonah is a former U-boat captain who had been once trapped in his submerged submarine. Like his

⁶² Driver, "Thesis for a Playwright Still in Hiding," in Eversole, pp. 143-144.

Biblical counterpart this Jonah at first declines to speak to the people. His reason, however, is that he is certain they will *refuse* to be converted, whereas the original Jonah was successful in converting an entire city.

The Judge and the three archangels, all former German military personnel, engage in mutual accusations. What is at stake is to be the goal of the entire trial to follow: to establish the "initial precedent" for atrocities committed through fiery furnaces, bombings, and denunciation of one's fellow citizens. Judgment Day is announced in a long poem, delivered by the archangels, as an invitation to accept God's mercy. With the addition of the three witnesses, the mutual recriminations continue. The Merchant asks how in the recent political and economic circumstances an individual could have remained spotless and survive, arguing that he at least tried to stay honest and furthermore paid the price of the loss of wife and children in a bombing raid. When the initial precedent cannot be found among the common people, or in the audience, the accusation is turned against the rulers. The Queen counters that she has no choice, given the nature of the human species, but to govern through terror. Thus the ultimate culprit is determined finally to be God, who must bear the responsibility for creating a universe in which mutual human respect and compassion and non-violence are not possible. On behalf of God, the Judge reluctantly accepts the verdict.

Jonah then turns to the audience as those responsible for the outcome of the trial.

What do you think you really have accomplished, people of the twentieth century? Do you think you have done something particularly bold, have made a new discovery? It is just a rediscovery! . . . good taste prevents us from showing you the actual execution of the verdict. You know that it was carried out, and you know in what fashion. We merely wish to remind you of it. (p. 83)

For the rest of the final scene the three witnesses remain in the roles of citizens of Nineveh/Sheba. They quietly explain how they managed to change their course of action, through standing in "awe of God" and refusing to bury the memories or disguise the evidence of their past viciousness. The Merchant asks desperately what he is to do.

JONAH: Condemn yourself, then God will acquit you.

QUEEN: As the Judge condemned himself.

The Merchant suddenly realizes what he has done in joining in the condemnation of God. The other characters return to the stage, and the Judge proclaims hopefully: "Then, after all, it was not in vain." (pp. 89-90) Whether he refers to the performance of the play, the crucifixion of Christ, or the Second World War, is left ambiguous. Jonah sends the members of the audience home with the admonition that the future will be determined by their own actions.⁶³

⁶³ This final scene in particular may seem close to sheer didacticism on the part of the playwright. Observation of several productions of the play, however, has convinced the present writer that sensitive performance which avoids overplaying can keep the dialectic alive rather than substituting homily. The single sentence accorded the drama in "The Burns Mantle Yearbook" reads: "Guenter Rutenborn's *Sign of Jonah* gained respect for its author, but was more treatise than drama." Henry Hewes, "Off Broadway," in *The Best Plays of 1960-1961*, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead, 1961), p. 44. It should be borne in mind in this regard that the George White adaptation may be held accountable for turning much of Rutenborn's allusive "simile" into explicit "metaphor." See Driver's interesting discussion of this point in "Simile into Metaphor," pp. 1250-1251.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Liturgical Treatment of Jonah

"Liturgical drama" is quite likely more often spoken of than clearly realized in practice. If a dramatist's insistence that a play ought to be performed in a chancel, rather than on a stage or in an open hall, alone makes that play "liturgical," then such drama hardly bears analysis as a separate "type." Olov Hartman's dramatization of Jonah, however, is not simply a play with Biblical subject matter that happens to have been written for production in a sanctuary. *Prophet and Carpenter* may indeed serve as model for a kind of drama which takes seriously and employs integrally as a forming principle the structure of the liturgy as developed within a particular ecclesiastical tradition.¹

Like German Lutheran pastor Rutenborn in *The Sign of Jonah*, Swedish Lutheran Pastor Hartman in his *Prophet and Carpenter* refers directly to the New Testament allusion to Jonah. Hartman's Act Three opens with the line: "There shall no sign be given this generation but the sign of Jonah," and the ensuing choral speech elaborates the theme (p. 20). Furthermore, as in *The Sign of Jonah* so in *Prophet and Carpenter* the Luke passage with its notion of the "sign" serves as a basic assumption for the author's dramaturgy. Hartman himself acknowledges a debt to Brecht.²

¹ Hartman, *Prophet and Carpenter*, in *Three Church Dramas*, pp. 1-13. The play was written originally in Swedish in 1954. The English version was produced in 1965 by participants in the National Council of Churches Religious Drama Workshop in Lake Forest, Illinois, staged by the play's original director, Tuve Nystrom.

² Ibid., Introduction, p. viii.

And, citing the symbolic function of Biblical figures in an essay entitled "Symbolism in Church Art--Inhibition or Inspiration?," Hartman perceives a kind of parabolic if not dialectical relation of Biblical to contemporary events:

In the New Testament we find a mass of names and events from the Old Testament that serve as "types" of Christ and his reconciliation. The story of the prophet Jonah is thus "typical" of the death and resurrection of Christ . . . Anyone who has learned to recognize this symbolism has been given access to a rich and inexhaustible world of images. Some of these "types" have had their content fixed once and for all; other appear in different guises for different ages; others again are still waiting to be discovered.

But that Hartman's dramatic interest differs ultimately from Rutenborn's becomes clear a bit further in the essay when Hartman advises that

. . . if this kaleidoscopic mass of symbols is really to serve the Word, and not hinder it, it must become a part of the liturgy and submit to its laws; that means it must facilitate, emphasize and clarify the proclamation of the Word and the blessing of the sacraments. It must not draw attention to itself, but lead attention to what is happening at the altar and in the pulpit.³

If Rutenborn's drama is prophetic, in its use of history to illuminate the sins of the contemporary moment, Hartman's drama is by contrast sacramental, conceived like worship itself ". . . as proclamation and intercession." Hartman speaks of re-establishing ". . . the relation between cult and drama" As a liturgical dramatist he is concerned with the play's relation to a particular church tradition, to its architecture and its appointments and its ritual, and to the symbolic values which they hold for the worshipping congregation.⁴

³ Olov Hartman, *Earthly Things*, trans. Eric J. Sharpe (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1968), p. 213.

⁴ Hartman, *Three Church Dramas*, Introduction, p. ix. Eric Sharpe finds the roots of Swedish Evangelical Lutheran liturgical drama in ". . . the cultic drama of the Ancient Near East, with its patterns of humiliation and coronation, death and resurrection." Sharpe, "Liturgical Drama in Sweden," in *Visible Proclamation: The Church and Drama*, ed. Rod French (Geneva, Switzerland: Youth Department, World Council of Churches, 1963), pp. 23-29.

Regarding the particular space which both players and audience occupy, Hartman maintains:

First of all, we must note that the Word itself is prolific of symbols. . . . Should it be proclaimed in the open air, the points of the compass become symbolic. The closed room, too, becomes a part of the Word itself. The upper room, in which the Eucharist was instituted while the night pressed, black and threatening, outside, is transformed by what took place to an image of our Father's house, of which Christ spoke.

The room in which the Word is proclaimed and the Eucharist celebrated becomes a frontier, where earth and heaven meet in the means of grace . . . It is inevitable that the entire room shall be drawn into this symbolism.⁵

The symbolism of the night to which Hartman refers is carried directly into *Prophet and Carpenter*. In the first act ". . . altar and pulpit hangings are in accordance with the church year." (p. 3) For Act Two these are exchanged for black hangings. The act takes place in the belly of the fish, which is also the kingdom of death. The first act hangings are restored for Act Three, to indicate Jonah's deliverance from the fish as well as the promised deliverance through Christ from death.⁶ But since this latter deliverance has not yet been fully realized, in the

⁵ Hartman, *Earthly Things*, pp. 211-212. See Sharpe's description of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran church interior, in "Liturgical Drama in Sweden," pp. 25-26.

⁶ The correspondence between the fish's belly and the kingdom of death may be suggested by the psalm which the Biblical author has assigned to Jonah as his prayer while within the monster. In discussing Jonah's psalm, Leslie C. Allen remarks:

The theme of the descent to the underworld is a constant feature of Hebrew psalmody to express the psalmist's brush with death encountered in one form or another . . . A straightforward reading of chapter 2 indicates that the psalm was meant as praise for deliverance not from the fish but from drowning.

Allen, p. 184. Discussions of death, transformation, and resurrection as symbolized in swallowing and disgorgement by the monster are cited in chapter three, pp. 66-67, n. 8.

final act the night is still spoken of as the time of the prophesied destruction of Nineveh, as well as hinted at as the time of Christ's agony on Good Friday.

The sanctuary itself, already in Hartman's view charged with the symbolic, becomes during the course of the play a ship on the Mediterranean, the kingdom of death/belly of the fish, and a mountain outside Nineveh. Although the "performance" takes place mainly in the chancel, the entire sanctuary is used consistently. At the beginning of Act One the sailors enter from the rear, processing to the chancel with the ship's mast "formed like a cross." (p. 3) At the same time the other actors are seated in the pews, where they remain with the congregation until it is time to take their places in the chancel. The Merchant delivers his lines from his pew. Jonah, awakened from his sleep, is brought forward by a sailor from the rear of the sanctuary.

The purpose of church drama, according to Hartman, is to engage all participants ". . . in a dialog with God."⁷

The "footlights" across which this drama is played are at the altar; on the far side there is the great darkness, out of which gaze eyes that no one on this side has ever seen. The whole of the art of worship is turned in this direction (that it faces east is a further confirmatory act of symbolism).⁸

The altar then is for Hartman the critical point of focus, though in another tradition a different liturgical symbol might take precedence.

"It is to be the altar or the communion table, i.e., the prevalent symbol of God's presence in the midst of his congregation, which is to govern

⁷ Jaroslov Vajda, "The Church Rediscovered Drama: An Interview with Olov Hartman," *This Day* (May, 1966), p. 17.

⁸ Hartman, *Earthly Things*, p. 189. Compare Soren Kierkegaard's image of worship, with congregant as actor, speaker as prompter, and God as audience and critic. Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing: Spiritual Preparation for the Office of Confession*, trans. Douglas V. Steere (New York: Harper and Brothers, Harper Torchbook, 1938, 1948), pp. 177-184.

the worship and the drama."⁹ At the conclusion of *Prophet and Carpenter* all the players, with the congregants, turn to face the altar, as the final choral lines are spoken, the Our Father is recited, the pastor pronounces a benediction, and the last stanza of the hymn is sung.

The congregation sings stanzas of the hymn "'Welcome, Happy Morning!' Age to Age Shall Sing" at the beginning and end of Act One and at the end of Acts Two and Three. With the refrain "Hell today is vanquished" occurring on each occasion, the congregation thus voices the continual hope for salvation maintained through the storm at sea, as Jonah vanishes in "the mouth of the deep," during the "death" in the fish, and after the dark night of Nineveh/Gethsemane.

The congregation is conceived as playing a critical role in the drama.

. . . church drama presupposes the cooperation of a worshipping congregation which is something quite other than a body of observers who happen to be present in the pews of a church. The presence of a worshipping congregation is, indeed, a theological necessity . . . [church drama's] distinctive aim is to proclaim God's word to the congregation and to express the congregation's intercessions before God.¹⁰

Theologically, Hartman focuses on the individual as in need of personal forgiveness, but equally on the worshipping community of which the one redeemed must necessarily be a part.¹¹ The players in his drama are

⁹ Hartman, *Three Church Dramas*, Introduction, p. ix.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. viii.

¹¹ See Eric Sharpe's Introduction to *Earthly Things*, pp. 9-13, for an account of Hartman's early experience with the Salvation Army and its individualist orientation, its emphasis on active involvement in the world, and its identification with the social outcast, followed by his joining the Lutheran Church of Sweden and the development of his concern with the relationship between church and contemporary culture.

integrally a part of the congregation. And Jonah, as a character, finds his place in community with the formerly despised Ninevites. Thematically, *Prophet and Carpenter* ends on the note of a new universalist understanding which many critics find to be the lesson of the Biblical book of Jonah. Hartman's particular emphasis, however, is on the need of all--the Ninevites, the dead, Jonah--for Christ.

Hartman avoids proliferation of non-liturgical properties or secular costumes. The single mast of Act One is in Act Two laid on the floor to represent a wreck. In Act Three the Carpenter is working on the mast, both following his trade literally and symbolizing the Christ preparing willingly for his sacrifice. Later the Carpenter carries the mast like a cross on his back, to leave it standing in the midst of the congregation. The costuming employs ecclesiastical garb, with symbolism in color and occasional suggestion of distinctive character.

Jonah wears a purple robe made like an alb with a hood.
 The captain wears an alb and cape.
 The sailors wear surplices with appliquéd anchors.
 Saul, David, and Jezebel wear gray robes.
 Amos wears a gray alb and carries a shepherd's staff.
 The carpenter wears an alb.
 The Ninevites wear black albs.
 The choir wears albs. (p. 2)

Ritual aspects of *Prophet and Carpenter* are enhanced by the use of a chorus to which are assigned the formally poetic passages. Their opening lines exemplify Hartman's remarkable imagery:

The sail was set in the evening
 we sailed westward in the sun-street
 but black grass grew between the rocks
 over golden stones of that street fluttered
 all thy swelling billows. (p. 3)

Hartman understands the chorus in particular as ". . . closely connected with the worshipping congregation. In the liturgical tradition it

represents the congregation, and voices its intercession."¹²

In general, the major incidents of the Biblical account of Jonah as well as Jonah's reactions to these events are all incorporated within Hartman's drama. But all of the characters and events of the play are to be perceived on more than one level. Hartman explains his method:

In this drama, Jonah, on one level, is a disobedient prophet, numbered among the many pious individuals for whom a radical gospel of God's grace is an unwelcome and incomprehensible part of the Biblical tradition; the distinction between the saved and the damned is for him one of the basic principles of existence. On this level the carpenter is simply a carpenter in Nineveh who--like the captain and the sailors--is bound to the rules of his vocation. The sea is the sea, the ship is the ship, Nineveh is Nineveh.

On another level the events of this drama make transparent a different pattern. The desperate atmosphere of Act Two, for instance, parallels the Old Testament's interpretation of the Kingdom of Death. Jonah's visit, however, foreshadows the visit of a greater prophet, descended into hell, on the third day to be raised from the dead. At other points as well this perspective breaks into the action, as when the tired prophet sleeps in the depths of the ship, when he is cast into the sea, when like one resurrected he appears in Nineveh and preaches repentance. Similarly, the carpenter is an archetype for another carpenter in that he repairs what has been broken and goes into the great city instead of away from it. On this level the ship is not merely a ship and Nineveh is not merely Nineveh. We all sail in this ship and we all live in that city.¹³

Certain lines of dialogue emphasize Jonah, often ironically, as the type of Christ. On the ship he asks, "Why have you not forsaken me?" (p. 8) Later, in the belly of the fish, Jonah exclaims, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (p. 17) The Captain justifies the casting of Jonah overboard with the words: "It is better that one man should die for the people than that all perish." (p. 9) The Carpenter's identification with Christ is made clear through his trade, his repairing and then carrying the cross, his insistence that "I belong with them down there"

¹² Hartman, *Earthly Things*, p. 196.

¹³ Hartman, *Three Church Dramas*, Introduction, pp. xvi-xvii.

as he joins the Ninevite sinners (p. 26). Salvation is the result of the act of the Carpenter/Christ.¹⁴

In the belly of the fish Jonah meets "the gray crowd," the dead, all of whom cry out about some personal need or loss. Jonah learns what isolation, hell, and death his desired escape from God actually is. The messianic passage from Isaiah 9:2, spoken by the chorus, relates this kingdom of the dead to the situation of all who wait, and by implication (since it is the passage read annually during the advent season) to the situation of the contemporary living. At the end of the act the pounding at the door followed by its opening to reveal the light represents Christ's freeing of the dead from hell.

If Olov Hartman's drama is ritualistic, liturgical, sacramental, it is so in order that the participant may be renewed for relating actively to the secular world outside (or within) the church. His purpose in this respect is not dissimilar from Rutenborn's, however markedly his dramatic style and method differ from those of the German playwright. "The Gospel has something to do with the things outside the church . . . What goes on in the church is representative of what is going on in the world."¹⁵ Hartman's intent is ". . . to place the social reality of the world in the context of the sacrament of the altar."¹⁶

¹⁴ For comparison with the New Testament passages see, respectively, Matthew 27:46 and John 11:50. The Carpenter's identification with the Ninevites relates to Jesus' assertion that ". . . I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" and his reputation as ". . . a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Luke 5:32, 7:34.

¹⁵ Vajda, "The Church Rediscovered Drama," p. 15.

¹⁶ Eric J. Sharpe, Introduction to *Earthly Things*, p. 11. See Sharpe's "Liturgical Drama in Sweden," p. 24.

Both Rutenborn and Hartman create a dramatic form suited to the intended audience and to the conditions of performance. For Rutenborn these are the theater-going public, the "legitimate" stage, and theatrical tradition and conventions; for Hartman, the worshipping congregation, the church sanctuary, and liturgical tradition and conventions. Thus it is in terms of the means to the desired end--in terms of the dramatic form--that *The Sign of Jonah* and *Prophet and Carpenter* must finally be classified as such distinctively separate types of plays.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Summary and Conclusions

Poor Jonah! I wonder if he knows how popular he has become in the twentieth century. May he R.I.P.

So comments Kathleen Bainbridge-Bell with reference to modern "Jonah" drama.¹ Jonah's twentieth-century popularity has not been restricted to the drama but is reflected in literature more broadly. Robert Nathan's novel *Jonah* was published in England and the United States in 1925. Harald Tandrup's novel *Profeten Jonas Privat* was translated from the Danish as *Reluctant Prophet* in 1939.² Zora Neale Hurston's *Jonah's Gourd Vine* was first published in 1934. Though not a novelized account of the Biblical Jonah, *Jonah's Gourd Vine* concerns a preacher who attempts to flee from the task he believes God wants him to perform.³ Among poetic

¹ Letter of September 20, 1976, from Kathleen Bainbridge-Bell to the present writer.

² Harald Tandrup, *Profeten Jonas Privat* (Copenhagen: Berlingske Forlag, 1937); A. G. Chater, trans., *Reluctant Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939).

³ Zora Neale Hurston, *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1934, 1962), pp. 123, 141. See Larry Neal's explanation of the novel's title in his Introduction, p. xviii. An earlier and more celebrated use of the book of Jonah in the American novel is Herman Melville's in his *Moby Dick*, in which Father Mapple preaches a "Jonah" sermon and the white whale is generally agreed to have an affinity with the Biblical prophet's great fish. See Nathalia Wright, "Moby Dick: Jonah's or Job's Whale?," *American Literature* 37:2 (May, 1965), pp. 190-195. Wright cites the book of Jonah frequently in her *Melville's Use of the Bible* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina, 1949). Frederic J. Masback argues that Joseph Conrad ". . . came close to rewriting the Book of Jonah to suit his own purposes in both *The Shadow Line* and *The Nigger of the Narcissus*." Masback, "Conrad's Jonahs," *College English* 22:5 (February, 1961), p. 328. *Moby Dick* itself has been dramatized a number of times in recent years. Orson Welles' *Moby Dick--Rehearsed: A Drama in Two Acts* (New York, Hollywood, London, Toronto: Samuel French, 1965) was staged by Douglas Campbell at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in

treatments of Jonah are Aldous Huxley's "Jonah" published in 1920, Randall Jarrell's "Jonah" in 1951, Thomas John Carlisle's cycle *You! Jonah!* in 1968, and Don Mulder's "Jonah" in 1978.⁴ In the space of two years two books appeared in which a poet and an illustrator collaborated to retell the Jonah legend for children.⁵ Among recent translations into English have been the "Jonah" poems of Jean-Paul de Dadelsen and Enrique Lihn.⁶

Indeed, the climate for Jonah in the present century seems much like that in the Tudor period. In addition to plays for both live actors and puppets, various literary treatments, and the use of the prophet as

New York City. Emmanuel Peluso's *Moby Tick*, a kind of reminiscence in the form of a television quiz show, was directed by Peter Goldfarb for NBC-TV on April 12, 1970. Peluso, *Moby Tick: An Original Teleplay*, in *New American Plays*, vol. 4, ed. William M. Hoffman (New York: Hill and Wang, Mermaid Dramabook, 1971), pp. 213-241. See also Brainerd Duffield, *Moby Dick: A One-Act Play* (Elgin, IL: Performance Publishing, 1972).

⁴ Aldous Huxley, "Jonah," in *Leda* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1920), p. 25. Randall Jarrell, "Jonah," in *Modern Religious Poems*, ed. Jacob Trapp (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 83-84; reprinted from Jarrell's *The Seven League Crutches* published in 1951. Thomas John Carlisle, *You! Jonah!* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1968). Don Mulder, "Jonah," *For the Time Being* 5:6 (special issue: Don Mulder, *The Trail to the Promised Land*, 1968), pp. 8-9.

⁵ George MacBeth, *Jonah and the Lord*, with illustrations by Margaret Gordon (London: Macmillan, 1969); Clyde R. Bulla, *Jonah and the Great Fish*, with illustrations by Helga Aichinger (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970).

⁶ Enrique Lihn, "Jonah," in *The Bible as/in Literature*, ed. James S. Ackerman and Thayer S. Warshaw (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1976), pp. 219-220. Dadelsen's *Jonah* is cited in chapter three, p. 66, n. 8. Uwe Steffen surveys twentieth-century literary treatments of Jonah in *Das Mysterium von Tod und Auferstehung: Formen und Wandlungen des Jona-Motivs* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1963). Further examples of the Jonah tradition in literature will be found in Maurice Beebe, ed., *Literary Symbolism: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Literature* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1960), pp. 73-90.

homiletic illustration in sermon and tract,⁷ more casual literary and cultural references to Jonah occur with some frequency. In Bertolt Brecht's adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*, first produced and published in Germany in 1924, Anne cites the prophet:

Jonah sat and waited for Nineveh's promised end.
Only God didn't come back that way that time.
So Nineveh *didn't* end.⁸

Jerome Mazzaro calls attention to Robert Lowell's changing the name Hezekiah Mudge to Jonah Mudge in his stage adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux."

Intended here may be an oblique allusion to the Biblical Jonah, who rather than admonish Nineveh tries to run away from his appointed task. Sodom-Boston has had no such prophet.⁹

⁷ An example of the latter is James D. Devine's *Find God's Will For You* (Glendale, CA: G/L Publications, Regal Books, 1977), in which the story of Jonah is recounted along with ". . . parallels to your own life." Jacques Ellul in similar fashion suggests applications for the Christian reader in his *The Judgment of Jonah*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971). Terence E. Fretheim's chapter "Jonah For Today: Two Homilies" concludes his *The Message of Jonah: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977). George A. F. Knight appends to his commentary on Jonah an essay on the book's relevance to contemporary life. Knight, *Ruth and Jonah: Introduction and Commentary*, John Marsh, Alan Richardson, and R. Gregor Smith, gen. eds., Torch Bible Commentaries, (London: SCM, pub. 1950), Appendix i, pp. 81-85. Cartoon-strip versions of the Jonah story have appeared in *Jonah and the Big Fish* (Irvine, CA: Harvest House, Compass Pocket Comics, n.d.) and Friedel Steinmann and Dieter Kohl, *Jonah*, trans. Cornelius Lambregtse (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978). As typifying the interest in Jonah in terms of liturgy and preaching, Marlin A. VanderWilt delivered a sermon entitled "The Joy of Repentance" preceded in the service by a call to worship, prayer of confession, assurance of pardon, and scripture reading all taken from or based on the book of Jonah. Order for Worship for January 28, 1979, of the Hope Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan.

⁸ Bertolt Brecht, *Edward II: A Chronicle Play*, English Version by Eric Bentley (New York: Grove, Evergreen Black Cat Book, 1966), p. 66. The speech occurs in the scene entitled "Queen Anne laughs at the world's emptiness."

⁹ Jerome Mazzaro, "Robert Lowell's *The Old Glory*: Cycle and Epic," *Western Humanities Review* 24 (Autumn, 1970), pp. 354-355.

In a 1940 essay entitled "Inside the Whale" George Orwell discusses novelist Henry Miller's reference to Jonah's entombment, arguing that the metaphor aptly characterizes the passive acceptance of social evil on the part of Miller and his generation.¹⁰ Thomas Merton refers to Jonah in the whale in the final line of his poem "*Senescente Mundo*."¹¹ In his journal *The Sign of Jonas* Merton employs major episodes of the book of Jonah, as well as the New Testament allusion to the prophet, to characterize his spiritual journey as a Trappist monk.¹² In Richard Gordon's humorous novel *The Captain's Table* the crew of an ocean liner needing someone to blame for the foul weather attending their embarkation singles out the new captain as ". . . the Jonah who had attracted the spiteful Heavens . . ."¹³ "Project Jonah" is the name of one of the present-day organizations concerned with preserving whales and other species of sea mammals. And it is perhaps inevitable that Jonah should have been considered at some point in the current speculation about the "lost continent" of Atlantis and the question of earth visitors from outer space. "Was it, we might ask, a whale or an underwater craft of the

¹⁰ George Orwell, "Inside the Whale," in *A Collection of Essays* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1954), pp. 215-256. See especially pp. 248-250.

¹¹ Thomas Merton, "*Senescente Mundo*," in *Selected Poems of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, pub. 1959), pp. 85-87.

¹² Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Image Books, 1953).

¹³ Richard Gordon, *The Captain's Table* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1954), p. 27.

Cosmic Masters that snatched the drowning Jonah from the turbulent sea and set him back on land and on his way to Nineveh?"¹⁴

The reasons for Jonah's currency in the twentieth century can only be conjectured. Bainbridge-Bell comments:

Jonah seems to be very popular with playwrights at present. I suppose they feel he is appropriate to the times we live in.¹⁵

It would seem likely that the alternately comic and heroic figure of the rebel pitted against the circumstances of his existence, fleeing his responsibility and then accepting it in the face of ridiculous odds and even then complaining that all has not turned out to his satisfaction, has been found peculiarly suited to the climate of the present age. That certain types of "Jonah" dramas have tended to cluster within a decade or two may perhaps be explained with more certainty. By the mid-twentieth century a heritage of scriptural interpretive diversity, including non-literalist modes of understanding Biblical writings, may be seen as encouraging both the comic and the adaptive treatments of Jonah. Moreover, the critical perception emphasizing the book's comic or ironic qualities as its primary mode is itself fairly recent; and increasingly secularized uses and interpretations of Biblical material generally may have helped to create the ambience in which "adaptive" dramatizations are more readily conceived and accepted. The marked growth of didactic "Jonah" drama in the late nineteen-sixties and the nineteen-seventies parallels the increase during this period of an evangelical orientation

¹⁴ Brad Steiger, *Atlantis Rising* (New York: Dell, 1973), p. 95. On the presence of Jonah in modern literature and culture, including song and comedy routine, see Thayer S. Warshaw and Betty Lou Miller, with James A. Ackerman, eds., *Bible-Related Curriculum Materials: A Bibliography* (New York: Abingdon, 1976), pp. 102-103.

¹⁵ Letter of June 6, 1976, from Kathleen Bainbridge-Bell to the present writer.

in Christian religious practice and writing. And the liturgical drama of Olov Hartman is surely related to the liturgical movement which has engaged both Protestants and Roman Catholics since mid-century.

The rapid growth recently of "Jonah" drama makes it a timely topic for study. Furthermore, these plays illustrate various possible dramatic treatments of Biblical literature more generally. For the most part, little purpose can be perceived in the "straight" or story-telling Biblical dramatizations. In neither Githens' *A Fish Story* nor the Autrys' puppet play *Jonah* is fresh insight offered. The story seems at least as well told in its original prose form. Characterization is wooden and the development of the action awkward, suggesting that the "drama" which may be inherent in the source is not simply or easily realized on the stage. Independent vision and craft on the part of the dramatist are required. The tendencies toward interpretation of the Biblical source in the otherwise story-telling treatments by Manley, Bayer, and Matney do not seem to justify the dramatizations, if for no other reason than that the interpretive suggestions are not fully clarified or followed to conclusion.

The significant exception in this story-telling category is *The Journey with Jonah* in which Madeleine L'Engle renders the tale particularly entertaining for children. While the events of the Biblical narrative are not changed, her animal characters introduce a fresh dimension and irony and humor provide a special perspective not necessarily discerned in the Old Testament account.

Because drama is such an unusual vehicle for critical interpretation of a Biblical text, the "interpretive" treatment cannot be considered a major category. While one may be interested in the playwright's personal reading of the source, the play itself may not provide equal interest as

drama. Housman's *The Burden of Nineveh* reflects the critical tastes of both the dramatist and his age, and in the determination to discount the "miracles" the story loses much of its inherent theatricality. Tunstall's *Jonah* is difficult to take seriously, with its proliferation of commentators-as-characters, its citing of scholarly opinions for the sake of caricature, and its constant shift of focus.

By and large the "moral-lesson" drama is concerned with propositional statement rather than dramatic action or character. The playwrights' focus is essentially upon the audience (or readers) and their appropriation of the moral or ethical argument. Whether the desired lesson is best served in this fashion is moot; and, in any case, the devices employed by these dramatists to provide thought do not enhance the drama *per se*. In Hodgetts' *Jo Jonah* one finds no unfolding revelation or series of discoveries in terms of character, dramatic action, or theme. Rather one is simply carried forward to the narrowly focused point concerning world mission. Bennett's *So Why Does that Weirdo Prophet Keep Watching the Water?* is less obviously instructive, in that he does not offer a series of arguments leading ineluctably to the lesson. But each of Bennett's short scenes sets forth a particular proposition, all of which are discovered at the conclusion to make the point about the nature of salvation. A reading of this play along with the other two Biblical dramas in Bennett's Old Testament collection reveals that the dramatist has social and political concerns similar to those of Rutenborn and a like desire to draw parallels between Jonah and the twentieth century.¹⁶ But whereas Rutenborn in *The Sign of Jonah*

¹⁶ Bennett, *From Nineveh to Now*. Included with the "Jonah" play are *Meet Noah Smith* and *On the Plain of Dura*, the latter based on Daniel 3.

perceives dialectical relationships, Bennett draws analogies. Whereas Rutenborn's audience is invited to participate in the movement from thesis to antithesis, Bennett's audience is asked to accept the condemnation of one value through the persuasiveness of the arguments on behalf of its opposite.

Poovey in his *Jonah--The World's Greatest Miracle*, after striving to maintain a suspense in not revealing what the greatest "miracle" actually is, finally sets forth the proposition that God loves everyone. Debrecini similarly, in his *Jonah of Joppa*, teaches God's forgiveness. Fairman's *In the Belly of the Fish* stresses the sureness of salvation. Perhaps the most viable theatrical didacticism is that with purely local reference, as represented by Rose's *The Fish Who Went Manning*. Though this play like others of its type is structured to lead the minds of audience members to acceptance of the lesson, Rose concentrates on the mission responsibility of the particular congregation for which the drama has been written. The humor, of an "inside joke" nature, seems thereby less strained than is true of other plays in the didactic class.

Despite their didactic character, two of the "moral lesson" plays are theatrically more viable than the others in this category. Lodge and Greene both drew upon a strong morality play tradition and responded to the tastes of their age. The didacticism of *A Looking-Glass for London and England* seems as much a matter of popular convention as of the moral persuasion of the authors. The play is skillfully constructed so that its sensational incidents achieve maximum theatrical effect. Although in Campton's *Jonah* the crisis is basically intellectual and the resolution is stated as a moral proposition, the thought is engaging in its complexity and the problem does arise from Jonah's character.

The recognition that comedy is no less appropriate or effective in Biblical drama than in any other kind of drama is refreshing. A number of the recent "Jonah" comedies, furthermore, no more than realize for the stage what contemporary scholarship understands to be the tone and purpose of the Biblical book. Beer exploits the comic incident characterizing the book of Jonah. His *Jonah and the Whale* is a well-crafted, farcical entertainment. Mankowitz's equally skillful *It Should Happen to a Dog* stands between pure farce and comedy of idea. If the picture of Jonah-as-*shlemiel* is to furnish the audience an opportunity to reflect on the human dilemma, the hints are given but the audience itself must make the appropriate application. In his several "Jonah" dramatizations Bridie employs the satire and irony in the source itself to illumine contemporary religious and cultural mores in satiric and ironic fashion. Introducing as well his own particular views--or mischievous suggestions--on such matters as the female versus the male character, Bridie provides a drama rich in humorous commentary relevant to contemporary experience as well as to his Biblical source.

The use of any literary or historical source as a vehicle for exploring essentially contemporary issues is a tradition of some standing in the theater. The "adaptive" dramatizations surveyed in the present study suggest that such an approach may be particularly effective. There is little reason that Biblical material should be less suited to such treatment than classical mythology or historical events. Themes in this type of treatment are as varied as the individual concerns and perceptions of the dramatists. Rutenborn's *The Sign of Jonah*, furthermore, demonstrates the possibilities for exploration of theatrical form as well as dramatic theme. His dialectical approach to subject matter, actor and

character relationships, the respective roles of audience and performers, and the significance of history makes the Biblical material accessible and relevant in a fresh and striking manner.

Hartman's *Prophet and Carpenter*, finally, documents a way in which Biblical literature may be employed in the service of a liturgical drama. Merely to set a dramatic work in a chancel or to make use of a chorus or of verse dialogue does not necessarily create what is distinctively liturgical. Hartman's play, which could not be performed as effectively for an audience unversed in the Lutheran tradition of worship and which indeed could hardly be performed outside the architectural space for which it was written, illustrates that the shape of the particular liturgy determines the form of the liturgical drama.

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