THESIS

This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS DRAMA IN MODERN PRODUCTION:
AN APPLICATION OF SELECTED STANISLAVSKI TECHNIQUES TO THE
INTERPRETATION AND STAGING OF CYCLE AND MORALITY PLAYS
FROM THE ENGLISH MIDDLE AGES

presented by

WILLIAM GEORGE MARX

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

____Ph. D.____ degree in __ENGLISH____

Major professor

Date _12 NOV 1991_

0-12771

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS DRAMA IN MODERN PRODUCTION:
AN APPLICATION OF SELECTED STANISLAVSKI TECHNIQUES TO THE
INTERPRETATION AND STAGING OF CYCLE AND MORALITY PLAYS
FROM THE ENGLISH MIDDLE AGES

By

William George Marx

A DISSERTATION

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1991

ABSTRACT

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS DRAMA IN MODERN PRODUCTION:
AN APPLICATION OF SELECTED STANISLAVSKI TECHNIQUES TO THE
INTERPRETATION AND STAGING OF CYCLE AND MORALITY PLAYS
FROM THE ENGLISH MIDDLE AGES

By

William George Marx

The surviving texts of the English cycle and morality plays
constitute the written record of a medieval dramatic art. As such,
they represent but one step in a creative process that was completed
only in performance. The modern production of these plays provides a
means to test the dramaturgy and stagecraft of their authors. An
application of selected theatrical techniques developed by Constantin
Stanislavski offers a systematic means to realizing credible
interpretations and effective productions of these plays. The Michigan
State University productions of the Second Shepherds' Pageant and
Mankind under my direction demonstrated the effectiveness of
Stanislavski's techniques of thematic interpretation, character
analysis, and production staging. The productions of these two plays
had the collateral benefits of confirming the Second Shepherds'
Pageant's high critical estimation and of demonstrating that Mankind
merits equal esteem.

My direction of these plays integrated four operations: the
construction of modern performance scripts; the expression of unified
thematic interpretations in playable "through-lines of action"; the
development of credible character "spines"; and the design of
production stagings that suggested a medieval performance style.

The construction of modern performance scripts had to solve substantial problems: editing, translating Middle English and Latin, adding supplemental performance elements, and adjusting the script to the exigencies of casting. The "through-lines of action" became statements of what the plays _were_, beyond what they were _about_, transforming their abstract ideas into specific physical actions. "Spines" supplied the motivational forces of personal "objectives" and obstacle "thresholds" underlying the characters' actions. The design for production staging implemented strategies of actor training and rehearsal and an integrative plan for the plays' material appearances, stage "blocking," and actor "business."

Both the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ and _Mankind_ responded well to the application of these Stanislavski techniques. That they did suggests that their dramatic constructions are remarkably parallel and that their characterizations are equally rich in psychological depth and complexity. The successful application of Stanislavski techniques to these two plays also suggests that these techniques may have useful applications to the interpretation and staging of other cycle and morality plays.

.

To the memory of my father and mother,

Theodore J. and Clesta M. Marx

"Therefore God grant 3ow all per suam misericordiam
þat ye may be pleyferys wyth þe angellys abowe
And hawe to 3our porcyon vitam eternam. Amen!"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Explorers in New Territory:
The Value of Performance Experience to the Study of
Medieval Drama, Interpretive and Creative Tensions,
Nature of Drama, Playing the Play

> Now, I am going to venture to make some observations based on
> my own experience, which will lead me to comment on my
> intentions, failures, and partial successes, in my own plays.
> I do this in the belief that any explorer or experimenter in
> new territory may, by putting on record a kind of journal of
> his explorations, say something of use to those who follow
> him into the same regions and who will perhaps go farther.
> (T. S. Eliot, "Poetry and Drama" 138)

The subject of this dissertation is the modern production of the

cycle and morality plays from the English Middle Ages. Like Eliot, I,

too, have tried my hand at realizing theatrical expressions of one sort

of dramatic poetry, albeit dramatic poetry composed by others a long

time ago in languages not now familiar or easily accessible to modern

audiences. Over the past fifteen years I have directed and acted in

five productions of four different plays from the English Middle Ages.

In 1975 and 1976, I directed two productions of Mankind and played

Mercy in each. In 1978, I directed a production of the Wakefield

Second Shepherds' Pageant and played the Angel in it. In 1988, I

directed a production of the Wakefield Last Judgment play. And in

1990, I directed a production of the Chester Noah's Flood. All of

these productions were sponsored by the Department of English at

Michigan State University, and were cast largely from graduate students

1

in that department. The productions of those four plays survive on videotape.

Like Eliot, too, I believe now that some reflection on what I learned in the doing of those plays may serve other explorers "in the same regions," especially those explorers who bring an essentially literary background to the study of this drama. This dissertation argues that performance sensitivity at least, if not outright performance experience itself, is essential to acquiring a complete understanding of this dramatic literature. The argument for this thesis proceeds along three lines. First, the surviving texts of the medieval cycle and morality plays constitute the written record of an ancient dramatic art, the corollary to which is that these texts mark but one point in a progress of interrelated steps that was completed only in performance. Second, the modern production of these plays provides demonstrable means to test the dramaturgy and stagecraft of their playwrights in the medium for which their works were intended. Third, an application of selected techniques that have grown in a school of theatrical practice that began with Constantin Stanislavski offers a coherent and systematic means to realizing credible interpretations and effective modern productions of these plays. The strategy of this dissertation is to demonstrate the utility and effectiveness of its thesis and argument by applying them to two dramas: the Wakefield Second Shepherds' Pageant, a cycle play, and Mankind, a morality.

This dissertation, however, is not a "how to produce a play" practical manual; such would be more properly the endeavor of a

dissertation in the theater arts. Rather, this study of the
applicability of selected Stanislavski techniques to the interpretation
and staging of English cycle and morality plays means to demonstrate
that the medieval playwrights, to the extent that they were successful
playwrights, wrote in anticipation of and specifically for physical
performance. The proposed benefits to the literary scholar are two.
First, such an understanding of these dramas as may be derived from a
heightened performance sensitivity and experience augments and enhances
(and sometimes corrects) the critical responses to medieval dramaturgy
and stagecraft of more traditional forms of literary study. Second,
the more literary scholars of medieval drama cultivate performance
sensitivity and experience, the more likely they will be to offer
better informed insights for their students into what makes the study
and preservation of this ancient dramatic art important. Important
plays from any age speak to enduring truths of the human condition. To
these ends, Stanislavski's techniques of dramatic analysis, character
interpretation, and production design offer effective ways of
explaining not only the "hows" but also the "whys" of what happens when
dramas become plays, when the written word becomes the physical
enactment. The greater part of this dissertation, then, illustrates
how directors may work upon medieval dramatic texts to evoke the modern
stage plays that they can legitimately sustain. Though this
dissertation does not intend to offer complete instruction in producing
medieval plays, it does not intend to inhibit such worthy endeavors,
either.

The _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ and _Mankind_ present an intriguing pairing to illustrate what directors need to consider in order to fashion modern performances from medieval texts. For different reasons each play can at first appear daunting. Critical estimations of their dramatic merit or lack of it have put them at the top and bottom of their respective cycle and morality traditions. The _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ has long been regarded as the best play in the Wakefield cycle, and may arguably be the best play of any cycle to have survived. _Mankind_, however, has had a difficult time winning equal critical favor. Earlier in this century, E. K. Chambers spoke of it in the most disparaging of terms, saying that it was "obviously . . . a very degraded type of morality" and that the "monk Hyngham ought to have been ashamed of claiming [its] ownership" (_English Literature_ 62). Michael R. Kelley, a more recent student of the English moralities, suggests ways to boost _Mankind_'s reputation. He writes:

> Criticisms of the play have either seized on its vulgar comedy or accused it of being a badly conceived moral allegory, since its evil characters don't fit neatly into a clear theological scheme. When we recognize that the comedy serves the instructural purpose by parody and contrast, . . . _Mankind_ can be appreciated for what it is--a flamboyantly illustrated sermon, displaying a consistency of design that is both rhetorically effective and structurally harmonious. (93)

These plays, both late additions to their respective traditions, seem to have won or lost critical favor according to interpretive criteria that have evaluated their merits only in comparison to others of their kind. Like first cousins born to families of different backgrounds, their relative reputations have been established more by their lineage than by their individual characters.

My performance experience with these plays leads me to question their critical disparity. They share remarkable similarities, even though they come from different "families." Their dramatic structures are remarkably parallel. The characterizations in both plays are drawn with depths of vision that are startlingly rich in psychological and spiritual complexity. And their character relationships shift deftly from the serious to the comic to the moving. Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant are so similar in dramatic vision and execution that the disparity in their reputations is unwarranted. The pages that follow will not only use these two plays as examples of what modern directors do to stage the medieval drama, but they will also invoke performance authority to confirm the Second Shepherds' Pageant's high reputation and to elevate that of Mankind to equal status.

My application of Stanislavski techniques to the modern productions of these plays involves the integration of four elements: "translations" of medieval dramatic texts into modern performance scripts; thematic interpretations that ensure fair representations of medieval social and religious values; actor characterizations that produce credible individuals; and production stagings that reinforce thematic meanings and character relationships. Though these elements will get individual attention in the next four chapters, their essential concerns need to be seen as interlocking and interdependent.

Since play productions are always unique to some place, time, cast, and audience, all dramatic texts, ancient or modern, need some order of "translation" to become performance scripts. The text of Richard III, for example, changes every time the play is performed,

being cut here, rearranged there, and now often beginning with lines added from the last act of <u>Henry VI, Part III</u>.[1] And since the languages found in England's medieval drama (Middle English, Latin, and Medieval French, predominantly) are now generally inaccessible to modern ears, the challenge to "translate" the meaning of these ancient dramas to contemporary audiences is all the greater. The thematic interpretation serves to unite cast and crews into one community of common purpose and to ensure that the medieval values of these plays get fair representation. As Stanislavski cautioned, "the poet, the actor, the tailor, the stage hand serve one goal, which is placed by the poet in the very basis of his play" (<u>My Life in Art</u> 298). Stanislavski called that "goal" the production "super-objective," and the means to its attainment, the "through-line of action." To make sure that the production "goal" and the play's "basis" correspond requires the artful blend of theatrical imagination and linguistic, literary, and historical scholarship. Likewise, the development of credible characterizations requires the same blend of imagination and scholarship, directed toward the work of the individual actor. Nowadays, those schooled in the Stanislavski tradition call the bases for the actors' roles character "spines." The spines are individualized and subordinate versions of the play's super-objective and through-line of action. Production staging gives physical reinforcement to thematic meanings and actor characterizations by creating a performance environment and a complex sequence of stage events that allow medieval values to take on a concrete, active, and communicable life. These production elements depend on the directors'

abilities to "translate" ideas and words fixed upon the page into the
confluence of sight and sound and action upon the physical stage. In
their grappling with dramatic texts, then, directors are charged with
devising strategies that can evoke expressions of dramatic meaning
among production casts and crews and between them and their audiences
through almost all the communicative media available to the senses,
save those of reading and writing.

The directors' work to translate, virtually to transmute, dramatic
texts into stage performances necessitates struggling with considerable
amounts of interpretive tensions, and results in striking reversals of
strategies midstream. Modern productions of medieval plays share some
common interpretive tensions with all play productions. They also have
some tensions that are uniquely their own. The interpretive tensions
unique to producing medieval dramas are essentially three: the
justification for modern performance at all; the distance between the
shared religious, aesthetic, social, and psychological realities of
medieval actors and audiences and those of modern societies and
theaters; and the problem of making the meanings expressed in medieval
languages accessible to the modern ear. The interpretive tensions that
these productions share with all productions of dramatic works lie in
the inescapable struggle to fulfill the silent word on the page through
appropriate utterance, appearance, and action on the stage. The work
of directors to devise strategies to translate word and idea into
communicable experiences involves a calculated reversal of labor that
is striking. The work of directors begins months before first
rehearsals, and results in production notes that accumulate to book

proportions. Once rehearsals begin, their goal is to be free of their production notes as rapidly as possible. Before rehearsals, directors' minds and eyes and imaginations are in the library and on the page; once rehearsals begin, their faculties must be directed to the stage. The most creative work of rehearsals does not come until both the directors and the actors are "off book." The directors' work on paper, then, work which this dissertation essentially illustrates, plots the most exhaustive strategy for them and their production casts and crews to transcend texts.

The most acute interpretive tension that modern directors of these old plays must face is scholarly resistance to the notion of any justification for performance at all. The argument against such an endeavor as this dissertation proposes has in earlier times been forceful. For example, Hardin Craig writes:

> Indeed, the religious drama had no dramatic technique or dramatic purpose, and no artistic self-consciousness. Its life-blood was religion, and its success depended on it awakening and releasing a pent-up religious knowledge and religious feeling. Therefore to carry to the study of the medieval religious drama a body of criteria derived from Aristotle, Horace, and their Renaissance followers, or of specialists in the technique of the modern drama or of drama in general is to bring the wrong equipment. Writers of medieval religious drama had no doubt their own ways (however simple) of presenting their religious themes effectively, but these techniques, originally merely liturgical, have no connexion with the vast body of doctrine usually referred to as 'the technique of the drama'. Few studies of the techniques of playwrights and actors of the medieval religious drama have been made, except by persons who have not understood this aspect of the task, and perhaps for the lack of definite materials none can be made, because we have here the strange case of a drama that was not striving to be dramatic but to be religious, a drama whose motive was worship and not amusement. (4-5)

If I had to be the first to counter this position, the first to straighten out Craig's confusion of message with medium and tenor with vehicle, such a statement as his would be daunting. Happily, the work of scholars on the medieval drama over the last 35 years or so has done much to overcome this prejudice against performance sensitivity. The studies of John Russell Brown, E. M. Browne, A. C. Cawley, Stanley Kahrl, Alan Nelson, Richard Southern, Glynne Wickham, and Arnold Williams, among others, argue persuasively that the medieval playwrights had a strong sense of the theater arts and that their works can be understood and validated today in the medium for which they were intended. Arnold Williams's criteria summarize the stance of these scholars. He writes that "the fundamental question must always be whether the imagery enhances the dramatic impact, whether the sermon is good theater, whether the typology functions under the conditions which govern any play produced by actors on a stage" ("Typology" 677). Such criteria reassure me and would doubtless have been reassuring to the medieval playwright himself, had he needed any more support than that which the enormous and long running popularity of his works already gave him. He was not then, nor am I now, fearful that the performance medium through which he chose to express religious truth was inadequate or inappropriate to its task.

Beyond the collected work of these scholars who have argued for the theatrical validation of medieval drama, I may respond briefly to what seem to be the stifling barriers imposed by Craig's nearly "territorial" claim on the "unperformed" text and message of medieval drama. Were his argument generalized, then any aspect of religious art

would be off limits to the expertise of those whose "secular" craftsmanship produced it. Since the church was a religious edifice, its structure would be outside the expertise of the architect. The statuary would be off limits to the insights of the sculptor. The stained glass would be irrelevant to the vision of the glazier. The church paintings, frescoes, and manuscript illuminations would be safe from the explanatory comments of the artist. And sacred music would be far removed from the mundane testaments of those who sing and play.

What seems most disheartening about Craig's assertion, though, is its misreading of the link between the communal natures of the theatrical and the religious experiences. The Eucharist itself--the priests' acts of distributing the body of Christ to their parishioners--unites priesthood with laity and makes of them all a renewed and vibrant "Corpus Christi." The central mystery of the faith enacted in this sacrament--a sacrament directed by Christ himself and performed on his authority--transmutes religious ideal into actual event. The apprehension of the reality in the actual and the universal in the particular was as familiar to the untutored lay person as it was to the most learned medieval scholastic, though understood, of course, on much varying levels.[2] The Eucharist, then as now, is a religious experience played out in physical terms that re-creates, renews, and revitalizes a community of believers. Such, too, is the operating principle of what makes the theater work, though its shared, believed, communal experience among the actors and between them and the audience does not always have to be religious. For the medieval cycle and morality dramas it was. The nature of what the medieval playwright achieved in

re-creating, renewing, and revitalizing religious and social realities commonly shared by his cast and audience of believers does not need the artificial protection from study that Craig is quick to give.

Modern directors of cycle and morality plays must also confront the interpretive tension of the distance between the shared religious, aesthetic, social, and psychological realities of medieval actors and audiences and those of modern societies and theaters. The problems are formidable but solvable. Essentially, this tension gathers around the directors' decisions about how much modern productions of these plays ought to replicate medieval performances themselves. If they decide that modern productions should be exact replications of medieval originals, then the tension is loaded heavily against audience communication. For example, if a modern production of Mankind were meant to be an exact replication of the original, then the play could be performed only at specific times during the year and only at restricted locations, no women could be cast as characters, the script could not be modernized or glossed, the play's dialogue would have to be spoken in Middle English and medieval Latin, there could be no electronic aids to production, costumes would have to be exact to original specifications, and so on. The burden of historical accuracy would be so great as to amount to making the play an antiquarian demonstration rather than a truly communicable experience. If directors decide that their productions of Mankind should be entirely modern, then they may grant themselves license to ignore, and thereby alter, any (if not all) of the play's medieval character. Such decisions, motivated by notions of modern "relevance" or effortless

communication, load the interpretive tensions heavily against preserving anything of the original integrity of the play at all. The danger and disappointment in this tack is that these directors risk so distorting the play's medieval meanings as to make it a modern play, abundant examples of which already exist. Their decisions about production would thus negate their choice of play.

I have taken a middle stance between the extremes of historical replication and wholly modern redaction, one that does not so much dispel interpretive tension as make it creative, expressive, and communicable. It asks that the production and the audience each give a little. The production works to make true medieval meanings communicable, and the audience works to stretch its comprehensive powers to representations of other people in other times that can act as counterpoints to modern understandings. The end is collaborative effort, a communal experience. Theatrical performance has always worked this way, even the medieval. In one sense, there is no medieval original to replicate. The original performance conditions of those plays, like the conditions for any performance art, were ephemeral and adaptive, necessarily changing each year for different performance sites and for different assemblies of actors and audiences. Any attempt to "recapture" them in the original is to confuse the nature of the performing arts with that of the material and plastic arts. The directors' efforts to bring the medieval drama to modern audiences and them to it are not easy, but entirely possible. Perhaps because relatively few such productions have been staged, the doing of it may seem tentative. We may take some encouragement, though, from the

numerous productions of plays from the English Renaissance, productions
which demonstrate again and again that the theater can bridge time and
place and cultural sensibilities.

Of the interpretive tensions unique to the medieval drama,
directors have one more to address, that of what to do about the plays'
medieval languages. To leave a play's text unedited and unglossed
would make some of the action and nearly all of the actors' speech
virtually incomprehensible to a modern audience. To gloss a text
completely by substituting wholly modern pronunciations and modern
idioms, syntax, and vocabulary would destroy the medieval character,
meanings, and poetry of the play. Once again, the goal is
communication and the means is collaborative effort. Directors need to
edit the texts and gloss the languages only so far as to enable their
audiences to enter into the experience of the plays. Anyone who
attends performances of Shakespeare's plays already knows how this
works, though Shakespeare's Early Modern English and the actors' Late
Modern English pronunciations help the cause considerably. For the
first few minutes, the audience is busy tuning its ear to Shakespeare's
language; after that, it enters Shakespeare's idiom and works with him
to follow out the play's drama.

The directors' work on the texts of medieval plays can assist this
process in two ways. First, their editing can repair fractures in
dramas that are the results of a variety of past misfortunes. The text
of Mankind, for example, has a major lacuna at its beginning, abruptly
breaking off Mercy's first long sermon and jumping into the revelry of
the Vices at the tavern. A resolution to this problem may be effected

by editing the text to integrate Mercy's sermon with the revelry of the Vices, thereby precipitating some of the drama's major conflicts and animosities at the play's very outset. Second, directors have a variety of options for handling language. For example, almost all of the characters in Mankind speak in Latin at one time or another. The Latin may be translated or retained and translated, as in Titivillus's, "Ego sum dominancium dominus--I am the Lord of Lords" (475), thereby triply reinforcing his character's pride, or glossed by actor pantomime, as in Nowadays's, "Osculare fundamentum" ("Kiss my ass" 142). The work of directors is done when they have made complete understanding possible; they do not have to ensure it at all points. To do that would be to usurp their audiences' right--in fact, their duty--to invest some of their own efforts in the success of the performances.

The interpretive tensions that the productions of medieval drama share with the productions of any dramatic works lie in the inescapable struggle to fulfill the silent word on the page through appropriate utterance, appearance, and action on the stage. The problems of reconciling presumed authorial intent with performance interpretation and of suiting word to action are essential matters for directors to settle, and are not unlike the problems all performance artists must face. Whereas those who create works in the material and plastic arts may be content with something like Keats's notion of a "silent form" that has the capacity to "tease us out of thought," those who create works for performance depend on interpretive artists to give animation to their ideas through their active play upon the senses. Composers

anticipate musicians, dancers, singers, and very likely nowadays
conductors, choreographers, and vocal coaches as well. They would be
loath to think that what they wrote was meant to lie silent upon the
page, to remain a "still unravished bride of quietness." Likewise,
playwrights anticipate actors and nowadays directors as well. They
must come to accept that their words, unlike the words of other
authors, create outward-bound, generative contexts, not insulated or
definitive contexts. T. S. Eliot goes to the heart of the matter:

> In writing other verse, I think that one is writing, so to
> speak, in terms of one's own voice: the way it sounds when
> you read it to yourself is the test. For it is yourself
> speaking. The question of communication, of what the reader
> will get from it, is not paramount: if your poem is right to
> you, you can only hope that the readers will eventually come
> to accept   it. . . . But in the theatre, the problem of
> communication presents itself immediately. You are
> deliberately writing verse for other voices, not for your
> own, and you do not know whose voices they will be. You are
> aiming to write lines which will have an immediate effect
> upon an unknown and unprepared audience, to be interpreted to
> that audience by unknown actors rehearsed by an unknown
> producer [i. e., director]. (138)

Playwrights give over their texts to the expert nurture of production
directors, to be brought by them to completed expression, with
something like the leap of faith with which some medieval and
Renaissance families would give over their adolescent children to be
raised in the households of others, hoping to find them adults upon
their return.

The problems inherent in reconciling presumed author intent with
performance interpretation are complex and knotty. These problems
cluster around several tough questions. Do authors exert so much
intellectual and expressive control over their works that their
meanings and thematic structures admit only one right interpretation?

If authors are not available to supply their own interpretive directions to their works, can their "intents" be recovered by subsequent interpreters? Is authorial intent extractable from the text itself, without the aid of external sources of information? If authors are not available for interpretive adjudication, upon what bases do subsequent interpretations claim authority? Is the notion of presumed authorial intent itself fallacious? Even if an author presumably had a single intent during the composition process, does that intent sufficiently explain what in fact was produced? That is, do authors produce works that convey more meanings in more ways than they are aware of when they write? These questions are now commonplace in discussions of literary theory. For directors, however, these questions cannot remain abstract disputations. Actors and technical crews demand to know what specific business they should be about every moment of performance, and <u>why</u>. Their audiences have an equal right to expect that what they see and hear on stage will make sense throughout.

Such questions can be especially tough for directors, because the medium of drama admits more than one hand to the composition process. Some dramas from the medieval corpus, like the <u>Second Shepherds'</u> <u>Pageant</u>, can be more confidently assumed to be largely the product of one author's controlling vision. A good many others show evidence of many hands working over many different versions over a considerable period of time. Such a process of multiple contributions to the drama exists even in modern times. The published text of <u>A Streetcar Named</u> <u>Desire</u>, for example, reflects Tennessee Williams's rewriting of some actors' rehearsal improvisations, and his notes on the stage design,

blocking, and actor business reflect the work of Jo Mielziner and Elia Kazan.[3] The practice of multiple authors, too, is widespread. Neil Simon has contributed revisions to many another playwright's script during rehearsals and pre-Broadway runs. George S. Kaufman and Abe Burrows, to cite two playwrights from earlier in this century, made profitable moonlighting careers of "doctoring" the scripts of others. Any drama, whether medieval or modern, needs to support some order of controlling vision and thematic structure to be any good at all. But the communal, collaborative nature of this medium makes singularity in interpretation impossible, if not altogether undesirable. Only rarely do performance interpretations approach "definitive" status (as in Marlon Brando's Stanley Kowalski). More commonly, directors locate their interpretations within what can be described as legitimate "fields" of interpretive responses. The process can seem frustrating, but it is ultimately liberating.

Playwrights have been surprised and happy on occasion to discover that their dramas can sustain more than one interpretation. When asked about the possibility of multiple interpretations of his works, Arthur Miller once remarked that over time, and after working with a number of formidable directors including the likes of Harold Clurman and Elia Kazan, he was content to accept that his works were more complex than he realized when he wrote them.[4] There was no single right interpretation, though there could be any number of wrong ones. Stanislavski, himself, ran into this problem during the Moscow Art Theatre's first reading of Chekhov's Three Sisters. As the delicacy and pathos of the drama came to grip Stanislavski and the actors more

and more, so much so that several of them were moved to tears, Chekhov grew more and more agitated and finally bolted from the theater in a rage. He thought that he had written a "happy comedy" (_My Life in Art_ 370-71). We know now that the essence of Three Sisters floats somewhere in between pathos and comedy, though its exact location resists fixed coordinates. And so it should, for its floating essence invites performance exploration again and again. Each production, so long as it remains in the legitimate interpretive field between pathos and comedy, affirms that Chekhov wrote to invite the discovery of meaning on the stage, not to impose it.

As for the medieval cycle and morality plays, the interpretive tensions between presumed authorial intent and directorial interpretation are both easier and more difficult. Directorial interpretation of these plays is easier because they all derive their dramas from a common theology. In one sense, all of them share the same meaning. Whether it is the Play of Adam or Noah or Abraham and Isaac or The Castle of Perseverance or Everyman or Mankind or whichever, each play, in microcosm, is a dramatic homily on the right relationship of man to God, which in all instances is effected by turning the human will to the divine through obedience. In this sense, each play fully understood becomes all plays in the medieval religious drama, essentially understood. So long as modern directors are willing to bend their sympathies to medieval theology and religious observance, their interpretations cannot go too far wrong.

Things get more difficult when generalities have to be made specific, when universals have to become local, and when abstractions

have to be concrete. That the medieval playwrights recognized that
essential truths could have multiple manifestations is evident in the
quantity of dramas they wrote, especially in the Corpus Christi cycles.
They found the Scriptures replete with variations on the same theme.
Likewise, each drama has its own assembly of multiple and varying
characters who play out its essential themes. The problem for
directors, for which they do not have the easy solution of medieval
theology and religious observance, is what to do with these characters.
Just who are those three shepherds in the Second Shepherds' Pageant?
Where did they come from? Where are they now? How old are they? What
do they look like? What do they wear? How do they move? How do they
speak? How do they relate to each other? What do they do? And why do
they do it? Why does what happens happen to them, and not to somebody
else? Such questions as these, and many more, beg interpretive
answers. Directors cannot avoid these questions and still play the
play. They must think in terms of the actors--real people--leaving the
wings and entering the set, and realize that they are desperate to know
what course of action their characters should be about, why that course
and not some other, and how best to perform it. Actors cannot play
generalities and will not be made to seem witless fools in public.

Underlying all of the other interpretive tensions that directors
must face is the designing of a mise en scène that suits word to
action. Directors are pressed by the unrelenting demands of
performance to transform the abstract and "fixed" state of the dramatic
text into the physical and "fluid" expression of the stage. The
essential problem here is deciding what takes precedence, what

dominates—fidelity to text or fidelity to stage action. Perhaps that
is too stark and artificial a distinction, though I suspect that the
temptation for literary scholars of these plays is to guard the texts
jealously, to protect the words against all apparent license in
interpretation. In so doing, their vigilance can sacrifice the drama
for its poetry. What can take precedence for them is the structure of
imagery or the recurrence of motifs or the running theological argument
(evidenced by apparent typology or figuration or presumed allegory) or
some other critical construction. So long as their vision remains in
these regions, the drama remains an intellectual abstraction,
unexpressed and unexpressible on the stage. For directors to counter
with stage action that ignores literary understandings, though, does
just as much damage to the drama, for the temptation then is to compose
evocative sets or artful tableaux or startling business or intriguing
characterizations for their own sakes, without a controlling
justification from the text itself. The temptation is to make a mark
upon the play by theatrical artifice, something over which directors
have complete control. The directors' yielding to the temptations of
stage effects, without regard for literary authority, risks making
their productions idiosyncratic theatrical "creations," which would
subvert or subsume the proprietary rights of the source texts.

In his article, "Performing the Poem," David Samuelson suggests
some ways in which this tension between the authority of the word and
the experience of performance can be made meaningful, even if it cannot
be entirely assuaged. He argues that the last scene in King Lear
communicates Shakespeare's affirmation of the human experience only in

a performance that fuses word to action in a way that gives to each a greater expressive power. He concentrates on what to do with the temptation for directors to make the final lines of Lear over the dead Cordelia a pietà-like tableau vivant. He writes that to "see this spectacle would mean we would see more, something like a halo effect superimposed over this particular image of grief, an aura of the universal type, a typal image that absorbs the individual instance and mitigates the horror" (22). However, this staging, he argues, "is rendered implausible by the language 'dramatically' controlling our vision, those five 'nevers' [King Lear V, iii, 314] which at the very least make this staged emblem cruelly sardonic" (22). Shakespeare's language prohibits the false, too easy stage action of self-serving pity, remorse, and reconciliation.

On the other hand, to do nothing on the stage but recite the words misrepresents the depth of Shakespeare's vision, one that probes deeper realities than those that can be spoken. Samuelson argues that the characters, by sharing silent witness to the deaths of Cordelia and Lear, bind themselves and us to the pain and "heart" of the human experience. He writes that Shakespeare creates for the stage a torturing, but affirmative bonding to life in the "way [the] survivors refuse deflecting commentary and refuse to look away. Instead, they gaze with unspeakable care toward the vanished image of nothingness, and in doing so they evince a human image of 'heart,' the radical force Cordelia herself represents and which underlies the 'bonds' in this play" (24-25). Shakespeare's words carry partial truth; the stage business carries partial truth. Together, they become something more

meaningful than either alone. Lear is witness to Cordelia's death, the survivors are witnesses to Lear's death, and the audience, sharing a living silence with them after and beyond their words, is witness to all. The words, the action, the actors and audience together fulfill the dramatic moment. Shakespeare's drama completes its meaning in its playing.

Mankind has an analogous moment. Its last scene reconciles Mankind to God through the intercession of Mercy. The modern production of this play can act out this reconciliation in ways that overtake the words and that were not available to its medieval cast. Everything about the final scene implies that Mercy reconciles Mankind to God through the sacrament of penance. Such would have been the appropriate conclusion to a Shrovetide play. But the medieval stage did not permit the portrayal of the sacraments, so in the text Mercy teaches Mankind back to God in a scene that includes invitation, confession, explication, and departing charge--every element of the sacrament but the laying on of hands and the forgiveness of sin. Our production inserted the Latin lines of the sacrament ("Ego te absolvo peccatis tuis"--I forgive you your sin), performed the sacrament, and cut much of the instruction. The medieval drama, too, completes its meaning in its playing.

I have used those terms, drama and play, liberally so far, but with implicitly restricted meanings--drama for what occurs on the page, play for what occurs on the stage. Before I continue using them, the boundaries to their usage need to be made more explicit. The nature of drama can be highly theoretical and difficult to pin down; the playing

of the play accrues to itself more physical, but equally demanding, difficulties. Moreover, the application of Stanislavski techniques to medieval dramatic literature may seem to beg the question of what constitutes drama. His techniques are commonly associated with the naturalistic dramas of Chekhov, Gogol, Turgenev, Ibsen, and others, and readers may presume that his techniques impose that character on all dramas to which they are applied, an imposition that would destroy the integrity of the medieval dramatic vision. Stanislavski's own career belies that presumption, however. Stanislavski did not restrict his directing to naturalistic plays; he also directed the classics, opera, popular farces, and expressionistic plays. The application of his techniques has extended to impressionistic and "absurd" plays as well. In 1988, Mike Nichols, who was trained by Lee Strasberg at The Actors Studio (America's foremost advocate of the Stanislavski system), successfully directed Samuel Beckett's <u>Waiting for Godot</u>. Even though Stanislavski's techniques have been proved to be very adaptive and flexible indeed, they make certain assumptions about the nature of drama which will limit the scope of that term for this dissertation.

The most basic of those assumptions is that dramas require performance. If there is any common authorial "intent" to dramatic literature, it is the expectation of playwrights that communities of actors will enact their words. Though dramas may share some qualities with other forms of literature, they alone demand physical representation. The novel may have characters and story and dialogue, but it is written quietly alone and can be read quietly alone. The epic may have great poetry and sweeping conflict, but it can complete

its meaning between the page and the eye; it can accommodate performance, but does not require it. The dramatic monologues of authors like Browning have characters and speech, but no necessity for stage representation. Playwrights, however, originate works in one medium that require another and different one for their completion.

Another assumption of Stanislavski's techniques is that dramas have conflict. His techniques work best when the issues of the drama necessarily involve struggle. Some dramas in the medieval corpus are largely episodic, as are the prophets plays, and they do not lend themselves to Stanislavski's techniques easily. Though they represent characters, these prophets have little to do with each other and have little conflict to struggle with, except, perhaps, for having the implicit struggle of teaching an obdurate humanity the will of God. (Why else would God have to employ so many of them?) They can be spectacularly theatrical, given their opportunities for costuming, properties, and movement, but without intercharacter conflict, Stanislavski's techniques find them harder to deal with.

Likewise, Stanislavski's techniques have a more difficult time of it with medieval liturgical dramas. Though I have directed the Quem quaeritis for Easter church services, its very sparseness hobbles the Stanislavski impulse to develop full characterizations and patterns of conflict and resolution. The play will yield some interesting staging, though, when one posits that the Angel has to overcome a number of doubts, fears, and contrary expectations among three Marys of very different character backgrounds and temperaments. Directors can make of this little drama a truly Stanislavskian moment, but it must be

carefully done. They have to mine the dialogue with a good bit of
disciplined imagining in order to extract characterizations and action
from what is only barely suggested in the text, and they must be able
to extract them without violating the drama's simplicity of spirit and
expression.

The rest of the medieval religious dramatic corpus--the remaining
cycle, morality, and saints plays--respond to Stanislavski's techniques
well. They are full of conflicts, conflicts of man against man and of
man against the will of God. They play out struggles that are cosmic
and mundane, spiritual and physical, and psychological and social. The
fullest and best of them, represented in this study by the Second
Shepherds' Pageant and Mankind, provide as much for Stanislavski's
techniques to work with as almost any modern play. Even the briefer
and less developed dramas from this corpus provide substantial amounts
of dramatic conflict, if directors are willing to dig for it. The
twenty minutes or so of the N Town Magi Play, for example, can be
filled with intrigue and dissimulation, pomposity and deception,
resistance to flattery and godly obedience.

Lastly, Stanislavski techniques assume dramatic characterization.
The heart of Stanislavski's system, as first devised by him and as
later augmented by other practitioners, is the development of
individual, believable, integrated character interpretations. Above
all else, Stanislavski's techniques respond to the needs of the actors,
among whose characters the conflicts of the drama will be generated,
acted out, and resolved. Stanislavski's three books establishing the
core of his system (An Actor Prepares, Building a Character, and

Creating a Role) are all actor based. His techniques presume that the characterizations in good dramas will sustain the actors as they search for inner truth and expressive motivational and behavioral logic. In this regard, the greater part of the medieval drama is packed with characters who are among the most interesting and important in the world: Adam, Noah and Mrs. Noah, Abraham, Herod, Mary, Jesus, Pilate, and on and on. Directors who apply Stanislavski's techniques for searching out and developing rich characterizations from textual sources meet little resistance in this medieval drama and find much to reward their efforts.

These three elements, then—performance intent, conflict, and characterization—delimit the nature of drama for this study and the number and sort of dramas in the medieval corpus to which Stanislavski's techniques will have the most useful applications. On balance, his techniques apply to more of the dramas than not. Such news is good on two accounts. First, the application of Stanislavski's techniques offers a systematic, and as yet largely unapplied, means to reveal what makes these old dramas successfully dramatic. Second, because they work so well on so many of these dramas, these techniques can bolster the reputations of the medieval playwrights themselves. Though they may have been writing when dramaturgy in Europe was still young and formative, their works are true dramas, and far from primitive. Drama did not become some other species of composition when it turned secular in the Renaissance, as a result of the impacts of the Protestant Reformation, the rediscovery of Classical writers, and the rise of Humanism. Its performances may have gotten longer and more

elaborate, its conflicts may have gotten more intricate, and its characterizations may have gotten more complex and sophisticated, but old man Adam remained (and still remains) his same own self.

Whether the drama is the York _The Fall of Man_ or Marc Connelly's _The Green Pastures_, Archibald MacLeish's _J. B._, or Andrew Lloyd Webber's _Jesus Christ Superstar_, or any other, the quality of its dramaturgy is proved by the level of performance that it can sustain-- the final test of any drama is how well it plays. The medieval drama is not exempt from this stricture and does not need to be. But single productions of dramatic works can be deceptive. Some good dramas get bad productions and at first seem weaker than they are. Some bad dramas get spectacularly distracting productions and for a short while seem better than they are. Stanislavski's techniques can help to ensure that each of these old dramas gets fair playing and thereby fair judgment. They apply the same standards, the same analysis, the same strategies, the same rehearsal methodology to every production of every play. By the application of these techniques, the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ can receive the same rigorous performance test in Toronto or in Chapel Hill or back home in Wakefield as it did in East Lansing. And in the end, multiple productions can confirm its success or failure; it can escape performance anomaly and critical misrepresentation. The Wakefield Master likely never needed such a confirmation of his abilities; his drama played well then and continues to play well today. _Mankind_'s playwright, on the other hand, would likely have been glad to know that his work could find in these techniques a way to recover its reputation for twentieth-century scholars, performers, and audiences.

As for the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u>, the application of Stanislavski techniques helps to explain and reinforce the literary esteem for this drama's excellence. These techniques demonstrate that it is a masterful synthesis of thematic control, tight structure, close verisimilitude, insightful characterizations, raucous comedy, and moving pathos—all brought to heart-catching fulfillment in a final scene that is as moving as it is revealing. This simple, artless scene of the shepherds' humble adoration of the Christ child is as serene, confident, and joyous as was the dramatic craftsmanship of the master playwright who wrote it. As for <u>Mankind</u>, Stanislavski's techniques demonstrate that it is an astonishingly powerful, surprisingly "modern," psychological and spiritual "cliffhanger." It thrashes through the conflicts that plague the human soul with a ferocity that is breathtaking, and then it structures the drama so that its final resolution is the last decision in the last scene of the play. (Will Mankind confess or not? Will he accept Mercy or not? What will Mankind decide to <u>do</u>?) To have an audience hanging on the performance to see what next a character will do, what act he will next perform, is dramatic writing at maturity and in full power. Stanislavski's techniques demonstrate that <u>Mankind</u>, far from being a degradation of the morality dramatic form, is one of the best (if not the best) of its expressions.

Explorers in the regions of the dramatic arts must be folk of many parts. Drama is the active fusion of intellect and substance, and those who study and practice it need to bring mind and body, understanding and experience to their labors. More than this, these

explorers must recognize that they are among a host of collaborators: playwrights, scholars, directors, actors, production crews, and audiences. Among all of these laborers and between them and the completed production is a bundle of inescapable tensions: tensions between past and present, idea and experience, universal and particular, intent and interpretation, word and action, conflict and resolution, error and truth. Modern productions of the medieval drama have them all. But what is inescapable need not be overwhelming. The techniques for interpretation, characterization, and staging that have grown in a school of theatrical practice begun by Constantin Stanislavski offer systematic means to shaping order from what can at first seem chaos. By these means, those collaborative and communal experiences unique to the regions of the dramatic arts can take their rightful place among the proper experiences of all the arts. And by these means the medieval drama can claim its proper place in the great body of English dramatic literature by demonstrable right, and not by faith alone.

NOTES

1. In his book, <u>On Acting</u>, Laurence Olivier writes:

> "'Now is the winter of our discontent . . .' is the most
> dramatic opening speech of any Shakespeare play; a direct,
> frontal attack on the audience's sensibilities, more brutal
> than Richard's upon Lady Anne's. . . . On film, I had to get
> the audience in the mood, give them some background, before
> the opening soliloquy. So I gave them the coronation scene,
> the last scene from <u>Henry VI Part III</u>, as I had done on stage
> at the Old Vic. . ." (303). And, "Even thinking about the
> way I shot the soliloquy fills me with pleasure: ideas
> springing naturally from the text (which, admittedly, I
> manipulated) . . . . For the first seventeen lines [Richard]
> speaks as though to each one of us personally. . . . But
> upon:

>> I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
>> Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,

> he turns away from the camera to list his deformities (I used
> ten lines from Act III, Scene II of <u>Henry VI Part III</u> for
> this, to save us embarrassment perhaps, to gain our sympathy
> certainly, to shout a bit, to show his righteous anger.
> Upon:

>> Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
>> Have no delight to pass away the time,
>> Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
>> And descant on mine own deformity

> he's standing at the entrance to the large throne room,
> expecting the camera to come closer to him. So upon 'Then,
> since this earth affords no joy to me' (the beginning of
> another five lines from <u>Henry VI</u> he moves toward us . . . "
> (304-305). Finally, "The last thirty lines of [Richard's]
> speech were from <u>Henry VI</u>. He says to us, after a modest
> smile: 'Meantime, I'll marry with the Lady Anne. Here she
> comes'--we see her through the window--'Lamenting her lost
> love.' (Not Shakespeare.) And taking us down a dark passage
> towards two huge doors which open into the courtyard, he
> explains who her lost love is:

>> Edward, the Prince of Wales [my words], whom I,
>>   some three months since,
>> Stabb'd in my angry mood at Tewksbury.
>> A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman . . .

> The spacious world cannot again afford; . . .
> And made her widow to a woeful bed.
>
> > (Richard III, <u>Act I, Scene II</u>)
>
> That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring
> To cross me from the golden time I look for!
>
> > (Henry VI, <u>Part III, Act III, Scene II</u>)
>
> . . . and he pushes open the doors. We see Lady Anne walking
> behind her husband's coffin . . . ." (306-307)

2. Cf. Frederick C. Copleston, <u>Medieval Philosophy</u>. The debate between "realists" and "nominalists" lasted in one form or another throughout the whole of the Middle Ages. Whether one favored the realist position of Anselm and others on, or later the nominalist position of William of Ockham and others, all positions had to account for, and somehow link, universals to particulars.

3. "We cut five pages out of the last scene and that was it. He [Williams] did insist on rewriting the throwaway lines the actors spoke to cover activities like carrying Brando to the cold shower. Tenn called them "dummy lines," wanted even these bits to have some quality of writing, so he'd give me scraps of hotel stationery with what he wished the actors to say instead of the improvisations I'd allowed. He wanted everything to be as worth hearing as watching" (Kazan, <u>A Life</u> 344).

4. Arthur Miller, personal notes from his discussion with the senior class in theatrical direction (Speech 438) at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, c. 1 March 1967. Also, "In America, <u>Death of a Salesman</u> was the great twentieth-century tragedy; in Europe, it was the final <u>drame satirique</u> on materialism" (Styan 22).

II. Word Made Flesh:
The Translation of Medieval Dramatic Texts
into Modern Performance Scripts

> Comparing the manner in which Chekhov conducted himself
> at rehearsals with the manner in which other authors
> conducted themselves, I cannot help but wonder at the
> extraordinary modesty of the great man and the boundless
> vanity of the little writers. One of them, for instance,
> when I suggested that a long-winded and false-sounding
> monologue in his play be shortened, told me with complete
> belief and the anger of the insulted in his voice:
> "Shorten it, but do not forget that you will be held
> responsible by history."
> But when we dared to suggest to Anton Pavlovich that a
> whole scene be shortened, the whole end of the second act of
> "The Cherry Orchard," he became very sad and so pale that we
> were ourselves frightened at the pain that we had caused him.
> But after thinking for several minutes, he managed to control
> himself and said:
> "Shorten it." (Stanislavski, _My Life in Art_ 417-18)

The production of any play requires that directors find some means

of bringing the ideas of the playwright recorded in a literary text to

the immediate understandings of an audience attending a live

performance. Anton Chekhov may have been more astute than most

playwrights in accepting the necessity for directorial "translation" of

his plays' texts into performance scripts that were responsive to the

exigencies of the theater. The circumstances of the rehearsal hall and

the stage are different from those of the study and the printing house.

Likewise, directors who create performance scripts for medieval cycle

or morality plays create complete production documents that "translate"

medieval meanings into modes of theatrical expression that will sustain

the actors' and production crews' work and be communicable to modern
audiences. The foundation for this work is the medieval text itself,
the source of directorial understanding of the playwright's dramatic
vision and the final authority for what can and cannot be justified on
the stage.

Performance scripts are documents created by directors to give
physical expressions to the playwrights' source texts. They anticipate
and prepare for specific productions by adapting and augmenting source
texts to accommodate stagings at particular places and times, with
unique assemblies of actors and production crews, and for specific
audiences. For any written drama, ancient or modern, the directors'
anticipation of and preparation for performance always involve some
order of "translation" from received texts to acting scripts. As
Harold Clurman argues:

> What we call a play in the theater is something radically
> different from a play on the page. The dramatist expresses
> himself mainly through words, the director through _action_
> which involves people amid the paraphernalia of the stage. .
> . (273). The dramatist's conception--his story-line and plan
> of action conveyed through descriptive words and dialogue--
> serves the other theater craftsmen as the _raw material_ from
> which they make the thing we finally witness at performance.
> . . (274). Theatrical action is virtually a new medium, a
> different language from that which the playwright uses,
> although the playwright hopes that his words will suggest the
> kind of action that ought to be employed. The director must
> be a master of theatrical action, as the dramatist is master
> of the written concept of his play. . . (275). On the stage
> the dramatist's language must be translated; his spirit must
> be made flesh. . . (276). The written play is not the goal
> of the theater--only the beginning. If the play at the end
> is not something beyond what it was at the beginning, there
> is very little point in the process of transposing it from
> the book to the stage; very little point, that is, to the
> whole art of the theater. (278)

Dialogue anticipates speaker, idea intimates character, and conflict calls for action.

What survive now as source texts of the medieval cycle and morality dramas are the spotty records of productions long since completed. The distance between their original and any modern productions makes the need for and the degree of directorial translation to create performance scripts all the greater. Their textual vagaries, distant and unfamiliar languages, and unrecoverable local and topical allusions make their meanings the more difficult to determine and the more challenging to communicate. And unlike many modern dramas, these texts supply little in the way of playwright suggestions for actor characterizations, costuming, set designs, stage properties, or sequences of stage actions and actor business. The bare dialogue and cryptic stage directions that they do provide are now insufficient to support modern productions, and thus they cannot be considered performance scripts.[1]

The translation of medieval dramatic texts into modern performance scripts has to address and solve substantial problems. The medieval text may need editing, cutting, and emending; Mankind, for example, has a major lacuna at its very beginning, and its text at various places apparently invites the insertion of local or topical references and allusions. The texts' Middle English and medieval Latin always need some degree of translation or reworking otherwise; the characters in Mankind speak in good or corrupt medieval Latin and in a now archaic East Midland dialect, and the sense of what they say needs to be brought within reach of modern audiences. Many of these texts also

call for songs or other performance elements not supplied by the
playwrights; the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ calls for songs at three
places, at least, and except for the obligatory _gloria in excelsis_,
nowhere else does the Wakefield Master identify specifically what that
music is to be. And the academic necessity of having to cast actors
largely from shifting populations of students can also affect the
character of the script. Our graduate course production of _Mankind_, as
it turned out, included only four male students; we had to rewrite some
lines, then, to support female characterizations. The problems that
directors encounter in making modern scripts out of medieval texts thus
range from the most sophisticated of literary concerns to the most
mundane of practical necessities. Directors cannot leave any of them
unsolved and still hope to produce a performance script that achieves
conceptual integrity and expressive coherence.

I wish that I could report that the script-making process for
Mankind and the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ was simple and linear, but it
was not. The determination and shaping of content and form and the
writing and revising of the scripts were constantly affected by my
accumulation of new insights into the languages of the source texts,
attendant literary and historical research, and emergent notions of
performance possibilities. Each reconsideration or revision of the
developing scripts opened new lines of linguistic, literary,
historical, or performance inquiry. Advances made on one front always
had repercussions on others. The process may sound circular, but it
was in fact a kind of incremental, give and take, bruise-by-teacup
progress. The problems that I encountered in translating these

medieval texts into performance scripts and the solutions that I found were thus multiple, cumulative, and inescapably interactive. General and integrative principles may be derived from them, but my account of these problems and their solutions here will, of necessity, take the artificial form of separate and sequential description.

*   *   *

The creation of a performance script begins with editing, cutting, and emending the source text. Before any other considerations, directors need to secure a written foundation that has textual integrity and can support a unified thematic interpretation. The construction of a whole and unified text for any medieval drama can proceed without having modernized any of its language or having supplied any supplementary elements. In fact, such a "pre-modernized" construction of a whole and unified text is essential, for it assures that the drama will shape and justify itself in and on its own terms.

A number of the medieval dramatic texts present problems here. Some texts, as the Shrewsbury and Newcastle fragments illustrate, survive in very incomplete states. Other texts, like that of _Mankind_, survive in more complete states, but with major lacunae. Still other texts have lesser gaps caused by physical damage to their manuscripts or by the carelessness of their copiers, or both. To complicate matters further, the texts of some medieval cycle dramas are expanded, cut, or otherwise altered versions of source texts adapted from other cycles from different towns. Whether great or small, any gap, lapse, or confusion in the source text disrupts the apparent progress of the drama and makes its interpretation and direction the harder to

ascertain and plot. What are directors to do, then, when faced with medieval texts that do not readily supply completeness or structural unity? My work in editing, cutting, and emending Mankind's text may be of some help in this regard. I had to repair a major lacuna, cut the play's length to fit the external demands of an hour's running time, and supply local and topical allusions in such a way as to realize the drama's meaning and structure, and make them both understandable and communicable to modern players and audiences.

The text of Mankind begins with Mercy's conflict with Mischief (1-71), then breaks (evidently, one leaf of the manuscript is missing), and then resumes with Mercy's interruption of the Vices' (i. e., New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought) revelry and their ensuing conflict (72-161). Between the Vices' exit and their next appearance, Mercy preaches to Mankind and seems to win his discipleship (162-322). Apparently, Mankind's playwright meant to establish early and crucial animosities between Mercy and Mischief and the Vices, thereby providing the provocation for the Vices' later retaliation on Mercy's disciple, Mankind. Without such an early establishment of provocation and discipleship, the Vices' later actions seem misdirected and illogical. Moreover, Mercy must establish himself early on as the vigorous, undeniable champion of virtue, an opponent against whom Mischief and the Vices (and ultimately Titivillus) are wholly unworthy. The logic of the play's conflict depends on the Vices choosing to attack Mankind, a more vulnerable adversary, whose rescue in the play's final scene is made plausible by Mercy's indomitable strength. As they stand in the text, though, the first 161 lines of Mankind do not provide a very

easily understood initiation of conflict: Mischief attacks Mercy for no
other reason it seems than his irritation at pompous oratory, and the
Vices seem to taunt Mercy before he has done anything directly to
provoke them. It remained, then, for the me to reorder these opening
lines to establish some character-justified conflict implicit in the
broken and disjointed text.

The first 322 lines of the play suggest that the initial conflict
of Mercy with Mischief and the Vices and the winning of Mankind as
Mercy's disciple take place in a tavern, in two distinct but related
"motivational units."[2] Nowadays's early reference to drinking, the
presence of minstrels and music, and Nought's passion for dancing all
reinforce this tavern locale. Moreover, Mischief's jealous attack on
Mercy suggests his defence of a tavern society completely under his
dominance. The first unit of the play (1-161) can thus be reordered
and unified to represent Mercy's challenge to Mischief's dominance of
this society. In the performance script Mercy's entrance first
disrupts the revelry of the Vices. Mischief then takes charge,
attempting to restore the tavern's jollity and his dominant position by
interrupting and mocking Mercy's sermon. Their ensuing conflict,
fueled by the Vices' belligerence and vulgarity, awakens Mankind's
sensitivity to his own soul's peril and motivates his divorce from the
tavern society to become Mercy's disciple in the second motivational
unit (162-322). The challenge to his dominance of the tavern world in
Unit I followed by his loss of Mankind in Unit II spur Mischief to
organize the later retaliation of the Vices, and when that fails, to
invoke the demonic power of Titivillus. So conceived, the reordered

lines in the initial motivational unit establish and reinforce dominant and subordinate conflicts in the morality.

The reordered portion of Unit I in our performance script follows. (Unbracketed line numbers are those of our script. The bracketed line numbers are those of Eccles's edition of Mankind's text.)

Unit I: Mercy Confronts the World in a Tavern

(Enter Mankind, Mischief, Vices, and Minstrels)

```
NEW GYSE. Ande how, mynstrellys, pley þe comyn trace!   1 [72]
      Ley on wyth þi ballys tyll hys bely breste!
NOUGHT. I putt case I breke my neke: how than?
NEW GYSE. I gyff no force, by Sent Tanne!
NOWADAYS. Leppe about lyuely! þou art a wyght man.
      Lett ws be mery wyll we be here!
NOUGHT. Xall I breke my neke to schew yow sporte?
NOWADAYS. Therfor euer be ware of þi reporte.
NOUGHT. I beschrew ye all! Her ys a schrewde sorte.
      Haue þeratt þen wyth a mery chere!                      10 [81]
                         Her þei daunce. MERCY [entering] seyth:
Do wey, do wey þis reull, sers! do wey!
NOWADAYS. Do wey, goode Adam? do wey?
Thys ys no parte of þi pley.
      NOUGHT. 3ys, mary, I prey yow, for I loue not þis
rewelynge.
Cum forth, goode fader, I yow prey!
Be a lytyll 3e may assay.                                      16 [87]
MERCY. The very fownder and begynner of owr fyrst
creacyon                                                       17 [1]
      Amonge ws synfull wrechys he oweth to be magnyfyede,
þat for owr dysobedyenc he hade non indygnacyon
      To sende hys own son to be torn and crucyfyede.
      Owr obsequyouse seruyce to hym xulde be aplyede[.] 21 [5]
      . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Yt may be seyde and veryfyede, mankynde was dere
bought.                                                        22 [9]
      By þe pytuose deth of Jhesu he hade hys remedye.
He was purgyde of hys defawte þat wrechydly hade wrought
      By hys gloryus passyon, þat blyssyde lauatorye.   25 [12]
[NOUGHT.] Anon of wyth yowr clothes, yf 3e wyll play. 26 [88]
      Go to! for I haue hade a praty scottlynge.
MERCY. Nay, brother, I wyll not daunce.
NEW GYSE. Yf 3e wyll, ser, my brother wyll make yow to
prawnce.
NOWADAYS. Wyth all my herte, ser, yf I may yow avaunce.
      3e may assay be a lytyll trace.                          31 [93]
[MERCY.] O souerence, I beseche yow yowr condycyons to
rectyfye                                                       32 [13]
```

Ande wyth humylite and reuerence to haue a remocyon
To þis blyssyde prynce þat owr nature doth gloryfye,
þat 3e may be partycypable of hys retribucyon.   35 [16]
I haue be þe very mene for yowr restytucyon.

Mercy ys my name, þat mornyth for yowr offence.   36 [18]
NOUGHT. 3e, ser, wyll 3e do well,   37 [94]
Trace not wuth þem, be my cownsell,
For I haue tracyed sumwhat to fell;
I tell yt ys a narow space.
But, ser, I trow of ws thre I herde yow speke.
NEW GYSE. Chrystys curse hade þerfor, for I was in slepe.
NOWADAYS. And I hade þe cuppe in my honde, redy to goo to
met.
Therfor, ser, curtly, grett yow well.
MERCY. Few wordys, few and well sett!
NEW GYSE. Ser, yt ys þe new gyse and þe new jett.
Many wordys and schortely sett,
Thys ys þe new gyse, euery-dele.   47 [105]
[MERCY.] Dyverte not yowrsylffe in tyme of
temtacyon. . . .   48 [19]

(Continue with Eccles's edition, lines 20-68.)

MYSCHEFF. I say, ser, I am cumme hedyr to make yow
game.   98 [69]
. . . .
MERCY. Lady, helpe! how wrechys delyte in þer synfull
weys!   99 [106]

(Continue with the normal order of the text.)

This reordered first unit for Mankind initiates the play's

desperate and eternal conflict in human and personal terms with

clarity, logic, and economy. In performance, the play opens with the

convergence of the Vices, Mischief, Minstrels, and Mankind in a tavern

(the "Double-Cross Tavern" in our production). They establish a

worldly context for the conflicts to come. There is much begun here

that will return again and again to tempt and taunt Mankind: drink,

dancing, sexual dalliance, and generally high spirited irreverence.

Mercy barges into this context and begins his moral instruction and

exhortations. Mischief sees that his control over the tavern world and

its inhabitants is threatened by Mercy and moves to discredit and

humiliate him. The Vices join in what promises to be a lively
entertainment at Mercy's expense. But Mercy, even though he does not
yet see all that will be needed to defeat his adversaries later,
counters blow for blow and eventually expels the Vices from the tavern.
Mischief is momentarily defeated and enraged. Throughout the first
unit, Mankind has been a silent witness to all. He has been
embarrassed at his own presence in the tavern, and when the Vices are
expelled he moves to establish contact with Mercy in the next
motivational unit. By the end of the second motivational unit, Mankind
will appear to have been easily rescued and sent back safely to his
fields and labor. Both actors and audiences have an immediate sense of
character relationships and a clearly understood and readily apparent
set of causes for the conflicts to come.

We cut some of Mercy's lines in the first motivational unit. We
cut others of his lines throughout the play, but mostly in the last
unit. Three factors determined the need for and the kind of cuts made
in the source text.[3] One factor was the external demand for an hour's
running time. Our 1975 production was included as part of East
Lansing's Arts Festival performance schedule. We were asked to keep
the length of performance to one hour. The following year our
production of Mankind was videotaped by Lansing Community College, and
its Instructional Media Department asked that we limit the running time
to one hour to make broadcasting easier to schedule. A second factor
was what Mercy had to say and how he said it. Mercy begins the play a
rather overbearing and flamboyant orator/preacher. He has important
truths to communicate, but he asserts their importance in language that

likely sounded pompous to a medieval audience and certainly sounds
extravagant and self-satisfied to a modern one. A good bit of Mercy's
inflated and redundant rhetorical style is open to lampooning, for he
appears at first to be out of touch with and untested by worldly
realities. Mischief and the Vices have a good bit of fun ridiculing
Mercy's sermonizing. We cut three of Mercy's lines at the very
beginning (6-8), for they are simply the amplification by redundancy of
his opening assertion that Christ died to win mankind's redemption. We
cut other lines in Mercy's opening sermon (32-41), for they seem to add
a parenthetical explanation of, and justification for, the Eucharist.
Cutting those lines helped the actor playing Mercy stay focused as a
character and helped to minimize the audience's distraction from his
central concern that ". . . þer xall be a streyt examynacyon,/The corn
xall be sauyde, þe chaffe xall be brente" (42-43). The sacrament of
most importance to Mankind in this play is not the Eucharist, but
penance, the third factor in determining the kind and extent of our
cuts in the source text.

In its playing, the drama of Mankind becomes the active, sometimes
violent, struggle of an individual Christian to secure his right
relationship to God. That struggle is resolved favorably in the end by
Mankind's confession of sin and acceptance of God's mercy, but the text
does not provide for an enactment of the sacrament of penance. The
medieval stage would not permit the secular portrayal of sacred offices
by lay actors (or by anybody else, for that matter). The opportunity
for the modern production of this play, then, is to complete the drama
by fulfilling the meaning of the text in a way that goes beyond the

capacities of the original performance itself. Two questions need to be answered before the director can go forward with this interpretation. Can Mercy be played as a member of holy orders with priestly powers? Does the text justify the inclusion of the sacrament?

Sister Mary Philippa Coogan's monograph, An Interpretation of the Moral Play 'Mankind', establishes Mercy as a Dominican friar with priestly powers. Her recitation of the internal evidence of the play is impressive. Mercy describes himself as the "mean for restitution," indicative of his priestly powers and is addressed as "good father," also an indication of his priestly status; he refers to Mankind as "my son" on numerous occasions, a priestly form of address; New Guise wishes that Mercy be sent to the number of the "demonical friary," an indication that Mercy is a friar of some sort, and the twist on demonical/dominican virtually certifies the order; and Nought assaults Mercy with "off with your clothes," suggesting that Mercy is wearing substantial and imposing clothing, very likely "the robe and cowl that constitutes the habit of the friar" (Coogan 2-7). Mercy describes himself as Mankind's "father gostly," and that he has a duty to "procede forth and do my propyrte" (Mankind 765).

Does this property include the sacrament of penance? Virtually the whole of the last scene cries yes. The dialogue between Mankind and Mercy is almost exclusively the recitation of Mankind's confession and Mercy's explanation of the causes of sin and the exhortation "'Vade et jam amplius noli peccare.'" (Go, and sin no more), the very words of Christ, himself (850, cf. John 8:11). Such content is entirely consonant with the play's Shrovetide theme and original performance

occasion. But since the medieval stage would not permit the portrayal of the sacrament itself, the last scene of this play loads instruction upon instruction. It communicates its overwhelming import by accumulated and reiterated verbal bulk rather than by the performance of the one, sacred act that would cleanse Mankind's soul and restore his right relationship to God. In the text Mercy teaches Mankind back to God, rather than actually binding him physically and spiritually to his maker. Our production reversed this proportion by cutting a good bit of the instruction and inserting the sacrament, by having Mankind ask for blessing ("Bless me, Father, for I have sinned"), and by having Mercy lay hands upon him to confer his healing ministration, "Ego te absolvo peccatis tuis" (I absolve you of your sin). The act overtakes the instruction and makes any more words unnecessary. The last 14 lines of our script for Mankind, including the insertion of the sacrament of penance between lines 898 and 899, ran this way. (Line numbers are those of Eccles's edition.)

> [MERCY.] The New Gyse, Nowadayis, Nowgth, þe World we
> may hem call; 885
>   And propyrly Titiuillus syngnyfyth the Fend of helle; 886
> . . . .
>   That ys to sey, the Dewell, þe World, þe Flesch and þe
> Fell. 884
> . . . .
>   Wherfore, goode sunne, absteyne fro syn euermore after
> þis. 892
> 3e may both saue and spyll 3owr sowle þat ys so precyus. 893
> . . . .
> 3our body ys 3our enmy; let hym not haue hys wyll. 897
>   Take 3our lewe when 3e wyll. God send 3ow good
> perseuerans! 898
> [MANKIND. Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.
> MERCY. Ego te absolvo peccatis tuis.
>   In nomine Patris, et Fillii, et Spiritus Sancti.]
> MANKEND. . . . her þen I go. 899
>   God send ws all plente of hys gret mercy! [Exit Mankind]

MERCY [Addressing audience]. Dominus custodit [vos] ab omni malo

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen!   902
[Exit Mercy. The play ends.]

Mercy's address to the audience in words that echo his sacramental absolution of Mankind closed our production by linking Mankind's individual drama to the collective experience of those who witnessed it. We took the immediacy of Mercy's closing benediction and its associative linking with the sacrament of penance to be sufficient to carry the import of the last scene and to transfer its implicit exhortation to eschew worldly vanities for divine grace to the audience. The last three stanzas of the text, which make the exhortation explicit, seemed less necessary and redundant and were cut. The drama came to a swift conclusion, hard upon the heels of its denouement--Mankind's last and most crucial decision, which was to accept God's mercy through the sacramental acts of confession and repentance.

There were other ways, though, that we employed to make the drama of Mankind more immediate and relevant to a modern audience. Our emending of the text, especially in our supplying modern local and topical allusions, helped to bridge the gap of time and also helped to fulfill some of the potentials for surprise and delight (or as Eccles says, "high-spirited fun" xliii) inherent in the text. We know that Mankind was originally performed at different locations by a traveling band of some six or seven players (depending on whether or not the parts of Mercy and Titivillus were doubled). The insertion of local and topical allusions appropriate to each medieval performance location served at least two purposes. First, they made the drama personally

relevant to each audience. Mankind has its generic figure, Mankind, but in naming actual people and places, it also became a close and immediate experience for those who saw it. The drama was not about other folk at some other time far away, but about those who shared it in their own time and place. Second, the insertion of local and topical allusions won audience sympathy. They elicited support and empathy for the players and their play by establishing a sense of a close community; the play was performed not by strangers but by familiar friends. For any who have ever acted, the need for such audience support and empathy does not have to be argued. The practice is as old as theater and continues today.

Some of the emendations that we made in Mankind's text simply gave modern American equivalents to medieval English places and things. For example, in the text New Guise attempts to conceal the money that he has just collected from the audience from Titivillus by saying "By þe masse, I fayll to farthyngys of an halpeny;/3yt hade I ten pounds þis nyght þat was" (480-81). We substituted American coinage and slang to have him say "By the mass, I fail two nickels of a dime;/Though I had ten bucks this night that was." The sense was readily understood by the audience and made the playing all the more humorous. In fact, we did collect money from our audiences, and when New Guise delivered those lines to Titivillus his feeble deception not only sounded witless and unbelievable, but the large bag of coins that jangled about his waist also made his lie incredible.

We had more "high-spirited fun" with our insertions of names into the text. In lines 689-90 Mischief puts his court in the time of the

reign of King Edward IV: "Anno regni regitalis/Edwardi nullateni." We brought the lines closer to home, though we kept some of the self-important pomp of their Latin: "In this year of the reign regitalis/Of Geraldus Fordus." (Few American Presidents have been less adept at being "regitalis" than Jerry Ford, a joke which our audiences seemed to catch very quickly.) Earlier in the text, Titivillus orders the Vices to say to whom they will go where they "may do harme" (502). He volunteers that they may "Take William Fyde, yf 3e wyll haue ony mo" (503). That name, and the others supplied by the text, seemed open invitations to insert current substitutions of our own which our audiences would delight in hearing. At line 503, Titivillus always surprised our audiences when he blurted out "Take Tricky Dick, if you will have any more." His derogatory reference to Richard Nixon, who had just affirmed again that he was "no crook," was perfect for Titivillus's abusive character, the "situational ethics" temper of the times, and the drama's criminal moment.

In the text, New Guise is the first to respond to Titivillus. He says that he will go to "Master Huntyngton of Sauston" (505), "Wylliam Thurlay of Hauston" (506), and Pycharde of Trumpyngton" (507). Our script, however, did not give him credit for such presence of mind, and his response to Titivillus amounted to a fumbled stammering of nonsense. (Throughout our play, New Guise was always the most pompous and least clever of the Vices.) After New Guise's failure to think of anything, Titivillus turned to Nowadays, who fared better. In the text, Nowadays says that he will go to Wyllyham Baker (509), Rycherde Bollman (510), but "xall spare Master Woode of Fullburn/He ys a noli me

tangere" (511-12). In our script, Nowadays would go to Henricus
Kissinger and George Wallace. He would "spare Jean Leclercq, for he is
a noli me tangere." All of our audiences recognized the first two
references. We included Jean Leclercq in Nowadays's list for our
performance at the Eleventh International Congress on Medieval Studies
at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Dom Leclercq attended the conference, and our
audience of medieval scholars was particularly delighted by this
surprise reference to one of their own. In the text, Nought's list
follows. He says that he will go to "Wyllyam Patryke of Massyngham
(513) and "spare Master Alyngton of Botysam/Ande Hamonde of
Soffeham,/For drede of in manus tuas qweke" (514-16). In our script,
Nought would go to Ronaldus Reagan and would spare Otto Gründler. The
Reagan brand of conservative ideology and social values was a good
target for Nought's disdain for any pretense to social conservatism or
propriety. Professor Gründler coordinated the Congress on Medieval
Studies at Kalamazoo that year. It was he who invited us to perform,
and it was he whom we especially wanted to acknowledge and please, "For
drede of in manus tuas qweke."

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

The editing, cutting, and emending of the medieval dramatic text
is the necessary first step to creating a performance script. The goal
is to produce a written document that attains wholeness and thematic
unity in and on its own terms. But those terms, expressed as they are
in Middle English and medieval Latin (and other languages, sometimes),
are remote nowadays from the common experiences and understandings of
modern actors and audiences. The necessary next step in creating a

performance script is that of devising some means to make the meanings
of the medieval expressions understandable. That process involves two
orders of "translation" at least. One order is simply to make sure
that what amount to foreign expressions now get fair representation in
modern language equivalents. Directors must decide how to bring the
medieval Latin and other foreign languages into the reach of modern
audiences. Directors must also be alert to the shift in meanings of
English words over time, especially those Middle English words that at
first appear commonplace and familiar. Another order of "translation"
is more complicated. Beyond simply substituting modern lexical
equivalents to old or foreign words, directors must determine how the
meanings of the medieval languages affect dramatic interpretation and
stage action. There may be no modern equivalent for the medieval
expression, and the forcing of some modern, but only approximate,
"translation" upon the text will result in a misrepresentation of the
dramatic vision of the playwright. In those instances, directors must
invent stage action that will convey the playwrights' dramatic meanings
through and beyond their language. Both orders of translation share a
common goal: the fair representation of the medieval dramatic vision in
speech and action that bring its meanings to the possible grasp of
modern audiences.

Inserting lexical substitutions for old or foreign expressions in
the text is the simpler of the two orders of language translation, but
it is not altogether simple. Directors must decide whether it is
better to translate or not, even if there are modern English
equivalents. My work on the medieval Latin in Mankind offers some

examples here. I have already cited Nought's "For drede of in manus tuas qweke" (516) above. That little line combines English, Latin, and onomatopoeic nonsense into a phrase that has as its meaning: "for dread of being hanged." Eccles notes that the Latin quotes part of Psalm 30:6 in the Vulgate (31:5 in more recent Bibles), "In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum" (Into thy hands I commend my spirit); it was "the prayer said by the dying" (223). Moreover, Christ repeated this verse on the cross (cf. Luke 23:46), thus Nought's appropriation of the words to death by hanging. That sense, though, is not readily accessible to a modern audience. The Latin may not be understood and the phrase's associative medieval meanings, even if the Latin were understood by the audience, may be lost. Does the director translate the line or not?

I let the line stand just the way it was for three reasons. First, Nought is in effect quoting Christ here, at least in part. The tenor of his speech needed high seriousness at that moment. A possible hanging has supreme worldly significance for Nought, regardless of its consequences to his soul. Retaining the Latin elevated the apparent importance of Nought's concern, albeit his was based solely on worldly standards. Second, what began as a Latin quote of supremely high seriousness was immediately undercut by Nought's "qweke," his onomatopoeic imitation of the sound of neck-breaking strangulation. The juxtaposition of the Latin and the nonsense debased the allusion to Christ's crucifixion and fit Nought's character. Even in the contemplation of mortal and spiritual extremities, Nought could not stay serious or resist being vulgar. Third, stage action could convey

the line's meaning. If Nought grabbed his throat at "qweke," bugged his eyes, and stuck out his tongue, then Titivillus, New Guise, and Nowadays could immediately pick up his sense. Later, when New Guise warns Nowadays and Nought "Lett ws con well owr neke-verse, þat we haue not a cheke" (520), Nought's repetition of the choking pantomime linked his Latin to New Guise's English and reinforced the line's meaning. Still, not all of the audience may have got the sense of what he said, but my obligation as director was met, if the possibility for understanding had been established. My impulse in all of these instances was to be conservative. I retained as much of the original text as possible, and where direct translation would have sacrificed too much, I invented stage business that made communication possible beyond what the actors simply had to say.

The rest of Mankind's Latin was handled in a variety of ways, some easier than others. Mercy's "In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti" (902), when accompanied by his making the sign of the Cross, ought to have been recognizable to modern audiences; whether it was or not, it went untranslated into the script. The Latin in Mercy's opening sermons was kept, too, for Mischief had to mock it by imitation, and New Guise had to have cause for his "yowr body ys full of Englysch Laten" gibe (124). Even if the audience did not understand what Mercy said in Latin in his preaching, neither did the Vices. It may well have been sufficient for the audience to have recognized that Mercy began the play a little too aloof, a little too "bookish" for his own good or for that of the simple, untutored folk he wanted to save. Mankind's playwright did have a sense, it seems, of when his Latin had

to be understood. At those points, he provided his own translation, as when Mercy says to Mankind: "For þer ys euer a batell betwyx þe soull and þe body:/'Vita hominis est milicia super terram'" (227-28, cf. Job 7:1). The metaphor of battle informs the whole of the play!

Following the playwright's cue, our script supplied other translations that stood side by side with the Latin and reinforced dramatic meaning. In the text, Titivillus enters saying "Ego sum dominancium dominus and my name ys Titivillus" (475). In our script, we inserted the English translation, "I am the Lord of Lords" immediately after the Latin, and thus emphasized the devil's pride. Not only did he proclaim himself lord in over-reaching language, but he also inflated the Latin with the "ego" intensifier and then translated his extravagant claim so that the local Vices would understand and be cowed by his presence. The audience derived benefit from the translation, but enjoyed a different response to the message. We also glossed Mischief's line "And do yt sub forma jurys, dasarde!" (666) by adding "Legal-like, you blockhead" and directing the epithet to a befuddled New Guise. Mischief's condescension to New Guise reiterated their dominant/submissive relationship, and the audience got the lateral benefit of the gloss.

The more comfortable the actors became with playing out the meaning of Mankind's Latin, the more we left it untranslated, as in Mankind's beginning of the Lord's Prayer at line 554, "Pater noster qui es in celis." Similarly, the actor playing Nowadays could pantomime the sense of line 142, "Osculare fundamentum!" (Kiss my ass!), and leave the Latin alone. In our script and performance, Nowadays

followed Mischief's lead and taunted Mercy (instead of Nought, as the text seems to indicate) in his own church language. Nowadays's use of Latin to express such a vile thought to Mercy made the words, when accompanied by the pantomime, doubly insulting. Finally, for Mercy's absolution of Mankind, we added Latin to the script where none occurred in the text. The sacraments in the Middle Ages were performed in no other language.

The intent of our script and performance decisions about what to do with Latin words, phrases, and sentences that were likely to be outside the immediate understanding of the audience was to preserve dramatic meaning. If the Latin could be <u>played</u> as it stood in the text, then it went untranslated into the script. If not, then it was altered to make its sense clear to the audience in such a way as to keep our script as close to the playwright's dramatic vision as possible. Sometimes the Latin was simply retained and glossed, sometimes it was replaced by whole translations, and sometimes it was not translated at all. In the end, my decisions about translating <u>Mankind</u>'s Latin were individual. The sole criterion for how I handled each word, phrase, sentence, or speech was how best its dramatic import could be played on stage.

The same performance criterion applied to the ways in which I handled the Middle English in <u>Mankind</u> and the <u>Second Shepherds'</u> <u>Pageant</u>. There is, however, one important difference between the playwrights' usages of Middle English and Latin in the cycle and morality plays. Whereas Latin is almost always used to invoke special levels of authority among characters, Middle English is the common

language of dramatic meaning. It is from the matrix of Middle English meanings that directors extract thematic interpretations and determine performance characters for these plays. What directors make of the meanings of the Middle English, in short, establishes performance authority. Without a clear understanding of Middle English meanings, directors are at a loss to give the actors any coherent or unified direction to their work on stage. If modern actors have a clear understanding of what the Middle English meant for the playwright, the original actors, and their audiences, then they may work together to bring that dramatic vision within the grasp of modern audiences. Directors could make something of these plays, even if they understood no Latin at all, though that "something" would be the lesser for it. They can do nothing useful with these plays, however, without understanding the Middle English.

The process of "translating" Middle English into dramatic action is as much interpretive as it is lexical. No change in the original text escapes having interpretive impact on the performance. The options for actor translation of the Middle English are as many as for the Latin. The more that actors understand the Middle English themselves, the less dependent they are on word-by-word substitutions. And the more that the actors can "play" medieval meanings, the less dependent is the audience on hearing such substitutions. Readers of these cycle and morality plays may not always grasp this performance truth: on the stage, action always takes precedence over the spoken word. Stage action should not violate the sense of the medieval playwright's words, but his words alone do not make the play. Neither

the actors nor the audience has the same contemplative luxury of the
reader. The play cannot stop in performance for interpretive
footnotes, nor can a scene be repeated (reread) to study out its verbal
imagery or thematic motifs. One word here or a line there or a stanza
later on is but one moment in a flowing progression of meaning revealed
in action. Richard Hornby comes to the point directly. Reacting to
over-close readings of Shakespeare, he writes:

> The American New Critic Cleanth Brooks, for example,
> published an essay on a single short passage from _Macbeth_:
>
> > a naked new-born babe,
> > Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, hors'd
> > Upon the sightless couriers of the air. . . (I. vii.
> > 21-23)
>
> Brooks maintained that this complicated and confusing image
> informs the entire playscript, containing in kernel form the
> whole underlying structure. While he makes an interesting
> and often ingenious argument, it is hard to grant so much
> weight in a _dramatic_ work to a single passage of such
> opacity, which requires about five seconds to recite, in a
> scene that depends for much of its effect on a banquet going
> on simultaneously in the next room. . . . While the method
> of imagery analysis contains important implications for the
> stage designer, who can translate verbal images into visual
> ones, it is simply too static to be adequate by itself for
> the actor or director. (18-19)

Whether the Middle English in these cycle and morality plays is simply
retained or retained and glossed or translated outright depends on the
capacities of directors and actors for performance invention, <u>once the
meaning of the Middle English is clear to them</u>.

The "translation" of the plays' Middle English into sound and
action that will be communicable to modern audiences does not intend to
produce simply another variety of literary document. Instead, it seeks
answers to inescapable, and quite practical, questions that affect the
plays' interpretations, productions, and performances. Essentially,

these questions address dramatic circumstances, conflict relationships,
and characterizations. Actors need to know who their characters are,
what they look like, what they do, and how they relate to each other.
Set, lighting, make-up, costume, and properties designers and technical
crews need to know what direction the physical construction and
practical operations of the production will take. All look to their
director for answers. And their directors look to the Middle English,
first to understand it and then to decide how best to express its
meaning. Three passages from the Second Shepherds' Pageant can
illustrate how directors may extract answers to the questions of
dramatic circumstances, conflict relationships, and characterizations
from the Wakefield Master's Middle English and how directors may devise
ways to communicate their medieval meanings to modern audiences.

The dramatic circumstances of the Second Shepherds' Pageant are
established in the shepherds' opening complaints. The external
physical circumstances may be quickly sketched. The time of year is
late December, just before the birth of Christ. All of the shepherds
begin their complaints with descriptions of the weather. They describe
a decidedly English winter night--cold, wet, and windy. In production,
we left these complaints against the weather just as they were, for
staging, sound effects, and lighting could create the sense of a cold
and hostile environment. We also know from the very beginning that
these shepherds are poor, ill-clothed, and hungry. They eke out an
existence, but by no means thrive. Coll says that he is "yll happyd"
(1) and "nere hande dold" (2). Gib says that the frosts are "so hydus
thay water myn eeyne" (58) and that "When my shone freys to my fete,/It

is not all esy" (62-63). Daw is terrified by the violence of the night, by "Wyndys and ranys so rude and stormes so keyn" (128). Everything on this night seems to him to be "wars that it was" (119). The script glossed "yll happyd" with "ill wrapped" to make clear that Coll was referring to the poor condition of his winter cloak and not to the whims of fortune. Otherwise, the script kept the Middle English, for the external physical circumstances were readily communicable through costuming and staging.

The external physical circumstances are also related to the social circumstances that affect the external and internal lives of these shepherds. The violent and oppressive weather is a reflection of deteriorating social values. Coll does not attribute his condition to fortune, but to the invidious practice of "mantenance" (35) that has elevated undeserving "gentlery men" (18) to social prominence and political and economic power. Coll does not see himself as unlucky at all, but as one "opprest in point to myscary,/On lyfe" (22-23). The specific form the oppression takes against him and Gib and Daw has been that of "purveance" (33). The actor and the audience both need to know what Coll is talking about here and how it affects his characterization, the point of the drama, and the audience's understanding. Does the language remain or change? How is the crucial importance of this external social circumstance communicated?

Coll's rage against gentry men and their abuses of power is crucial to the play and important to make clear to both the actor and the audience. Not all gentry men are the object of Coll's wrath, only those newly-made, with fresh stripes on their sleeves or shiny new

badges (28). For these men, "gentlery" describes an acquired social rank, not a station of birth. They wield their power, not by ancient right, but by recently bestowed authority, being "lord fest" (20), that is, bound to a local lord for their protection and "mantenance" (35). Arnold Williams writes that the "'maintenance' of which the shepherd complains was viewed by both moralists and legislators as one of the chief evils of the age. It was simply the practice of the powerful to hang together and to back up their subordinates, by legal means if possible, by force if necessary. The outcry against it was shared by commoner and lesser noble" (Drama 133). Lynn Squires ranks "maintenance, and its attendant evils perjury, champerty, and conspiracy to defraud" as "the most familiar evil of the age" (201). Coll resents the arrogance of these newly-minted men and distrusts them intensely. They are full of boasting and bragging (34) and they simply take away Coll's goods through "purveance" (33). Purveyance included "the act of requisitioning provisions for the royal household at a price set by the buyer" (Middle English Dictionary), an act that amounts virtually to the theft of Coll's goods to which he "were better be hangyd/Then oones say hym nay" (44-45). Purveyance was widely abused in fifteenth-century England, and Coll's complaint gives public outcry to an injustice that must have been silently endured by many.

These three terms—gentry men, maintenance, and purveyance—and their social import meant different things to Coll's medieval audience than they would likely mean to modern listeners. Gentry has modern connotations of comfortable economic circumstances and social reputation, all rather benign. Further, the word has lately gained a

colloquial verbal form in America that connotes a change which brings about a material improvement to property values, as in "to gentrify" a neighborhood. Beyond its commonplace meaning of routine upkeep and a state of good repair, maintenance in American criminal law refers to third party interference in law suits for personal gain--what Squires cites as the attendant evil, champerty, above. Those usages, even if a modern audience knew them, would still not encompass all of Coll's rage. Purveyance may have now lost most, if not all, of its connotations of buyer-set prices and virtual theft. If these terms were left "untranslated" by directors, then the modern actors and their audiences would likely understand only a part of what had meaning for Coll and his fifteenth-century English audience, and not the most important part at that.

The importance of these terms to the Second Shepherds' Pageant is so great, however, that directors must devise ways to make their meanings accessible to modern audiences. Coll's rage against what appear to him to be fraudulent acts perpetrated by counterfeit gentry men underlies virtually all of his actions in the play. In this he is not alone. Not only is maintenance a threat to Coll's livelihood; it is also a threat to the order of society itself. As Squires writes: "Law stood for the principle of virtue itself; it stood for the ordering forces in society and, more importantly for our purposes, in drama" (200). Coll sees society itself collapsing, especially in the disintegration of the values of honesty and truth that he esteems most. Squires notes that the "retrogression to feudal disorder in the fifteenth century is a historical commonplace; the cause of disorder is

said most usually to be the indentured retinue or band of retainers

serving the often violent purposes of their sworn lords"--in short, the

"gentlery men" (201). Coll rages against their counterfeit of

nobility, their acts of fraud upon the defenseless, and their self-

serving abuse of and disregard for the social contract expressed in

law. The Wakefield Master's short, explosive lines serve Coll's rage

well, as in:

> Thus hold thay vs hunder,
> Thus thay bryng vs in blonder;
> It were greatte wonder,
>   And euer shuld we thryfe. (24-27)

These are sharp words from "perhaps the greatest satirist of his times"

(Williams, _Drama_ 141). How can directors help an actor to communicate

these dramatic circumstances that Coll's character brings to this play

and that will affect all of his actions in it? How can directors help

to make the sense of the medieval terms that Coll uses to explain

himself accessible to modern audiences?

There are two ways to handle the difficulties of this language

barrier. One way is to gloss and augment the text in place. For

example, lines 15-18 identify the gentry men as the perpetrators of

Coll's oppression. The Master's lines are short, choppy, full of spite

and anger:

> we ar so hamyd,
> ffor-taxed and ramyd,
> We ar mayde hand tamyd,
>   with thyse gentlery men.

Recasting them into modern English can capture Coll's anger by simply

clarifying the complaints and replacing the demonstrative pronoun

"thyse" with an adjective of contempt and derision:

> We are so lamed,
> Overtaxed and shamed,
> That we are hand-tamed,
> > By tin god gentry men.

The gentry men's abuses of maintenance offend Coll not only because they violate his traditional senses of social truth (troth) and justice, but also because the perpetrators flaunt their protected status. Coll's frustration is that he can do nothing to stop these abuses. When he speaks of maintenance, the audience must understand that it is the proper name for a social practice much abused in fifteenth-century England, and that it is not simply the equivalent of the modern senses of normal upkeep or support. Also, the performance script needs to make clear that purveyance amounted to a medieval license for gentry men to steal. Lines 33-36, then, need some reworking to convey these medieval meanings. In the text, they read:

> he can make purveance,
> with boste and bragance,
> And all is thrugh mantenance
> > Of men that are gretter.

The performance script can reorder these lines a bit and insert a gloss to help the audience understand that Coll is raging against an evil practice that has legal sanction:

> He just takes what he wants,
> By law of purveyance,
> And brags of his maintenance
> > By lords that are greater.

This translation not only makes the intimate--to Coll the offensive-- connections among gentry men, maintenance, and purveyance accessible to the audience, but it also helps to make the mini-drama in Coll's next stanza clearer.

The next stanza (37-45) acts out the gentry's virtual theft of Coll's goods through purveyance. And the actor's ability to "act out" the meaning of the lines is the second way in which their meaning can be communicated. In our production, the actor who played Coll used these lines to invent a pantomime that depicted one encounter with a gentry man. The stanza begins, "Ther shall com a swane as prowde as a po" (37). We translated the line to "There comes a swain, as proud as a peacock" and had Coll burlesque the gentry by strutting haughtily about the stage. The second line reads, "he must borow my wane my ploughe also" (38). We glossed "wane" to wagon, and had Coll's reading of the line turn venomous on "borrow." Coll's response in the next two lines exaggerated the servile and humiliating nature of his forced compliance. As he said, "Then I am full fane to graunt or [ere] he go" (39), the actor playing Coll bowed so low to his imaginary gentry man that he finished the line kneeling before his oppressor. From that position Coll delivered the next line, "Thus lyf we in payne Anger, and wo" (40), humiliated, but not humbled. He complies, though he hates it, rather than "be hanged" (44). Coll's pantomime communicates the meaning of the words, but more importantly, the seething rage behind them. They make his instant and explosive conflict with Mak inevitable and understandable.

Understanding the Wakefield Master's Middle English is also crucial to determining characterizations. Even if lines of the text go unchanged into the script, the actors need to know how to read them. We have problems with such readings even in modern play texts. In modern American urban slang "bad" can mean "good," even "superior," at

times. Actors can go quickly wrong in their characterizations by not understanding the possible range of readings and their contextual determinants. The problem is compounded by the distance and unfamiliarity of Middle English. For example, "sely" (silly) in Middle English was a benign adjective meaning "innocent" or "humble" or "poor"; its connotations were not pejorative, as they are today, meaning "foolish" or "trivial." Directors and actors can err disastrously, if they interpret all of the "silly" characters in medieval drama to be fools, as in Coll's "we sely shepardes" (10) and Gib's "we sely wedmen" (65). Middle English words that look familiar to us but which had a different range of meanings for their medieval speakers make all directors of these plays cautious.

One brief passage in the Second Shepherds' Pageant that has great importance for the shepherds' characterizations illustrates this problem. After the shepherds' opening complaints, they have only one short scene of 45 lines (145-189) to establish their characters and the character of their relationship before Mak enters. These 45 lines, however, have produced widely different interpretations of the shepherds' characters, based largely, I think, on various readers' understandings of the range of medieval connotations to "master" (145, 156, and 163), "seruandys" (154), "knaue" (147), and "shrew" (151). Lois Roney has considered this campfire scene at length and concluded that "the First and Second Shepherd are both portrayed as oppressing masters, to be contrasted with the Third Shepherd, who is depicted as a maltreated, footdragging servant" (700). Further, she argues that, "When the three shepherds finally meet, there is genuine bad feeling

between them. . . . The human evil here is real. These people lack
goodness in their wills" (712). John Gardner, however, sees this
campfire scene entirely differently. He writes:

> After the three soliloquies, the poet presents a brief
> struggle between, on the one side, Coll and Gyb, the masters,
> and, on the other, Daw, the servant. Daw asks for supper,
> his masters tease him, and Daw berates masters in language
> which recalls Coll's complaint against "gentlery-men"
> earlier. . . . Then Daw asserts that since masters will not
> treat servants fairly, he will repay his masters with bad
> work; and when Gyb asks where the sheep are pastured, Daw
> says he left them . . . to wander "in the corne." Order--
> essentially the feudal order, a reflection of the order of
> the cosmos--seems undone. But in fact all three shepherds
> are, in their rough, country fashion, joking. Only a moment
> ago Daw was considering giving the sheep a turn, so it would
> seem they have not been left wandering since morning, "in the
> corne." And now the shepherds, actually at one, sing
> together to warm themselves. (88)

How do directors decide whether these characters are only "joking" or
acting out "genuine bad feeling"? How do directors decide whether
these characters are at conflict with each other or "at one"?

The answers lie in the range of meanings that the Wakefield
Master's Middle English could support and the logical implications of
the given dramatic circumstances. A director's interpretation of four
words-- master, servant, knave, and shrew--is critical. If a director
gives them all pejorative connotations, then the shepherds can have
evil wills. But those words also had benign, even meliorative meanings
for the Wakefield Master, his actors, and their audiences. If
directors choose the meliorative, then the shepherds can be "at one"
and sing as they say "to myrth vs emong" (184).

"Master" (145, 156, 163) does not have to mean "employer"
exclusively. It is used in that sense in this passage, but it is also
used here, too, to connote a difference in ages between Daw and the

older shepherds. Master also connotes the command of some discipline

and the authority to teach it, senses that we made much of, for we took

the whole of Coll's relationship to Daw and Gib to be one of the

preservation of ancient feudal values through his teaching. "Servant"

(154), likewise, did not mean employee exclusively. Teachers need

students, and servant can connote that relationship as well. Our

production interpreted the relationship between Coll and Daw to be like

that of a knight and his squire, but since these two characters were

commoners they had only the words "master" and "servant" to describe

it. Modern connotations to "knaue" (147) are exclusively pejorative;

synonyms range among rascal, rogue, and scoundrel. Five hundred years

ago knave had the more innocent meanings of "a male infant," "a male

servant," or simply of "a boy" or "young man" (from the German, knabe).

The Middle English Dictionary goes so far as to say that knave was a

"familiar term of address." In fact, this is exactly how Gib uses the

word later in the play, when he asks Mak, "Is youre chyld a knaue"

(554)? Coll and Gib need not be impugning Daw's character by calling

him a knave; he is simply a young boy who works for them, whom they

address in familiar terms. Nor would they necessarily be impugning

Daw's character by referring to him as a "shrew" (151). Though its

connotations are almost always pejorative--even in the middle ages--

shrew can also mean simply " an unruly or ill-disciplined child"

(Middle English Dictionary), a meaning that certainly fits our first

impression of Daw. In addition to this expanded range of possible

meanings for master, servant, knave, and shrew, directors must consider

the dramatic circumstances in which these words are uttered to decide

their meanings. In this case, I found it incredible that these three

men would leave the world outside these fields to spend time together

in the midst of a raging storm and not like--even love--each other.

My decision to choose meliorative over pejorative meanings for

this scene was something like choosing the half-full over the half-

empty cup. This scene represents the shepherds coming to the fields

for some good, not simply to get away from some evil. And the good

they come for is the fellowship of each other's company--a company of

"trew men." Directors who would bypass the Oxford English Dictionary

and the Middle English Dictionary risk creating performance scripts

(and production interpretations) that are unnecessarily diminished in

meaning or farther removed from the playwright's vision.

The conflict relationships in the Second Shepherds' Pageant come

out of the dramatic circumstances and the characterizations. Coll's

opening complaint, for example, establishes implicit standards of truth

and justice, honesty and trustworthiness that the shepherds apply to

themselves and others throughout the play. Coll seeks truth and finds

deception instead. He seeks the fellowship of "trew men" (52), but

into the sanctuary that Daw and Gib and he make against the storms of

the world comes a very lightning rod for his wrath--that fraud of

frauds, Mak. The first words that Mak speaks directly to the

shepherds, "what! ich be a yoman I tell you, of the king;/The self and

the same sond from a greatt lordyng" (201-2), ignite Coll. Mak's

ludicrous claim to social superiority is delivered at the wrong time in

the wrong place to the wrong man. He has greatly miscalculated the

effect of trying to pass himself off as a gentry man. (Mak has not had

the benefit of hearing Coll's opening complaint!) He even has the gall

to threaten the shepherds in words that allude unmistakably to the

practice of maintenance: "Ich shall make complaynt and make you all to

thwang/At a worde,/And tell euyn how ye doth" (211-213). No strategy

could have been worse.

The audience can understand Coll's explosion when it comes, for

his anger against gentry men, maintenance, and purveyance has been well

established. The text reads:

> Bot, Mak, is that sothe?
> Now take outt that sothren tothe,
>   And sett in a torde! (214-216)

The "sothren tothe" allusion is to Mak's imitation of a southern

dialect of Middle English, one more commonly associated with the

nobility. In performance, Mak can alter his speech to sound pompous,

but since this exchange between him and the shepherds occurs just at

his entrance, the audience needs some assistance to know that the

shepherds recognize that both his speech and his pretense are unwelcome

shams. The lines may take some form as this in the script:

> But, Mak, is that true?
> Why speak like the gentry do,
>   With a mouth full of turds!

At these lines in our production, Coll took out his broad sword, struck

Mak behind his knees with the flat of the blade, and dropped him to his

seat on the ground, as if an imaginary chair had been hacked out from

under him. Mak begins the play a known fraud, though Coll's depth of

feeling against him cannot be appreciated without seeing their

relationship in the light of the dramatic circumstances revealed in

Coll's opening complaint. This idea--that the basic conflict

underlying all of what happens in the Second Shepherds' Pageant is one

of truth against falsehood—will be developed more fully in Chapter

III, which deals with a director's responsibility to provide a unifying

thematic interpretation for performance.

The progress of the shepherds throughout the play is marked by the

occasions for song, but the Master's text cites only one song

specifically: "Angelus cantat 'gloria in ex[c]elsis'" (a stage

direction following line 637). Even there, the Master does not specify

which gloria in excelsis he had in mind. Director need to choose one

from among many. And the play cannot be performed without its director

deciding what songs to supply to the script elsewhere.

Our performance script supplied three additional songs.[4] For the

shepherds' first song, following line 189, I chose the "Agincourt

Carol" (cf. Greene 289). Since we were playing Coll to be a veteran of

Agincourt, the carol fit his character. Moreover, it became the means

to act out the "truth" of fellowship and trust and faith among these

shepherds. In our production, Coll uses this carol to teach the

history of noble deeds of valiant men to Daw, the youngest of the

shepherds. As a stirring account of brave men in battle, the song

accomplished two ends. It gave Coll an opportunity to pass on to a new

generation a description of what true men (including himself) were, in

sharp contrast to the current gentry men. Also, the carol's

transcendent theme of God's grace bestowed upon the brave and faithful

calmed Daw's fears of the dark shapes and "sodan syghtys" (137) on the

fields at night. Its verses describing the battle and its chorus of

"Deo gracias Anglia/Redde pro victoria" (England, give thanks to God,

in return for victory) do not fit the three-part "glee" very well. In
our playing of it, though, we let Coll teach the English verses, Gib
teach the Latin chorus, and Daw learn it all with wonder and joy. The
dramatic intent was for each of the three shepherds to be contributing
some different, but important element to their characters' bonding. In
spirit, its singing was glee.

The shepherds reprise this carol late in the play. After they
have done with Mak and Gyll, Coll still cannot let go of his anger: "On
these thefys yit I mene" (635). He is an old man, and the trauma of
the theft and struggle with Mak has left him "sore in poynt for to
bryst" (629). "In faith," he says, he "may no more" (630). We took
this moment for Daw to rescue Coll's spirits and strength by singing
the carol's first verse and then repeating its chorus to him, until
Coll joined in. I changed line 637 from "So, as I say you" to "Do, as
I say you" to give Daw the means to return teaching to the teacher, to
restore faith where he found despair. When their singing grew strong
together and Coll's spirits became brighter—more gleeful—their
repetitions of the chorus were interrupted and overtaken by the
Angel's, gloria in excelsis. Their "victory" over Mak and God's
victory over sin and death converged in the "truth" of the Angel's
message. The shepherds' personal glee was gathered into the universal
and the sublime.

For Mak's "lullay on fast" (445), I spliced together snippets from
the refrain of "Lord Randall" to a repeated "lullaby, lullaby" to
create a strangely appropriate misappropriation of meanings. The song

became "Lullaby, lullaby/Make my bed soon,/For I fain would lie down."
In the original refrain, the phrase "For I'm weary wi' hunting" comes
just after "soon." Rethinking it now, I wish that I had included it
too, so that Mak could have lulled his stolen sheep to sleep with a
morbid hunting ballad. But Mak's singing would not have lulled any
creature to sleep, for "neuer none crak so clere out of toyne" (477).
As with everything else about Mak and Gyll, this lullaby was as far
from glee as they were from truth. The song, after all, means to
conceal the truth of Mak's deception and theft from the shepherds. And
Mak's intentions for the sheep are nowhere near benign! In contrast to
that of the shepherds and the Angel, Mak's singing betrays his lack of
character and trustworthiness. He hits no true notes.

To these two songs, I added a third, uncalled for in the text. At
the moment that we had Mak begin to stray from the shepherds' fireside
fellowship to look for a sheep to steal (just after line 252), Daw
caught him back and alerted the other shepherds by crying out "Hey!"
To cover his act, Mak picked up Daw's "Hey!" note and began a song of
his own, which the shepherds joined. The song was "Hey, Ho, nobody's
home./Meat nor drink nor money have we none,/Yet shall we be merry," a
round that I sang at campfires as a child. I have no idea where it
comes from or how old it is, but it fit this moment of the play. Mak
distracts the shepherds from his interest in their sheep and deceives
them into thinking that he wants to join their fellowship. The lyrics
fit the circumstances, and the shepherds sing them innocently,
believing that they are safe in a sanctuary of their own making. They
fool themselves into complacency and off to sleep. The contrast

between Mak's out-of-tune croaking and the shepherds' spirited singing of the same song puts their different character objectives into opposition and builds dramatic tension. Their singing is dramatically active, not idle, and is directed by different characters to different purposes. Glee is undermined by discord, and truth is lulled to sleep.

The character of the performance script can also be affected by more mundane and practical concerns. If our experiences at Michigan State University are any true indication, these old plays are generally performed by enthusiastic, essentially self-selected students. They enroll in departmental course work that advertises its performance intent, or they simply volunteer to participate in a unique campus experience. Directors are often faced with collections of willing souls who do not easily fit the apparent demands of the texts. More often than not, these students include more women than the texts call for. The problems of adapting texts to the casting of plays can become formidable. Our productions of the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ and _Mankind_ both included women actors. The text of the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ calls for one female character at least (depending on how directors view angels). _Mankind_'s text calls for none. What are directors to do, then, to reconcile the apparent expectations of medieval texts to the happenstance compositions of their modern casts?

James Cagney was once asked a similar question about what happened when one production plan did not seem to fit the play. His answer: "We changed it." I am not sure whether he meant the play or the production plan. We have changed both. In the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ we changed the production plan some. In _Mankind_ we changed the script,

too. The cast for the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u> had one too few male

actors. We did have a female actor to play Gyll, but no man to play

Daw. The youngest shepherd, then, had to be played by a woman. As

good luck would have it, that female actor was small of stature and

slight of build. With her hair bobbed in a style reminiscent of

medieval fashion, she could (we hoped) pass for a young boy. Two other

factors assisted in making her characterization the more credible. She

was an experienced, remarkably good actor. She had earlier played

Mischief in both of our productions of <u>Mankind</u> to very favorable

effect. Also, she could sing surpassingly well--a factor of critical

importance for our production of the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u>. Having

her play Daw taught the cast an important lesson: whatever they

<u>believed</u> to be the reality of their play on stage become the reality

accepted and believed by the audience. If medieval and Renaissance

England could have boys play women and be believed, then we could

reverse the casting and succeed as well.

More difficult problems arose with the casting of <u>Mankind</u>. We had

far fewer men than the text called for, even though the number of

characters in this play is small. Only four men (including myself)

acted in the play. And since we chose not to double Mercy and

Titivillus, we had one more part to cast with a woman than otherwise

could have been the case. The roles of Mischief, Nowadays, and Nought

were played by women. Mankind, of course, had to be played by a man.

And New Guise, whose relations with his wife are ridiculed throughout

the play, also had to be played by a man. I had to rewrite and

reassign some lines in the performance script to accommodate this

casting. Those difficulties, however, were more than compensated for by the surprisingly rich interpretive suggestions that their solutions yielded.

Most of the lines in Mankind accommodated rather easy changes in noun and pronoun genders to support the female characterizations. We did have particular trouble, though, with Mischief's report of her night in jail. In the text she says that she "kyllyde þe jaylere,/ʒe, ande hys fayer wyff halsyde in a cornere;/A, how swetly I kyssyde þe swete mowth of hers!" (643-45). Our script had Mischief say that she: "killed the jailor;/Yea and her fair man hugged in a corner:/A, how sweetly I kissed that sweet mouth of his!" We essentially settled for noun and pronoun substitutions here, though we were all a bit unsatisfied with the result. It seemed that we were describing a very unlikely penal system for the Middle Ages. Also, the woman who played Mischief (the same who later played Daw in the Second Shepherds' Pageant) was of so slight a build that she appeared incapable of overpowering and killing a jailor. In the end, we let it stand, without torturing it into other constructions and meanings, and trusted to the boldness of the actor to make the line believable. We took some comfort from the apparent social ambiguities in the original text. Any jail that would have husband jailers and their wives on site, it seemed, could allow a number of unlikely events. We were not disappointed by the actor's reading of these lines, nor did we ever receive any audience correction.

Some of Mankind's lines, though, had to be reassigned, for no amount of tinkering with their nouns and pronouns would make them

appropriate to their original characters. In the text, Nowadays poses

these facetious (and exceedingly vulgar) problems to Mercy:

>   I prey yow hertyly, worschyppull clerke,
>   To haue þis Englysch mad in Laten:
>   'I haue etun a dyschfull of curdys,
>   Ande I haue schetun yowr mowth full of turdys.'
>   Now opyn yowr sachell wyth Laten wordys
>   Ande sey me þis in clerycall manere!
>   Also I haue a wyf, her name ys Rachell;
>   Betuyx her and me was a gret batell;
>   Ande fayn of yow I wolde here tell
>   Who was þe most master. (129-138)

Our script assigned this whole passage to New Guise for three reasons.

Having New Guise ask for the translation fits his preceding gibe about

Mercy's body being full of "Englysch Laten" (124). The lines are not

out of harmony. More importantly, the whole of this passage, it seems,

means to mock Mercy's clerical status--particularly his celibacy. To

remove its "wifely" element would diminish the degree of sexual mocking

implicit in New Guise's question. And finally, New Guise's history of

domestic battles (and apparent losses) becomes a motif for his weak

character throughout the play and helps to explain Mischief's easy

dominance of him. Nought's interjection of "Thy wyf Rachell, I dare

ley twenti lyse" (139) turns the mockery back upon New Guise and sets

the motif running. Mercy may be celibate, but New Guise is virtually

castrated. Later on in the play, when Mankind takes a spade to New

Guise's "jewellys," the assault on his masculinity becomes painfully

direct (381). Not only did we preserve the dramatic import of these

lines by reassigning them to New Guise, but we also established a

character trait that would torment him throughout the play.

The work of directors to create coherent, communicable, and stage-

worthy performance scripts for the medieval cycle and morality plays

thus integrates several operations. Source texts may have to be edited, cut, or emended. Remote languages may have to be translated or otherwise adapted for performance. Staging elements not included in the texts may have to be supplied. Modern scripts may also have to bend to the exigencies of casting. These operations amount to the integration of several orders of "translation." Each order of translation requires that directors bring older forms of dramatic expression to the lively experience and understandings of modern actors and audiences, without losing the medieval meanings of these plays. Together, these orders of translation present complicated, often difficult problems. Solutions to any of them are based on one, overriding criterion--how the playwright's dramatic vision can best be enacted on stage. The creation of a performance script is not easy work, but very rewarding. My performance scripts for the Second Shepherds' Pageant and Mankind may not have preserved all that had meaning for their original playwrights, casts, and audiences, but what they did preserve became meaningful entertainments for those who acted and saw them anew.

1. Martin Stevens cautions that "It is a mistake to assume that the extant manuscripts were used as play texts . . ." (_Four Middle English Mystery Cycles_ 14). All of the extant medieval cycle texts were written long after their respective plays were first performed. There may have been a time, though, when texts closely approximate to these did serve as scripts, when their authors lived to provide immediate interpretations and performance direction. _Mankind's_ manuscript may have a closer relationship to its performance. Whatever their degree of relationship to medieval performances, these texts are now the literary and historical artifacts of dramatic expressions that no longer have familiar and current meanings or easily recoverable performance lives. For the medieval players, much of what is remote and unfamiliar to us now would have been very close and easily grasped. Though the character of performance may have changed some from year to year, it is likely that each medieval production company, especially those of well established trade guilds, would have been more stable than not, with essentially the same group of actors returning to re-create their roles. Such stability among performers would have allowed for much "shorthand" communication among actors during rehearsals and would have minimized the need to make extensive (or any?) alterations to the received text. This may help to explain why these texts seem to be so sparse in dialogue and are so lacking in stage directions. Something akin

to the re-creative familiarity with text for the medieval company occurred during our second production of <u>Mankind</u> in 1976. With the exception of the role of Mankind, which was played by a new actor, all of the rest of the company returned from the previous year. Having a group of actors who knew their roles and each other well made rehearsals very quick studies. Most of the script changes for this second production went unrecorded. The cast was so familiar with the established script that their inventions, additions, and alterations fit easily into an already comfortable context. I do not think that our experience of working with our performance script of <u>Mankind</u> was very different from that of its original cast and their script. The more that our performance became a familiar, living, and adaptable expression on the stage the more our own script reverted into being an increasingly distant record of what we had first thought about the play. As it happened, our modern script came to assume the character of a more recent "text," an authority to appeal to when there was any doubt or confusion among the players, but ultimately a fixed and limited document that could only suggest and but barely describe all that had to become fluid and spontaneous on the stage. We could not have performed anything, without having first created the script, but what it now preserves on paper comes nowhere close to recording all that constituted our performance. Rereading <u>Mankind</u>'s performance script, even though I created, directed, and acted it, leaves me puzzled at places about the meaning of what I wrote years ago that now seems obscure or simply indecipherable.

If I were to attempt to re-create my own production of <u>Mankind</u>
after so many years, I sense that I would have to translate text
into script all over again. Except for the demands of translating
Middle English and medieval Latin into modern expressions, I feel
that I am now in about the same order of relationship to our
performance script as I was to the original text when I first
began to think about this drama. I would do better translating
fresh from the medieval text itself to create the script anew,
though my accumulated experience would now make the process less
intimidating and more quickly productive.

2. Eccles's text for <u>Mankind</u> has Scene I run from opening line to
    Mankind's easy victory over the Vices's disruption of his labor
    (1-412). For our performance script, though, we divided this same
    portion of the play into three different "motivational units,"
    based on Stanislavski's principles of character motivational
    "objectives" and obstacle "thresholds." Unit I (Mercy Confronts
    the World in a Tavern) in our performance script ran from opening
    line through Mercy's expulsion of the Vices from the tavern (1-
    161). Unit II (Mankind Receives Good Counsel and Fortification)
    encompassed Mercy's instruction and apparent winning of Mankind's
    commitment and obedience (162-322). Unit III (Mankind Wins
    Apparent Victory and Falls into Overconfidence) ran from the
    reappearance of the Vices to their defeat by Mankind (323-412).
    The remaining motivational units for our production were: Unit IV
    (Plots and Plotters Against Mankind), 413-540; Unit V (Mankind is
    Frustrated and Deceived by Titivillus), 541-611; Unit VI (Mankind

is Ridiculed and Corrupted by the Vices), 612-733; Unit VII (The Battle for Mankind), 734-810; and Unit VIII (Mankind is Reconciled to God Through Mercy), 811-914.

3. There was a fourth, admittedly selfish factor that influenced these cuts, but it is only indirectly related to the progress of the drama itself. Since I acted Mercy in this production, I was glad to see any opportunity to reduce his part. It is hard enough to direct a production, without having to act its longest role, too. Happily, though, the stage business that we devised for Mercy could convey much of the meaning of his excised lines.

4. Readers may note that the shepherds also sing upon their exit and that a fourth song may be required there. In our production, we had the shepherds join the reprise of the Angel's, _gloria in excelsis_, which accompanied their exit and ended the performance. For the studio videotape production, we did add an additional song to cover the titles and closing credits. That song was the anonymous fifteenth-century carol, "Nowell sing we both all and some,/Now Rex pacificus is come" (cf. Rickert 166-67).

III. Fundamental Lines of Action:
Performance "Super-Objectives" for
Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant

> The first stage in the work of the actor and theatre manager
> [i. e., the director] is to probe for the germ of the play,
> investigating the fundamental line of action that traverses
> all of its episodes and is therefore called by the writer its
> transparent effect or action. In contrast to some theatrical
> directors, who consider every play only as material for
> theatrical repetition, the writer believes that in the
> production of every important drama the director and actor
> must go straight for the most exact and profound conception
> of the mind and ideal of the dramatist, and must not change
> that ideal for their own. (Stanislavski, "Direction and
> Acting" 22)

Interpretations of the English cycle and morality plays strive to
bring the medieval import of their dramas to performance expressions
that will become lively and meaningful entertainments for those who act
and see them anew. The approach that I have found most useful for this
interpretive work has been my application of Constantin Stanislavski's
criteria for performance "super-objectives" to produce a complex
statement of what constitutes the medieval "mind and ideal" of the
playwright's dramatic vision and how that subject matter can be plotted
into a unified sequence of stage actions. My experience in directing
the Michigan State University productions of Mankind and the Second
Shepherds' Pageant suggests that these old plays can support unifying
and stage-worthy thematic interpretations, despite the distance and

unfamiliarity of their religious and social contexts and their dramatic
conventions. Mankind's struggle to secure his salvation and the
shepherds' search for truth replay enduring human conflicts that can
still affect the minds and ideals of those who act and see them now.

The better medieval plays, like the better drama from any period,
can support several different determinations of thematic meanings.
Directors may argue about which among their thematic interpretations
best expresses the drama of any given play, but they must all
acknowledge that their interpretations are inescapably the products of
some favored biases and performance prejudices. None of them comes to
these plays (or any others, for that matter) with innocent hearts or
clean hands. As Jonathan Miller writes:

> Perception always approaches its domain with interests,
> preoccupations and prejudices about what is important in a
> work whether of art or literature. If we agree that the
> function of the director is to restore as much of the
> information of the original performance as he could, what he
> would infer as being important about the original production
> would not provide a faithful copy of the original but would
> merely tell us what he thought was important in it. He would
> automatically and unavoidably be introducing an
> interpretation, and even at his most obedient would introduce
> preconceptions. I believe that it is better to be conscious
> of your preconceptions rather than simply to be the victim of
> them. (53)

Something akin to Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle" affects the
interpretation of the performance script; the application of some
system of interpretive mechanics unavoidably changes the perceived
character of the script. Directors inevitably find what they are
looking for. They must be careful that their interpretive work upon
the play does not so alter its essential nature as to make it
unrecognizable in its playing. My own theatrical training, based

largely on the work of Stanislavski and subsequent practitioners of his system, carries significant biases and prejudices. My disposition to think of drama in terms of character development and interactive conflict limits my aptitude for directing several sorts of medieval drama--the highly stylized liturgical plays and the more episodic prophets plays, in particular. I must always be cautious that my interpretations do not fabricate character traits or conflicts that cannot be supported by the script. Other directors schooled in other systems, the Brechtian "epic theater," say, may have better results with the more stylized and episodic plays than I. Any director who sits down to interpret one of these old plays, however, needs to acknowledge that the result will in one way or another be idiosyncratic. Interpretations will always be limited and selective because our knowledge of the Middle Ages will always be incomplete and the requirements for performance necessitate choosing one among several possible interpretations. Such directorial acknowledgment early on makes performance interpretation both a more humble and a less anxious labor.

As I have worked on establishing thematic interpretations for any play that I have directed, I have found Stanislavski's prescription for performance super-objectives to be indispensable. They are the "germs" of playable ideas out of which whole productions grow. In the last chapter of An Actor Prepares, Stanislavski lists four properties of the super-objective: it conforms to the playwright's point of view; it establishes intellectual credibility, though it is not simply a summary of the intellectual argument of the play; it engages the play's

emotional content; and it excites the actors' wills to perform (284).
To his list, I might add several other properties. The super-objective
is all-inclusive; it circumscribes the whole of the play's dramatic
action, from first cue to curtain call. It states what the play is,
beyond what it is about, in terms of the characters' actions and
dramatic circumstances. And the super-objective is directive; it
charts the course of the drama through its superior and subordinate
character conflicts, making clear who and what at any given time drive
the play's "fundamental line of action" forward.[1] Directors who launch
into rehearsals without having devised these superior and subordinate
expressions of the plays' thematic meanings stand before their casts
and crews like captains lost at sea, whose ships left port without
sextant or compass or chart of ocean currents. They may with luck find
direction, but while they cast about, steering now one way then
another, they put their ships into jeopardy and risk mutiny.

*   *   *

The script of Mankind seemed to me to offer two choices to
establish thematic unity. I had to settle on one of them. One choice
(a rather obvious one) was to put dominant stress on the worldly
temptations to which the human soul is subject.[2] Such an
interpretation would thus emphasize the roles of Mischief, the Vices
(New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought), and Titivillus. There is much in
Mankind to support this choice, and an effective performance could be
made from it. It meets all but one of Stanislavski's super-objective
criteria. It does have some intellectual credibility. In keeping with
the play's original Shrovetide performance occasion, Mischief and the

Vices provide a rousing depiction of the assaults of the flesh upon the
spirit. And from one perspective, the play seems to be constructed to
frame Titivillus's literally show-stopping eruption from Hell. The
assaults of the flesh upon the spirit can certainly engage the actors'
emotions and excite their wills to perform. Mankind, for example, is
vexed in body and soul throughout. He begins the play disgusted by
fleshly temptation ("my flesch, þat stynkyng dungehyll" 204), rises to
exhilaration at Mercy's exhortation ("my soull ys well sacyatt/Wyth þe
mellyfluose doctryne of þis worschyppfull man" 311-12), swells with
pride at beating back the Vices ("By þe subsyde of hys [i. e., God's]
grace þat he hath sente me/Thre of myn enmys I haue putt to flyght"
394-95), backslides to sin after Titivillus deceives him ("I wyll hast
me to þe ale-house" 609), and sinks to suicidal despair in the Vices'
company ("A roppe, a rope, a rope! I am not worthy" 800). Any actor
would love to get a part that had such a range of emotional expression
as this one does.

This interpretation of the theme of Mankind includes a significant
part of the playwright's dramatic vision, but not all. According to
this interpretation, Mercy's appearances at the beginning and end of
the play serve merely as a framing device for the depiction of worldly
temptation and sin. Mercy would become a mere appendage to the play, a
character whose lines could be cut in quantity and with near abandon.
Such an interpretation fails to conform to the whole of the
playwright's point of view. Mercy is no simple frame or "code of
decency" afterthought to an otherwise scatological and scurrilous
farce. Though Mankind's playwright is impressive in his command of

scatology and scurrility, he is also capable of a great deal more. The greater part of these capabilities find their locus in the relationship between Mankind and Mercy.

Mercy's character development and redemptive actions give the play substance and unifying purpose. The inclusion of the character of Mercy in this play signals that there are more conflicts to be found than the rather simple one of flesh against spirit. The Shrovetide occasion for this play concentrates more concerns for the state and destiny of the Christian's life than simply those of the temptations of the flesh. Mercy's disruption of the life of the tavern puts Mankind into a life or death struggle. Complicating that struggle is Mercy's direct challenge to Mischief and the Vices which initiates a conflict between the duties of religious obedience and the varieties of secular transgression. Mercy's indirect conflict with Titivillus puts Mankind into the center of a struggle that pits divine purpose against demonic perversion. And Mercy's efforts to bolster the resolve of Mankind and then to rescue him from despair involve them both in psychological and moral conflicts which are strikingly modern in the complexity of their internal and interpersonal dynamics. To resign the thematic authority of this play to the limited potentials of Mischief and the Vices would be to reduce its character to that of a rather flat melodrama. To be sure, to play Mankind as melodrama would invite a good bit of fun. But much would be lost, however entertaining the resultant farce would be. Mercy's relationship to Mankind does not "frame" the conflicts of this play; it embodies them. At Mercy's entrance these conflicts begin, and in his sacred absolution of Mankind's sins they conclude. Each of the

play's conflicts ultimately gets absorbed into the problem of Mankind's salvation--salvation from worldly temptation and sin, salvation from despair and death, and salvation from eternal damnation. The character uniting all is Mercy, "þe very mene for . . . restytucyon" (17).

The original Shrovetide performance occasion for Mankind brings all of these conflicts into sharp focus. Shrovetide (the three days before Ash Wednesday) seeks to bring the errant Christian back to God through confession, repentance, and forgiveness. For medieval Christians it was a special time to heed their priests' call to the holy sacrament of penance (now reconciliation), wherein they could be shriven of their transgressions. Shrovetide concentrated the clergy's plea for the faithful to enter the Lenten season by putting away the temptations of "the Dewell, þe World, þe Flesch and þe Fell" (884), so that at Easter they "may be partycypable of hys [i. e., Christ's] retribucyon" (16). Mercy pleads to Mankind: "Ecce nunc tempus accetabile, ecce nunc dies salutis" (866). His words are full of the urgency and import of the moment. Mercy quotes Paul's second letter to the Corinthians (6:2), "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Sister Mary Philippa reminds us that these words were read as part of the "epistle for the first Sunday of Lent" (11). And Mark Eccles notes that the verse "is also in Matins on Ash Wednesday" (227). The perfect playdate for Mankind would thus be Shrove Tuesday, the Christian's last, perhaps desperate chance to confront and put away sin before Lent. With the exception of Holy Week observances, I can think of no other time in the church year when the

matters of personal mortality, moral judgment, eternal damnation, and divine redemption would so concentrate the Christian's attention.

Beyond the superficial temptations of the flesh, Mankind sets loose a life or death struggle. The sense of urgency in Mercy's mission of rescue and redemption is quickened by remembrance of the "four last things": death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Here, this remembrance is recurrently expressed in the particularly legalistic forms of criminal transgression and capital punishment. Mercy alludes to all four of the last things in the first speech in the text:

> For yt [the body and blood of Christ] hath dyssoluyde
> mankynde from þe bytter bonde
>> Of þe mortall enmye, þat vemynousse [sic] serpente,
>> From þe wyche Gode preserue yow all at þe last jugement!
>>> For sekyrly þer xall be a streyt examynacyon,
>> The corn xall be sauyde, þe chaffe xall be brente.
>>>> (39-43)

Also, early in the play, Mankind reminds himself that he is only dust of the earth ("Memento, homo, quod cinis es et in cinerem reuerteris" 321). Late in the play, Mercy characterizes Mankind's protestation of his unworthiness for God's mercy as a "crymynose compleynt" (815) and a "cryme notary" (845), and reassures him that "The justyce of God wyll as I wyll" (833). This last scene of the play brings two systems of justice into convergence at Mercy's rescue of Mankind from the gallows--the divine overtaking the secular. For most of the play, Mankind is buffeted by the world, the devil, the flesh and fell, and is tempted to weigh his life's worth on secular scales. He is trapped by his own failings, humiliations, suicidal depression, and Mischief's kangaroo court. Since he has foresworn mercy, Mankind is particularly susceptible to Mischief's and the Vices' inducements to sin, despair,

and death. He, like Adam before him, falls from grace and is made
painfully vulnerable to the afflictions of the world and the
inevitability of death. So long as Mankind sees himself only in terms
of the world's judgment, his fate appears bleak and terminal. Mercy's
rescue brings Mankind to a different standard of judgment and the
possibility of redemption and salvation. God's justice does not excuse
his sin, but offers a merciful means to overcome it. Mercy's rescue
provides Mankind with the means to free his soul from the prison of his
body. The world will reduce the body to dust again, but God can raise
the soul beyond its bodily confines to an eternal, spiritual life.

Mankind's playwright may have had the third verse of Psalm 50 in
the Vulgate Bible (51:1 in modern Bibles) in mind throughout. It was
the Middle Ages' gallows-escaping "neck verse"--the one that Mischief
remembers and New Guise forgets. It reads, "Have mercy on me, O God,
according to thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of thy
tender mercies blot out my iniquity." Mercy and the other characters
in Mankind allude to it and its pain, death, and gallows connotations
constantly. Mercy introduces himself by appropriating the words of
this Psalm to himself:

> þe grett mercy of Gode, þat ys of most preemmynence,
>   Be medyacyon of Owr Lady þat ys euer habundante
> To þe synfull creature þat wyll repent hys neclygence.
>   I prey Gode at yowr most nede þat mercy be yowr
> defendawnte. (21-24)

He warns Mankind against becoming ensnared by Mischief, who is ever
ready to "brace yow in hys brydyll" (306). And Mercy quotes the neck
verse's Latin opening clause directly ("'Miserere mei, Deus!'") late in
the play, in his effort to bring Mankind to penance (830).

Mischief, the Vices, and Titivillus provide secular and demonic counterpoint to Mercy's struggle to bring Mankind to God. They have rough-neck and head-busting business to conduct throughout the play. Mischief and the Vices allude to the neck-verse's worldly connotations of pain and death. Sometimes their allusions are in the context of their own horseplay in the tavern. Nought complains about New Guise's rough dancing ("I putt case I breke my neke: how than?" 74 and "Xall I breke my neke to schew yow sporte?" 78). More often their allusions are in the context of their combat with Mankind. Nought curses Mankind for his successful rebuff of the Vices' first attack on him ("Therfor Crystys curse cum on yowr hedybus" 399). Mischief promises to cure Nowadays's head wound ("I xall helpe þe of þi peyn;/I xall smytt of þi hede and sett yt on agayn" 434-35). Titivillus breaks Mankind's resistance to temptation and sin finally by inducing a nightmare vision of Mercy's hanging ("But I thynke he rydyth on þe galouse, to lern for to daunce,/Bycause of hys theft, þat ys hys gouernance" 598-99).

The threat of hanging is also behind Nought's self-interested charity in sparing "Master Alyngton of Botysam/Ande Hamonde of Soffeham" from criminal harm, "For drede of in manus tuas qweke" (514-15, 516). New Guise specifically cites the neck verse twice (Lett ws con well owr neke-verse, þat we haue not a cheke" 520 and "Myscheff ys a convicte, for he coude hys neke-verse" 619). He alludes to it, too, in his own misfortune of having forgotten to "con well" his own advice ("I was twychyde by þe neke; þe game was begunne./A grace was, þe halter brast asonder: ecce signum!/The halff ys abowte my neke" 615-617). And he has to explain his neck wound to Mankind ("In feyth, Sent

Audrys holy bende./I haue a lytyll dyshes, as yt plesse Gode to
sende,/Wyth a runnynge ryngeworme" 628-30). Mark Eccles identifies
Saint Audry's bend as the "silk bands for the neck [that] were hallowed
at the shrine of St. Audry in Ely Cathedral" (224). Like all that the
Vices take unto themselves, New Guise reduces the spiritual connotation
of this revered object to one of fleshly corruption, "a runnynge
ryngeworme." In the end, it is Mankind whom the Vices seek to bring to
temptation, sin, pain, and death. Mischief tempts Mankind to suicide
with rope and gallows tree ("Anon, anon, anon! I haue yt [i. e., a
rope] here redy,/Wyth a tre also þat I haue gett" 801-2), while the
hapless New Guise fumbles his demonstration of their use and for the
second time in the play nearly gets himself hanged ("Lo, Mankynde! do
as I do; þis ys þi new gyse./Gyff þe roppe just to þy neke; þis ys myn
avyse" and "Qweke, qweke, qweke! Alass, my thrott! I beschrew yow,
mary!" 804-5 and 808). Mercy's rescue of Mankind in this scene is the
play's climax.

Mercy's intrusion upon the life of the tavern initiates a conflict
between the duties of religious obedience and the varieties of secular
transgression. He preaches to bring all to the will of God, but is
heard only by Mankind. (In our production Mankind began the play as a
patron of the tavern and was thus present throughout Mercy's opening
sermon.) Mischief quickly opposes and mocks him, to preserve dominance
of the tavern. The Vices join Mischief's counter-attack. Mercy
rebuffs them all, eventually expelling the Vices from the tavern. His
exhortation to Mankind is a pointed reminder to "Do truly yowr labure
and kepe yowr halyday" (300). Mankind is overwhelmed by the fervency

of Mercy's words and vows to obey them. But Mischief, the Vices, and ultimately Titivillus have different plans. Their assault on Mankind includes the erosion of his faith in the church and its priests. Titivillus breaks Mankind's spirit by convincing him first to abandon his labor, then to forswear evensong and his prayers, and finally to believe that Mercy was hanged for stealing a horse. The effect of Titivillus's nightmare vision on Mankind is the turning point of the play. Once Mankind's spirits have been broken and his faith in Mercy shattered, he can no longer act with self-confidence or moral purpose. The salvation of Mankind depends on Mercy's ability to restore faith and effect a reconciliation between them. The means for that restitution is the sacrament of penance--the play's denouement.

Mercy's indirect conflict with Titivillus puts Mankind into the center of a struggle that pits divine purpose against demonic perversion. Mischief's and the Vices' unaided assaults on Mercy are doomed to fail. They cannot compete against the moral strength and spiritual authority of one from holy orders. But Titivillus can, or thinks that he can. His assault on Mankind's faith is an indirect attack upon Mercy and ultimately upon God ("He [i. e., Mankind] xall wene grace were wane" 540). If he can destroy both the faith of the simple Christian and the reputation of a priest, then he can wound God doubly. In our production, Titivillus carried both silver trident and red net, the symbol of demonic authority and the means to deception. Mercy began the play carrying no stage property. At his reappearance in the play to rescue Mankind, Mercy fought off Mischief and the Vices with a large staff topped by a gold cross and then donned the purple

stole of his office to perform the sacrament. He reappeared, then, armed with the symbol of divine power and the priestly authority to effect Mankind's salvation--the counters to Titivillus's props. If Mischief and the Vices could raise the stakes in the conflict by invoking powers greater than their own, then Mercy could also draw upon spiritual reinforcements that would give him the necessary strength beyond human means to defeat the devil.

Mercy's efforts to bolster the resolve of Mankind and then to rescue him from sin and despair involve them both in psychological and moral conflicts which are strikingly modern in the complexity of their internal and interpersonal dynamics. Mankind's spirits seesaw throughout the play, as his confidence in Mercy and his resistance to the temptations of the Vices and the deceptions of Titivillus rise and fall. They take a final turn for the worse when Titivillus deceives him into believing that Mercy has been hanged. And they hit bottom when Mercy's rescue forces him to confront his sins ("Dyspose yowrsylff mekly to aske mercy, and I wyll assent" 816). Titivillus's deceptions put Mankind's resolve into desperate peril, for they make him question the justice of a God who would abandon the soul of one who has seemingly done everything right. For Mankind, the hardships of life are easily understood and acceptable, when they are the result of disobedience. But Mercy promised that, so long as Mankind was faithful and industrious, he would be "partener" in God's "blysse perpetuall" (284). In his own eyes, Mankind had been faithful and industrious, and yet his corn was stolen, his fields grew hard and unmanageable, and he was apparently abandoned by a deceitful Mercy and a church that did not

deliver what it promised. At his rescue, he is thrown into deep moral confusion and despair and says that he is "not worthy to hawe mercy be no possibilite" (822). All of the external assaults upon his soul have taken internal root and will not be dislodged by the sound of Mercy's preaching alone. To save this "synfull synner" Mercy must reach deep into his own heart and infuse church doctrine with human compassion (825).

The infusion of doctrine with compassion demands that Mercy, too, grow in the exercise of his holy office. The soul of Mankind is not the only variable factor in this play. Mercy's character also undergoes change, and so it must to effect Mankind's salvation. We played Mercy as a Dominican friar--a young and rather raw recruit to the battle for human salvation. He begins the play full of all of the right doctrine, but with little life experience. All of what he says is true, but it is untested by human experience and worldly realities. At his first encounter with the Vices, Mercy says, revealingly, "Say me yowr namys, I know yow not" (114). For a time Mercy's doctrine alone is sufficient. Mankind is at first successful in fending off the moral assaults of the Vices. By the time of Mercy's second appearance in the play, though, Mankind has strayed from doctrine and is in peril. Mercy is at a loss for what to do next, and he fears for the safety of his "predylecte son" (771). Mercy must learn to add feeling to thought. He says:

> My mynde ys dyspersyde, my body trymmelyth as þe aspen leefe.
> The terys xuld trekyll down by my chekys, were not yowr reuerrence.
> Yt were to me solace, þe cruel vysytacyon of deth.
> Wythout rude behauer I kan not expresse þis inconvenyens.
> Wepynge, sythynge, and sobbynge were my suffycyens;

> All naturall nutriment to me as caren ys odybull.
> My inwarde afflixcyon 3eldyth me tedyouse wnto yowr
> presens.
> I kan not bere yt ewynly þat Mankynde ys so
> flexybull. (734-741)

This is not the same Mercy who began the play, who warned "Noþer

comfort nor cownsell þer xall non be hade" for those whose "delyte ys

in derysyon/Of her owyn Cryste to hys dyshonur" (179, 168-69). By the

time he sees Mankind in peril Mercy begins to understand that not all

who are in spiritual jeopardy "delyte" in their state or that doctrine

alone, however eloquently expressed, is sufficient to win their

salvation. For the same reason that God himself became man, Mercy must

temper absolute standards of judgment with human sympathy. And this he

does. Mercy's language in the last scene of the play changes the state

of his relationship with Mankind forever. As he reiterates the trials

that have vexed Mankind, Mercy speaks personally and solicitously,

rehearsing all to Mankind in intimate and familiar terms not found in

his earlier preaching. Everything that he says supplies comfort and

"cownsell" to Mankind. He offers a forgiveness that understands what

it forgives. He has, in the end, become Christ-like in character and

equal to the call of his holy order.

Mankind's playwright constructed a powerful denouement to the

complex and convergent conflicts of this drama, for their resolution

comes in the last decision of the last scene of the play, and is put

into the hands of Mankind alone. In this last scene of the play, Mercy

repeatedly implores Mankind to "Aryse and aske mercy . . . and be

associat to me" (827). The decision whether to choose mercy--to

confess, repent, and be shriven--is left to Mankind. We have a real

cliffhanger here, one which delays Mankind's confession until his last speech ("Syth I schall departe, blyse me, fader, her þen I go./God send ws all plente of hys gret mercy!" 899-900), a scant fourteen lines before our conclusion of the play. Though Mercy rather confidently boasts that "The justyce of God wyll as I wyll" (833), he must ultimately accept that Mankind's salvation depends on Mankind coming to him ("3e may both saue and spyll 3owr sowle þat ys so precyus./Libere welle, libere nolle [freely to will, freely not to will] God may not deny iwys" 893-94). Mankind's confession of sin and Mercy's sacramental absolution resolve all of the conflicts in the play. Mankind is forgiven and his faith is restored, Mischief and the Vices are overcome, Titivillus is defeated, and Mankind, Mercy, God, and the church are reconciled.

My interpretation, then, took Mankind to be a play about the salvation of the human soul, despite its temptations to sin and despair; it subordinated the temptations of Mischief, the Vices, and Titivillus to the developing characters of and the relationship between Mankind and Mercy. I kept all of the strengths of the alternate interpretation, but made my statement of super-objective comprehensive. Its one-sentence distillation of the thematic conflicts in Mankind was this:

> In his struggle to secure his personal salvation, Mankind
> suffers the vengeance of New Guise, Nowadays, Nought, and
> Titivillus, who lead him by worldly temptation, demonic
> deception, and personal humiliation to Mischief and suicidal
> despair, until Mercy's compassion brings him to admit
> priestly intercession and spiritual rescue through the
> sacrament of penance.

This one sentence became the interpretive touchstone which proved the relevance and importance of any subordinate line of action developed for our performance. It also helped to keep clear the relation of any one thematic element to any other. As I worked out a through-line of action for Mankind this statement both began and ended my work. It was the source of each unit's objective and the culmination of all of the units' objectives taken in sequence.

The sequence of stage actions that constitute the performance through-line of action segments the play into interpretive units that mark significant developmental stages in the conflict relationships among characters. These "motivational units," to adopt Stanislavski's term, have their own playable "objectives," which are subordinate to the super-objective. The through-line of action may also plot the course of dramatic conflict by identifying the more traditional structural demarcations of exposition, attack, rising action, turning point, climax, falling action, and denouement. I should note that, as I have adapted Stanislavski's system to my own directing, I have in fact devised two through-lines of action for each play. One sort is that illustrated here, which plots the progress of dramatic conflict in terms of plot action. It is the first step in stating what the play is, rather than what it is about. The other sort is a comprehensive statement of dramatic action expressed in terms of the characters' motivational "objectives" and obstacle "thresholds." No conflict in drama happens outside the opposing wills of its characters. For the actors' purposes, Shakespeare's Cassius was right, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,/But in ourselves . . . ." (Julius Caesar I.

ii. 141-42). This second through-line of action finds its proper place
in the next chapter on characterization. Not all of the English
medieval religious drama may admit Stanislavski's "motivational unit"
or the more traditional structural analysis. All those that I have
directed, though, have supported both--an indication that some of these
playwrights may have written from received knowledge of dramatic
construction. If they did not write from received knowledge, the
better of these playwrights developed extraordinarily sure instincts
for what made good plays.

My through-line of action for Mankind segmented the play into
eight motivational units. For each unit I devised a title, noted where
the conflict in that unit would fit into a traditional structural
analysis, stated the unit's performance objective (its dominant
conflict), and noted subordinate "beat" objectives.[3] Since Mankind's
super-objective put dominant stress on Mankind's salvation, I tried to
express each unit and beat objective in terms of Mankind's progress.
In all instances, the unit and beat objectives were expressed in terms
of active verbs that could sustain physical expression on the stage.
My through-line of action for Mankind follows. (Line numbers are those
in Eccles's edition, except for Beats 1 and 2 of Unit I, which follow
line numbering of the performance script.)

UNIT I: Confrontations
Exposition and Attack, 1-161

Objective: Mercy awakens Mankind's conscience.

Beat Objectives:

1. Mercy attacks the tavern revelry. (1-73)
2. Mischief and the Vices retaliate. (74-146)
3. Mercy prevails. (147-61) [ATTACK]

UNIT II: Good Counsel
Rising Action, 162-322

Objective: Mankind forsakes the life of the tavern.

Beat Objectives:

1. Mercy counsels Mankind to give up vice. (163-244)
2. The Vices challenge Mercy's counsel. (245-76)
3. Mankind chooses to follow Mercy. (277-322)

UNIT III: Apparent Victory
Rising Action, 323-412

Objective: Mankind defeats the Vices.

Beat Objectives:

1. The Vices attack Mankind. (323-75)
2. Mankind prevails in combat. (376-412)

UNIT IV: Plots and Plotters
Rising Action, 413-540

Objective: Mischief and Titivillus aid the Vices.

Beat Objectives:

1. Mischief invokes Titivillus. (413-74)
2. Titivillus takes charge. (475-540)

UNIT V: Frustration and Deceit
Rising Action and Turning Point, 541-611

Objective: Mankind succumbs to hardship and deception.

Beat Objectives:

1. Titivillus frustrates Mankind's labor and resolve. (541-88)
2. Titivillus destroys Mankind's faith in Mercy. (589-611) [TURNING POINT]

UNIT VI: Ridicule and Corruption
Rising Action, 612-733

Objective: Mankind returns to Mischief and the Vices.

Beat Objectives:

1. Mankind appeals to the Vices' mercy. (612-60)

2.   Mischief and the Vices dominate Mankind.
(661-733)

UNIT VII: The Battle for Mankind
Rising Action and Climax, 734-810

<u>Objective</u>: Mercy rescues Mankind.

<u>Beat Objectives</u>:

1.   Mercy retreats from Mischief and the Vices.
(734-82)
2.   Mischief tempts Mankind to suicide. (783-805)
3.   Mercy rescues Mankind. (806-10) [CLIMAX]

UNIT VIII: Salvation
Falling Action and Denouement, 811-914

<u>Objective</u>: Mercy saves Mankind.

<u>Beat Objectives</u>:

1.   Mankind resists Mercy's argument for
reconciliation. (811-70)
2.   Mankind is moved by Mercy's compassion to
admit spiritual rescue through the sacrament
of penance. (871-902) [DENOUEMENT][4]

SUPER-OBJECTIVE:

In his struggle to secure his personal salvation, Mankind
suffers the vengeance of New Guise, Nowadays, Nought, and
Titivillus, who lead him by worldly temptation, demonic
deception, and personal humiliation to Mischief and suicidal
despair, until Mercy's compassion brings him to admit
priestly intercession and spiritual rescue through the
sacrament of penance.

This interpretation of <u>Mankind</u> ensures that the actors'
performance invention and on-stage interplay will not stray from the
thematic dominance of Mankind's salvation. Mankind's struggle to
secure his personal salvation is <u>the</u> "fundamental line of action" in
the play. I believe that this interpretation meets all of
Stanislavski's criteria. It seeks to fulfill, not simplify, the
entirety of the playwright's complex dramatic vision. Its intellectual

credibility rests upon understanding (and accepting) the medieval
Christian's belief in the importance of confession, repentance, and
forgiveness of sin to spiritual humility and personal salvation--the
very focus of Shrovetide and the one dramatic theme that accounts for
all of the action of the play. It engages the subtext of emotional
relationships among the characters. Mischief, the Vices, and
Titivillus act out all of the seven deadly sins, not solely the
superficial delights in the transgressions of the flesh. Mercy and
Mankind reconcile because compassion overtakes doctrine. And this
super-objective can excite the actors' wills to perform. From first
cue to last exit, the actors know exactly what each of their characters
sets out to do and how each of their stage actions contributes to a
developing and integrated whole. In short, this super-objective and
through-line of action establish interpretive direction, actor
confidence, and performance coherence.

*   *   *

The Second Shepherds' Pageant also presented two possibilities for
interpretation. These possibilities, it turned out, were similar to
those I had to choose between when I devised the super-objective and
through-line of action for Mankind. One interpretation for the Second
Shepherds' Pageant could stress Mak's and Gyll's roles as anti-types of
Joseph and Mary; its conceptual integrity would thus emphasize the
Master's depiction of a sinful world in need of God's incarnate
ministration. Such an approach is analogous to the rather transparent
emphasis on the temptations of the flesh that first presented itself as
an interpretive possibility for Mankind. There is much in the Second

Shepherds' Pageant and its scholarship to support this interpretation. The Master's characterizations of Mak and Gyll do stand out in high relief. It seems that the demonic perversity of supernatural agents, the wickedness of malevolent villains, or simply the inept thefts and deceptions of these two bumbling crooks always attract more interest and attention than the artless piety of more virtuous characters. But these two characters and their actions are ultimately insufficient to the play's dramatic purposes.

The thematic and performance character of this play may get unfair or distorted representations by overestimating the importance of Mak and Gyll, or by underestimating the personal goodwill and integrity of the shepherds.[5] Maynard Mack, Jr., argues that Mak, not the shepherds, is the "energizer" of this play's drama (80). In his description of the shepherds and their lives (apart from Mak's intrusion upon them) as being "static" (79 and 81), "passive" (79), and "largely choric and undramatic" (80), he misunderstands the motivation for their gathering together away and apparently safe from the corruptions of the world outside their fellowship. He denies them a primary motivation and a dramatic objective of their own. But the actors who play these shepherds need some compelling reason for their characters to be on stage, whether Mak is having an influence on their lives or not. V. A. Kolve thinks that the opening complaints of the shepherds in all of the Nativity plays are there, "simply in order that contention and discord may be established as a dramatic fact, a mood, so that dramatic progress from it can be made" (158). Rosemary Woolf argues that, "since their [i. e., the shepherds'] night wanderings serve no

practical purpose, it gives them a vagabondish air and leaves them with time for senseless quarrels and feastings" (192). Lois Roney also underestimates the personal merits of these shepherds by characterizing them as suspicious men who share no bonds of friendship or trust. She writes: "When the three shepherds finally meet, there is genuinely bad feeling between them--the first two grudge the third his food and drink and vilify his labor; he promises to give them only as good as he gets. . . . The human evil here is real. These people lack goodness in their wills" (712).

Whatever the service of these scholarly observations is to other purposes, they are virtually useless to directors. Some of them are detrimental to the work of directors. Directors cannot direct actors to be "static," "passive," or "undramatic." Actors need to act. And they need to act toward some specific purpose that integrates their interplay into an interpretive vision that accounts for every action in the play. If the medieval cycle and morality plays are well structured at all, then they are dramatic throughout, not just in part. The dramatic construction of the Second Shepherds' Pageant is very good, indeed. It establishes a dramatic tension between truth and falsehood in Coll's opening complaint and sustains that tension through to its poignant conclusion. Everything that the shepherds say about themselves and their circumstances in their opening complaints suggests that they come to the fields and each other's company to find sanctuary from a deceitful, unjust, difficult, and terrifying world. Their opening banter is not the setting of some idle "mood" serving "no practical purpose" or the expression of long simmering hostilities.

Any who have shared the tavern camaraderie of day laborers after long work hours can recognize the same tough respect and sympathetic bonding underlying the shepherds' surface speech of spirited ridicule and personal abuse.[6] These shepherds seek each other's company on a cold and wet night to preserve and reinforce values they esteem, because there is value and esteem within and among them. They express those values and that esteem in a rough-hewn manner that befits their characters and quite likely the characters of sympathetic laborers in their audiences. If there were not this common bond of values and esteem, the shepherds would not share food, song, and hardship together, nor would they be fit for the Angel's message, nor would they be so genuinely moving in their artless adoration of the Christ-child. They recognize the universal truth because they are individually true.

In contrast to the shepherds' compelling search for enduring truth and joy, Mak's and Gyll's infatuation with demonic spells, livestock thefts, and haphazard deceptions seems a rather sandy base on which to build an interpretation of this play. We must keep in mind that transgressions such as theirs would be taken in the Middle Ages to be the perversions of some a priori virtues. According to Augustinian theology, no sin had independent existence; each was the dependent, willful corruption of some corresponding, preexistent, and independent virtue.[7] Mak and Gyll, as figures of vice, are dependent on the shepherds for any justification for their being in the play at all. Mak feigns social superiority, casts demonic spells, commits theft, and perpetrates elaborate deceptions--all willful transgressions against the innocence and goodwill of the shepherds. Gyll is Mak's willing

co-conspirator. Between them they act out (explicitly or implicitly) homespun varieties of all of the seven deadly sins. Whatever they do, though, has meaning only in the context of their larger relationship to the shepherds. Simply put, the Second Shepherds' Pageant could be played entirely without Mak and Gyll, though its richness would be considerably diminished. The contrary is impossible. To think of Mak as the play's "energizer," as Mack does, seems to misrepresent not only the source of dramatic action but also the medieval notion of the relationship of sin to virtue. The character of Mak cannot stand up to scrutiny on either count. Even Gyll dominates him. I chose to believe that the Master had better intentions for his play than to entrust its meaning to the limited capacities of so weak a pair, however entertaining their slapstick might be.

For my interpretation of the Second Shepherds' Pageant, I took the Master's use of "true" and "glee" to be the informing thematic principles underlying all that constituted our performance of this play. Once the medieval meanings of these words are established their reverberations can be found throughout the play. They establish values, character objectives, and performance tones that affect every moment of the actors' play on stage. An understanding of what the Master meant by these two, not-so-simple words admits directors and actors into a drama of extraordinary thematic unity and transcendent joy.

The shepherds' quest for truth sustains their action on stage throughout, from Coll's opening complaint to Daw's curtain line and

their last, exultant exit. Truth for these medieval shepherds meant a great deal more than our modern notion of an understanding that corresponds to evidential fact. For them, truth went through and beyond fact to the surrounding realms of reliability, trustworthiness, steadfastness, and good faith. It was the wellspring of character and the basis for both fealty and friendship. Coll's lines, "ffor I trowe, perde,/trew men if thay be,/we gett more compane/Or it be noyne" (51-54) summarize his opening complaint and project his hopes. His complaint about "gentlery men" (18) is an extended argument against trusting a whole class of newly created men who have neither merited nor earned his respect or willing service. They are all show and decoration, and without substance. He brings himself to the fields on a bleak night to share the company of "trew men"--Daw and Gib--men he can trust, men who have proved themselves reliable, men who have proved their friendship. The whole of the play for Coll (and for Gib and Daw) amounts to testing the truth of those around them, principally Mak, to find good faith and trustworthiness in a world of circumstantial hardship, crumbling values, and cheap deceptions (cf. Coll's line to Mak, ""can ye now mene you?" 220).

If Coll cannot serve new gentry men, who are the counterfeits of truth, where else then may he go to find any who are true? Within their human limitations, Gib and Daw, to be sure, provide some of what Coll seeks. Mak and Gyll fail his test miserably. The fulfillment of his search, of course, comes in the Angel's announcement of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Coll's response to the angelic news is that "It is true as steyll/That prophetys haue spokyn" (699-700). In our

production, we played Coll as a veteran of Agincourt. On this line he
caught hold of his sword and became the living image of Paul's militant
Christian (cf. Ephesians 6:13-17). Coll's line echoes an earlier line
of Mak's ("And I am trew as steyll all men waytt" 226) and supplants
the temporal lie with the eternal truth. In the end, Coll and the
other shepherds find the true Son of God, a steadfast lord whom they
may trust, worship, and serve.

The shepherds' poignant adoration of the Christ-child brings the
drama full circle. Coll's address to the infant on Mary's knee sounds
again the triumph of truth over falsehood in terms that describe also
the shepherds' like triumph over Mak: "The fals gyler of teyn now goys
he begylde" (713). They find the child in circumstances remarkably
like their own--cold, homeless, and virtually alone in a perilous
world. His plight must remind them of their own at the beginning of
the play. They offer him simple testaments of faith, humble gifts, and
a warm blanket. Their humility in the presence of faith fulfilled
reveals the depths of their own faith. The shepherds find truth in
this play because they are qualified to seek it and are prepared to
recognize it once found. Mary's confirmation of their search moves
them to true joy expressed in song--to glee.

Glee in this play is the evidence of truth, the outward sign of an
inward grace. The shepherds mention it by name only once, in Daw's
prayer: "Lord, if thi wylles be,/we ar lewde all thre,/Thou grauntt vs
somkyns gle/To comforth thi wight" (706-709). They seek it, though,
through the whole of the play.[8] Glee for these shepherds means much
more than its rather restricted and diminutive modern senses of

frivolous gaiety or lighthearted song, as in glee club. Though its

oldest sense in English (Old English. _gliw_, _gleo_) meant "entertainment"

(often in music and song), the modern reader must be careful not to

assign to that word current meanings, too, and thereby stray farther

still from the solemn joy of those who heard the heroic songs of

ancient gleemen. Though Daw mentions glee late in the play, the

shepherds act out its musical meaning early on in their first song (cf.

183-89). The lyrics are not recorded in the text, but the shepherds'

description of it as a three-part song for their unaccompanied voices

fits the definition of the English-invented "glee" exactly. These

shepherds do not sing to while away their idle hours; they have serious

purpose to their music. Whenever they sing, their solemn joy expressed

in song testifies to some important truth--to the truth of their

friendship, to the truth of mutual trust, to the truth of angelic

revelation, to the truth of Christ's birth. There is no affirmation of

truth in this play unaccompanied by glee.

What is crucial for the actors' performance is that these

understandings of the medieval meanings for truth and glee can be

played. The shepherds can search for truth in their every word and act

on stage. Whether in their opening complaints they are speaking to

everyone (addressing the audience) or only to themselves (strict

soliloquy), they seek to sort out truth from falsehood. Coll seems to

speak to himself: "It dos me good, as I walk thus by myn oone,/Of this

warld for to talk" (46-47). Gib seems to speak to the audience: "Bot

yong men of wowing for god that you boght,/Be well war of wedyng and

thynk in youre thoght" (91-92). Daw speaks to the elements of "floodys

seyn/Wyndys and ranys so rude and stormes so keyn" (127-28). Each in his own way seeks truth. Coll seeks the truth of the social contract reflected in the character of men. Gib seeks the truth plighted in marriage. Daw seeks the truth of God's relationship to his created world. They gather wood, build a fire, share food and drink and song, and make for themselves a true fellowship. Eventually, all of their searches become focused on Mak and Gyll, who violate social and personal trust, strain the bonds of marriage, and invoke demonic spells to twist the forces of nature. The actors who play the shepherds can act out their search, whether it takes the form of their verbal questioning of Mak and Gyll or their ransacking of Mak's and Gyll's cottage to find their stolen sheep. And they can play their search for truth fulfilled. Their adoration of the Christ-child confirms their objectives won. At Bethlehem they find a true lord, the union of God and man, and the reconciliation of their mutable and sinful world to the divine. They testify to their faith, give gifts, and depart singing. At every moment, their search for truth gives them something specific to do on stage. Once the actors understand all that truth and glee meant for the Wakefield Master, then the character and significance of their playing can work in more ways and on richer levels than our modern definitions of these words would suggest or could sustain.

My statement of super-objective for the Second Shepherds' Pageant, then, took as its basis the shepherds' resolute search for truth and joy, despite their hardships; Mak and Gyll and the theft of the sheep remained important (and comic), but their characters and actions took

subordinate place to the overriding story of the shepherds' longing and

fulfillment. Its one-sentence distillation of the play's theme is

this:

> In their search for truth and joy amid the circumstantial
> hardships, crumbling values, and cheap deceptions of a sinful
> world, three humble shepherds endure theft, deception, and
> disappointment at the hands of Mak and Gyll, resist the
> temptation to exact deadly retribution, reaffirm their faith
> in God's providence, and find his truth revealed to them in
> the birth of Christ.

My through-line of action for the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u>

segmented the play into nine motivational units. Though the first unit

is exposition (strictly speaking), the action of the shepherds to make

a sanctuary for themselves initiates a search for truth and joy which

will find its specific test in Mak's and Gyll's theft and deception.

Unit II includes Mak's entrance and theft of the sheep, the "attack"

action which gives the shepherds' overall search a local and timely

focus. I took the turning point of the play to be the shepherds'

recovery of their stolen sheep, the specific resolution to their

limited search for truth with Mak and Gyll. The shepherds have endured

a worldly test of their good will, but their susceptibility to Mak's

theft and deceptions has left them disheartened and tempted to despair.

The climax of the play comes in the Angel's revelation to the shepherds

of the birth of Christ. At that point the shepherds' specific trials

and personal discoveries are raised to universal and timeless levels.

The denouement of the play's actions comes in Mary's confirmation of

the fulfillment of the shepherds' deepest longing. In all instances,

my statements of unit and beat objectives tried to give the

interrelated themes of truth and falsehood, concealment and discovery,

despair and joy controlling expression. My through-line of action for

the Second Shepherds' Pageant follows.

UNIT I: Sanctuary
Exposition, 1-189

Objective: The shepherds make a sanctuary for themselves.

Beat Objectives:

1. The shepherds escape worldly tribulations.
    (1-144)
2. The shepherds make a sanctuary for themselves.
    (145-89)

UNIT II: Betrayal
Attack, 190-295

Objective: Mak steals the shepherds' sheep.

Beat Objectives:

1. Mak invades the shepherds' sanctuary. (190-
    268)
2. Mak steals the shepherds' sheep. (269-95)
    [ATTACK]

UNIT III: Co-conspirators
Rising Action, 296-345

Objective: Gyll invents a ruse to hide the stolen sheep.

Beat Objectives:

1. Mak asserts his prowess. (296-331)
2. Gyll reclaims her dominance. (332-45)

UNIT IV: Misdirections
Rising Action, 346-403

Objective: Mak evades the truth.

Beat Objectives:

1. Daw warns the shepherds of Mak's theft. (346-
    76)
2. Mak distracts the shepherds' attention. (377-
    403)

UNIT V: Concealment
Rising Action, 404-48

Objective: Gyll hides the stolen sheep.

Beat Objectives:

1.   Mak surrenders to Gyll's dominance. (404-21)
2.   Gyll takes charge. (422-48)

UNIT VI: The Pursuit
Rising Action, 449-75

Objective: The shepherds resolve to find out the truth.

Beat Objectives:

1.   The shepherds confirm the theft of their
sheep. (449-57)
2.   The shepherds resolve to pursue Mak. (458-75)

UNIT VII: Deception and Discovery
Rising Action and Turning Point, 476-628

Objective: The shepherds recover their stolen sheep.

Beat Objectives:

1.   Mak and Gyll deceive the shepherds. (476-570)
2.   The shepherds discover the truth. (571-628)
[TURNING POINT]

UNIT VIII: Revelation
Climax and Falling Action, 629-705

Objective: An Angel calls the shepherds to witness the
birth of Christ.

Beat Objectives:

1.   The shepherds recover their strength and
spirits. (629-37)
2.   An Angel calls the shepherds to witness the
birth of Christ. (638-46) [CLIMAX]
3.   The shepherds test the truth of the Angel's
revelation. (646-705)

UNIT IX: Fulfillment
Falling Action and Denouement, 706-54

Objective: Mary confirms the shepherds' search for truth
fulfilled.

Beat Objectives:

1. The shepherds honor the Christ child. (706-
   36)
2. Mary confirms the truth of the Angel's
   revelation. (737-54) [DENOUEMENT]

SUPER-OBJECTIVE:

In their search for truth and joy amid the circumstantial
hardships, crumbling values, and cheap deceptions of a sinful
world, three humble shepherds endure theft, deception, and
disappointment at the hands of Mak and Gyll, resist the
temptation to exact deadly retribution, reaffirm their faith
in God's providence, and find his truth revealed to them in
the birth of Christ.

This super-objective and through-line of action interpretation for

the Second Shepherds' Pageant satisfies all of Stanislavski's criteria.

Its affirmation of the shepherds' dominant importance to the play

embraces all of the Master's dramatic vision, from first line to last

exit. Its intellectual credibility rests upon the positive assertion

of the shepherds' search for truth and joy, a search that conforms not

only to the action of the play but also to its theological

underpinnings. The shepherds' search for truth and joy is the

"fundamental line of action" in the play. This interpretation also

engages the play's emotional content. The shepherds make for

themselves a true fellowship of trust and benevolent intent, which

finds ultimate purpose and expression in their heartfelt adoration of

the Christ-child. And Mak and Gyll have about them all of the frantic

desperation which their ill-conceived and badly executed transgressions

merit. Finally, it excites the actors' wills to perform. In contrast

to more restrictive visions of this play, each actor in this

interpretation has specific and purposeful business to act out every

moment of his or her appearance on stage. Moreover, the actors see how

their individual character actions integrate with the actions of all of the other characters.

The dramatic constructions of the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ and _Mankind_, as evidenced by their super-objectives and through-lines of action, are remarkably parallel. Both place natural men in the hostile environment of a fallen world. Both begin with complaints about the variable fortunes and vulnerable characters of men in the face of external tribulation and internal distress. Both subject these men to the corrosive influences of hardship, vice, worldly deceit, and demonic spells. In both plays, the characters' good will and simple piety are tested and tempered by the world's intrusion into the apparent sanctuary of their private lands and personal labor. And both plays redeem their protagonists through the application of supernatural grace--the divine redemption of the human soul, despite the waywardness of its will. _Mankind_ and the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ dramatize the testing and tempering of their principal characters in scenes of raucous comedy that reinforce a universal perspective on the folly of sin and vice. Their characterizations are drawn with depths of vision that are startlingly rich in psychological and spiritual complexity. They illuminate and reinforce the plays' dramatic themes and theological meanings in ways that testify to the surety of their playwrights' commands of dramaturgy and stagecraft. Our audiences' favorable responses to our productions suggest that both of these plays still sustain meaningful, entertaining, and affecting performances. _Mankind_ and the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ are so similar in dramatic vision and are so skillful in their executions that what had once been wide disparity in their critical reputations now seems unwarranted.

NOTES

1. The relation between a play's super-objective and its fundamental
    line of action (more commonly known as the "through-line of
    action") is symbiotic. The super-objective is a brief but
    comprehensive statement of dominant theme; it is the goal of
    performance and the interpretive authority to which any single
    aspect of performance must appeal. The through-line of action is
    the plot of subordinate conflict themes that integrates the
    individual and sequential actions of the play and drives them
    toward the overriding super-objective. Director Elia Kazan's
    "Notebook for A Streetcar Named Desire" illustrates the relation
    between the super-objective and its through-line of action. In
    his interpretation of the play and in his statement of its super-
    objective, Kazan focused the whole drama on the story of Blanche.
    He writes that:

>   This play is a poetic tragedy. We are shown the final
>   dissolution of a person of worth, who once had great
>   potential, and who, even as she goes down, has worth
>   exceeding that of the "healthy," coarse-grained figures who
>   kill her. (365)

    For his production, this is what the drama is about. Kazan's
    translation of that idea into performance, though, moves to
    express its truth through the play's character action. His
    statement of super-objective translates the abstract idea of the
    play into a concrete description of dramatic action:

>   Theme--this is [Blanche's] message from the dark interior.
>   This little twisted, pathetic, confused bit of light and
>   culture puts out a cry. It is snuffed out by the crude

forces of violence, insensibility and vulgarity which exist
in our South--and this cry is the play. (364)

Kazan's through-line of action, then, tries "to keep each scene in
terms of Blanche" (365). In every instance, the subordinate scene
objectives also translate idea into action. Kazan writes:

1. Blanche comes to the last stop at the end of the line.
2. Blanche tries to make a place for herself.
3. Blanche breaks them [Stanley and Stella] apart, but when
   they come together, Blanche is more alone than ever!
4. Blanche, more desperate because more excluded, tries the
   direct attack and makes the enemy who will finish her.
5. Blanche finds that she is being tracked down for the
   kill. She must work fast.
6. Blanche suddenly finds, suddenly makes for herself, the
   only possible, perfect man for her.
7. Blanche comes out of the happy bathroom to find that her
   own doom has caught up with her.
8. Blanche fights her last fight. Breaks down. Even
   Stella deserts her.
9. Blanche's last desperate effort to save herself by
   telling the whole truth. The truth dooms her.
10. Blanche escapes out of this world. She is brought back
    by Stanley and destroyed.
11. Blanche is disposed of. (365-66)

One remarkable moment, among many possible examples, in Marlon

Brando's playing out of Stanley's through-line of action will

illustrate the effectiveness of these suggestive images. This

moment has been preserved in Kazan's film version of the play.

Scene 2 opens with Stanley and Stella arguing over the contents of

Blanche's newly-arrived trunk of clothes and costume jewelry.

Stanley suspects that Stella's family estate of Belle Reve (his

property, too, under Louisiana's Napoleonic code) was sold by

Blanche to finance her taste for extravagant living. Stella

protests that Blanche's trunk packs only old, cheap clothes,

feather boas, and rhinestones. As they wrestle out Blanche's

clothes, a few of the feathers from one boa shake loose and float

aimlessly around Stanley's head. While he continues the argument,
Stanley plucks one feather then another out of the air and crushes
them in his "coarse-grained" hands. The image is perfect.
Blanche is an equally vulnerable "feather in the wind," who will
in time be plucked down and crushed by those same hands and
Stanley's "crude force." Even when she is not on stage, Blanche
dominates the action. And Brando's work as an actor spontaneously
invents subordinate stage images which connect Stanley to Blanche
and the scene objective to the super-objective.

2. *Mankind*'s playwright was clever enough to know that his
characterizations of Mischief and the Vices would be enormously
entertaining. And he was so confident of the audience-pleasing
appearance of Titivillus that his text (and our script)
interrupted the play just before the devil's entrance for the
actors to take up a collection. Nowadays says, "Gyf ws rede
reyallys yf 3e wyll se hys abhomynabull presens" (465). No one in
the audience would have likely given up "red royals" to hear yet
another sermon from Mercy. "Abominable presences" in the theater
may have always claimed a greater market share than more saintly
characters. The amount of money that we gathered at this moment
during our performances was a rather strong indication that the
marketing instincts of *Mankind*'s playwright were very sure,
indeed. The irony of all of this, I suspect, was not lost on
Mankind's playwright, and may have been appreciated by some in his
audience. The likely performance sites for many of the medieval
performances of *Mankind* were the courtyards of inns and taverns--

the very domain of Mischief and the Vices. And the occasion to take time away from their more profitable labors to attend a play as scurrilous as this one may have made some in the medieval audience a little uneasy at hearing Mercy say, "Remember . . . þe tyme of contynuance./. . . Spende yt well; serue Gode wyth hertys affyance./Dystempure not yowr brayn wyth goode ale nor wyth wyn" (233, 235-36) and "Do truly yowr labure and be neuer ydyll" (308). Mankind marks an important time in the development of English dramatic entertainments, for it comes at a moment when religious dramas became more truly professional and thereby farther removed from direct associations with church sites or church-sanctioned civic observances of religious festivals. The dramatic tensions in this play not only occur among its characters, but also between it and the changing social norms of its fifteenth-century audience.

3. "Beat" in theatrical parlance has many meanings. It can refer to the internal pace and rhythm of the actors' playing of a scene (analogous to the time signature in music, as in "Pick up the beat") and to the timing of cues ("Lights fade to out in 10 beats" or "Wait 3 beats after Mercy's exit, then enter"). Beat has also been employed to mark the smaller incidents of conflict in plays. In this usage, beat notes the brush fires of emotional exchange, not so much the passage of time or its pace. This is the usage I employ here. Though the term now has wide performance currency in this regard, I believe that it is an accretion by subsequent

performance experiences and experiments to the "motivational unit"
interpretive divisions devised by Stanislavski.

4. Our performance script concluded the play with Mercy's benediction
    to the audience. The last three stanzas in the text were cut.

5. Disproportionate emphasis on malcontent characters occurs in the
    scholarship and performance interpretation of many plays,
    medieval, Renaissance, or modern. Mrs. Noah always seems to
    dominate discussions of the cycle flood plays. Rosemary Woolf's
    comments on the flood plays, for example, devote nine pages to
    Mrs. Noah and only two to her husband (132-45). Laurence
    Olivier's interpretation of Othello effectively counter-balanced
    many previous productions that gave disproportionate emphasis to
    Iago. And directors must be careful not to let the character of
    Stanley Kowalski dominate their interpretations of A Streetcar
    Named Desire.

6. Cf. John Gardner's helpful discussion of the underlying affection
    in the apparent conflicts among the shepherds. He writes that
    "Daw asserts that since masters will not treat servants fairly, he
    will repay his masters with bad work; and when Gyb asks where the
    sheep are pastured, Daw says he left them, early this morning, to
    wander 'in the corne.' Order--essentially the feudal order, a
    reflection of the order of the cosmos--seems undone. But in fact
    all three shepherds are, in their rough, country fashion, joking"
    (88). And, "in all Gyb's jibing there is a certain gentleness,
    the familiar wish of the genial prankster that there be no hard
    feelings" (94).

7. Frederick Copleston summarizes Augustine's view of the dependent
   nature of sin this way: "But what is evil in itself, moral evil?
   Is it something positive? It cannot, first of all, be something
   positive in the sense of something created by God: the cause of
   moral evil is not the Creator but the created will. The cause of
   good things is the divine goodness, whereas the cause of evil is
   the created will which turns away from the immutable Good: evil is
   a turning-away of the created will from the immutable and infinite
   Good. But evil cannot strictly be termed a 'thing,' since this
   word implies a positive reality, and if moral evil were a positive
   reality, it would have to be ascribed to the Creator, unless one
   were willing to attribute to the creature the power of positive
   creation out of nothing. Evil, then, is 'that which falls away
   from essence and tends to non-being . . . . It tends to make that
   which is cease to be" (History of Philosophy 84).

8. "Glee" and its synonyms can be found throughout the play, whenever
   the shepherds give evidence of their good faith. Coll says, "yit
   I wold, or we yode oone gaf vs a song" (183). Gib replies, "So I
   thoght as I stode to myrth vs emong" (184). The shepherds
   undertake an extended analysis of the Angel's song (656-64) and
   even try to imitate it. Daw urges Coll and Gib to hasten to
   Bethlehem with the promise of glee, "Be mery and not sad of myrth
   is oure sang,/Euer lastyng glad to mede may we fang,/Withoutt
   noyse" (667-69). Anticipating the fulfillment of prophecy, Daw
   assures Coll and Gib that, "ffull glad may we be" (683), and then,
   to assure himself, prays for "somkyns gle/To comforth" the child

(708-09). The play ends with the shepherds making an explicit

connection between truth and glee:

> iiius pastor. ffor sothe all redy it semys to be told full
> oft.
> primus pastor. what grace we haue fun.
> ijus pastor. Com furth, now ar we won.
> iijus pastor. To syng ar we bun:
>   let take on loft. (749-54)

IV. Modern Actors, Medieval Plays:
Character "Spines" and Through-Lines of Action for
Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant

> The actor must learn how to compose a score of lively
> physical and psychological objectives; to shape his whole
> score into one all-embracing supreme objective; to strive
> toward its attainment. Taken all together the superobjective
> (desire), through action (striving), and attainment (action)
> add up to the creative process of living a part emotionally.
> Thus the process of living your part consists of composing a
> score for your role, of a superobjective, and of its active
> attainment by means of the through line of action.
> (Stanislavski, Creating a Role 80)

> There are no small parts, there are only small actors.
> (Stanislavski, My Life in Art 298)

The essence of live theater lies in its actors playing out the

truths and falsehoods, insights and errors, hopes and fears, joys and

sorrows, and successes and failures of believable characters--and there

alone. All of the external apparatus of the theater--the lights,

costumes, sets, make-up, and sound and special effects--exists only to

serve the actors in their work to build and communicate such

characters. Modern productions of the medieval cycle and morality

plays depend on credible characterizations just as much as any other

dramatic performances for their power to move audiences. The most

difficult problem for directors in bringing performance life to any of

these plays, then, is eliciting confident, understandable, and

believable characterizations from casts that are typically made up of

enthusiastic, but untrained student actors. The solution to this problem has two parts. Directors must establish interpretive authority and practical direction for each actor's work to build a character. Actors need to sense that their individual characters are understandable and important--that each role contributes to the whole play, regardless of its size or the frequency of appearances on stage. Directors must also establish communities of common purpose--performance ensembles. Actors need the performance confidence that comes from knowing that what they do individually fits together into a comprehensive interpretive design that makes sense--that their work will have meaning only in its collective expression. The approach to these directorial tasks that I have found most useful is that developed by Constantin Stanislavski and subsequent practitioners of his system of actor training. Its expression of character interpretations through an integrated and cumulative sequencing of motivated stage actions provides an effective strategy for assisting even the most inexperienced actors (and directors) in creating believable roles and ensemble performances. Both <u>Mankind</u> and the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u> are full of characters who play out universal and enduring conflicts in the specific and concrete terms of compelling character interaction.

Directors bear primary responsibility for coaxing understandable and believable characterizations from the actors and for integrating their individual work into commonly shared thematic interpretations and ensemble performances. Helen Krich Chinoy summarizes the recognized need for and the emergence of the modern director this way:

> When the animators of modern theater--Antoine, Stanislavski, Appia, Craig, Reinhardt, Meyerhold, Copeau--examined the <u>fin de siècle</u> theaters, they saw only an appalling absence of

homogeneous values in the production itself and in its appeal
to the audience. They insisted that if theater was to
reprieve its unique, primitive, communal power, a director
would have to impose a point of view that would integrate
play, production, and spectators. By his interpretation a
director would weld a harmonious art and a cohesive audience
out of the disturbing diversity increasingly apparent in our
urban, industrial, mass society. By his multifarious
activities the director would restore the artistic and social
unity that has always been the central demand of the
collective art of theater. (3-4)

The practical necessity for directors is especially acute here in the

United States, where there are few permanent acting companies--

professional or amateur. Here, directors usually have to work with

casts assembled just a month or so before opening, which very likely

include actors who do not share a common interpretive approach or set

of expressive techniques. More to the point, directors are essential

to the modern performance of medieval drama. If my experience is a

true indication, the casts of student actors who typically perform

these plays bring to interpretation, characterization, rehearsal, and

production virtually no theatrical orientation or training. They have

had, then, an immediate and practical need for a director-teacher to

provide some basic theatrical training and a unified interpretive

vision, character analysis, rehearsal strategy, and production design

for the play that they were to enact.

These actors share some problems and challenges that are common to

actors in any play. As Lee Strasberg once wrote, every actor is

required to cultivate "a special sensibility . . . , an ability to

respond to imaginary stimuli and situations, which makes it possible

for him to enter into the experience and emotions of the character he

is to represent" ("Acting" 527). Moreover, acting requires that each

actor's creative work occur in public, in consort with others, and be re-created afresh at every performance. The demands of character interpretation, performance invention, and sustained and collective work before expectant audiences are unrelenting. Such demands upon professional actors are routinely accepted occupational stresses; the same demands put upon amateur actors can become all-consuming terrors. Where does performance confidence come from? How are the actors to be sure that they have read their characters rightly? How do they select one best course of action from an apparent multitude of alternatives? What guideline exists to give their individual and collective inventions stimulus, common purpose, and expressive coherence? For amateur actors, these questions become intensely personal. "How can I be sure that I will fulfill the acting demands of my part and the play, and not appear to be a public fool?"

Beyond the common problems which all actors share, the medieval cycle and morality plays present additional and special problems of characterization. The presumed "allegory" of the morality plays is difficult. Many, if not all, of the moralities' characters seem to be the static depictions of some abstract and general quality. Mankind has its character, Mercy. Everyman has its characters, Knowledge, Strength, Discretion, and Fellowship. The Castle of Perseverance's "nomina ludentium" is particularly long: Mundus, Voluptas, Stulticia, Detraccio, Auaricia, Superbia, Ira, Invidia, Luxuria, Gula, Accidia, Caro, Confessio, Penitencia, Caritas, Abstinencia, Solicitudo, Castitas, Largitas, Humilitas, Cupiditas, Paciencia, Anima, Mors (and more), plus soldiers, demons, good angels, and bad angels—in short,

all of the sins, virtues, and benevolent or malevolent spirits that can afflict or save the soul (Eccles 2)! What are directors and actors to do, when faced with so many characters who seem to defy specific and concrete representation and who seem content simply "to be" rather than compelled "to act"? Even if they could act, "allegorical" personifications would have to act within the rigidly narrow confines of their defining quality. The actor playing Paciencia in The Castle of Perseverance might well ask if he could not lose his "patience" sometimes and get angry at the inconstancy of Humanum Genus. After all, constancy is the personification's singular strength and the basis upon which each relates to all of the other characters. Or is anger the exclusive property of Ira (wrath), the personification of one of the seven deadly sins? Experienced actors may find these "allegorical" characters difficult to interpret and play; amateur actors may find them utterly bewildering and more than a little intimidating.

Determining characterizations for the cycle plays is no less difficult. Directors may find in their researches that much of the scholarly interpretation of the cycle plays has been typological. The play of Abraham and Isaac is taken to be a type of the sacrifice of Christ by God the Father. The typological connection is particularly emphasized by the eventual (and merciful) substitution of a lamb for Isaac. The Abraham (God) and Isaac (Christ) typology works easily on two levels at least: father sacrificing son and the substitute sacrifice of a lamb, a literal agnus dei. The play of Noah's Flood is taken to be a type of the intercession of the church and its priests in the salvation of mankind. The ark may be taken as a type of the church

and Noah as a type of priest. As we shall see, the _Second Shepherds'_
Pageant has its share of typological interpretations, too. Such
interpretations may or may not contribute to the actors' work. The
essential problem with typology is that its interpretive function is to
see one thing as an emblem or sign of something else--the charity of
the shepherds in the Nativity plays as a type of the charity of the
Good Shepherd, say. But actors cannot play something else; they must
play their own characters. Directors must be careful to concentrate
their actors' attentions on the specific and concrete business that
their individual characters have to perform, and admit typology only
where it can be justified by the dramatic context and can be
successfully played on stage.

The medieval audience's response to the apparent allegory or
typology of medieval drama was likely quite different from that of
which modern audiences are now capable. The lives of medieval
spectators were permeated with all sorts of examples of allegorical
works and interpretations. The cruciform structure of church
architecture, the depiction of Biblical personages in medieval dress
and contemporary surroundings in sculpture, stained glass, and
manuscript illuminations, and the tendency of preachers to find
allegorical meanings in the circumstances of almost every sacred and
secular human event disposed those in the medieval audience to see
typological and figural implications in virtually every appearance and
action on stage. The medieval playwright did not have to overwork the
literal circumstances of his play to set those associated meanings in
motion for his audience. Modern audiences bring much less of this

interpretive disposition and capability to performance. Modern
directors, then, have to decide just how far current productions of
these plays ought to "cue" audiences to meanings beyond the plays'
literal contexts. My approach to this matter parallels my approach to
the translations of meanings of the Middle English and foreign language
elements in performance scripts. My responsibility as a modern
director has been met, if I make these meanings possible for a modern
audience, but do not forsake the plays' immediate and concrete
characterizations, conflicts, and resolutions to elicit secondary
interpretive responses as if they were primary. For me to do otherwise
would be analogous to storytellers interrupting their narratives to
explain the sadness, suspense, humor, or implicit meanings of their
stories. The sense of narrative immediacy and the right of the
audience to make discoveries on its own would be dulled and
compromised. If the story of the drama preserves its own integrity in
its own terms, the audience may then take care of the rest as well as
it can.[1]

Actors first need to give their characters specific identities,
definable relationships, a course of physical action, and a compelling
psychological purpose--all within the context of the play at hand. The
cycle plays present as many problems in characterization as the
moralities. Even the longer of these plays seem cryptically short, by
modern standards. The Second Shepherds' Pageant, one of the longest
and most fully developed, still leaves much for directors and actors to
question. Who are these shepherds? Where did they come from? How old
are they? What do they look like? What do they sound like? How do

they move? Why are they this way or that or choose to do this thing or that? What is the nature of the relationship among them? Why are they, and not some other shepherds, chosen to witness the birth of Christ? None of these questions gets direct answer from the Wakefield Master. And yet, the play cannot be played without answering these questions and more. What answers can directors supply? How can those answers best help the actors?

*   *   *

To accept all of these questions and concerns a priori to the production of any of the medieval cycle and morality plays is to accept, knowingly or not, the primacy of the function of the director and the pervasive influence of Stanislavski upon modern theatrical practice. More than any other director of the modern era, Stanislavski devoted his study and practice of the actor's art to devising ways to make that creative process accessible and sensible. The charismatic performances of Marlon Brando, Kim Stanley, Paul Newman, and Geraldine Page and the directing of Lee Strasberg, Elia Kazan, and Harold Clurman, along with the work of many others who have been schooled in Stanislavski's system, may suggest that his prescripts were intended only for the consummate professional. Such is not the case. He developed his system primarily to assist directors and actors whose native talents were not infused with genius--the greater portion by far of both professionals and amateurs. Stanislavski devoted his long and distinguished career to discovering ways to make the hardest tasks of the actor--the invention of a sequence of justified actions and the expression of true feeling appropriate to the individual character and

dramatic circumstances--easier to accomplish. In this regard, Stanislavski was a most humane revolutionary. He devised his system to be a rigorous, but compassionate restructuring of theatrical purpose and the actor's craft, as much to help himself as to help his fellow actors. Stanislavski's system seems ideally suited to the problems of amateur actors with characterization in the medieval cycle and morality plays. Most of the student actors whom I have directed have brought to the production of these plays ample intelligence, imagination, study, and willingness to work, but virtually no previous actor training. Stanislavski's system has proved itself well designed for their needs, as their intelligence and industry have proved readily responsive to it.

The drama of any play, including the medieval cycle and morality plays, lives in the dynamic relationships among its characters, characters continually at work scene after scene, performance after performance to overcome personal obstacles to achieve some valued objective. The informing structures to the drama's plan of action on stage are the individual actors' character "spines" and the play's through-line of action.[2] The interpretive spine unifies and directs each actor's physical and emotional energies toward the building of a living, believable character. This lifeline for the actor's work threads its way through each motivational unit in which the character appears, weaving character goals and impediments into the fabric of the play's dramatic structure, which is finally given comprehensive expression by the director in the integration of all of the individual character spines into one character-based through-line of action.

Stanislavski's design in this method of character interpretation was to

supply each actor with a schematic plan of action that would identify

both the character's strengths and desires and the physical and

psychological restrictions that impede action and disrupt emotional

stability. These strengths and desires Stanislavski called

"objectives," the specific ends that would motivate and direct each

character's efforts. The physical and psychological impediments to the

realization of objectives have come to be called "thresholds." The

heart of drama lies in the inherent conflict between character

objectives and thresholds. As Stanislavski writes:

> Yet no movement, striving, action is carried out on the
> stage, any more than in real life, without obstacles. One
> runs inevitably into the counter-movements and strivings of
> other people, or into conflicting events, or into obstacles
> caused by the elements, or other hindrances. Life is an
> unremitting struggle, one overcomes or one is defeated.
> Likewise on the stage, side-by-side with the through action
> there will be a series of counter-through actions on the part
> of other characters, other circumstances. The collision and
> conflict of these opposing through actions constitute the
> dramatic situation. (Creating a Role 80)

All of Mankind's efforts, for example, are informed by his "major

objective": to secure his personal salvation. Even his apparent defeat

by Titivillus and his reversion to the pleasures of the tavern do not

supplant Mankind's fundamental desire. He is merely attempting to

convince himself that the desire for salvation is subordinate to self-

indulgence. Mankind fails because his conscience cannot accept such an

inversion of value. He finds himself caught in this battle between the

temptation to self-indulgence and the demands of Christian obedience

and piety because of an essential character flaw--a personal insecurity

that makes him easily intimidated and confused.

Throughout the course of the play Mankind vacillates between triumph and failure, as his resolution and strength wax and wane. His character spine traces this progression through the subordinate objectives and thresholds of each motivational unit until the play culminates in Mankind's humble triumph through repentance and forgiveness. The spine also supplies some suggestion of age, appearance, and personality traits, in order to spark the actor's imagination to begin building a concrete character of depth and believability. My character spine for Mankind follows. For each motivational unit in which he appears, I have stated both a unit objective and a unit threshold. The objectives are expressed in terms of active verbs that can suggest and sustain physical expression on the stage. All of Mankind's subordinate unit objectives and thresholds lead to his major objective and threshold, and thus provide the actor who plays him with a motivated and unified plan of action. In addition to the outline of unit objectives and thresholds, the spine also includes notes on character background and dramatic circumstances. All of these elements in the spine mean to supply suggestions for action and character traits that will spark and sustain the actor's invention through rehearsals and performance.

Character Spine: Mankind

UNIT I

Objective: To escape his responsibilities.
Threshold: Mercy's disruption of the tavern revelry.

UNIT II

Objective: To seek the counsel of Mercy.
Threshold: The temptations of tavern life.

UNIT III

Objective: To defend the honor of his living.
Threshold: The disruption of his labor by the Vices.

UNIT V

Objective: To do his duty.
Threshold: Titivillus's frustration of his labor and
               undermining of his faith.

UNIT VI

Objective: To renounce the discipline of his faith.
Threshold: His reluctance to see the little good that his
               faith and labor have won stripped away.

UNIT VII

Objective: To commit suicide.
Threshold: Mercy's rescue.

UNIT VIII

Objective: To secure his personal salvation.
Threshold: The temptation to despair.

MAJOR OBJECTIVE AND THRESHOLD:

To secure his personal salvation.
The temptation to sin and despair.

Character Notes:

Male. 30-35. Sturdy build. A farmer in simple work
clothes. Mankind's inconstancy, his essential character
flaw, can be played as resulting either from an
impressionable, thick-headed density or as the vacillations
of an intelligent but insecure, easily confused sense of
value (the difference between our first and second
productions). I imagine Mankind as having recently inherited
the family lands, as always having been a good worker, but
who is now intimidated by the responsibility of adult
decision-making, thus his appearance at the tavern in the
opening unit. His "escape" to the tavern is avoidance
behavior, an attempt to get away from having to accept grown-
up responsibilities. Mankind achieves his major objective in
the end because he accepts on faith the nature of his own
being and salvation. His final and most mature decision in
the play is to let God be God and himself be human. He

> learns that his life will always be caught in the turmoil of
> temptation, sin, repentance, and forgiveness, but he finally
> welcomes that life by trusting that God's love and "euer
> habundante" mercy will prevail over all else. (22)

This spine gives the actor who plays Mankind a character identity,
a compelling purpose, and a course of action. It does for him what the
super-objective and through-line of action do for the whole play. The
major objective and threshold of Mankind's character spine, I believe,
conform to the playwright's point of view. The only objective that
will sustain Mankind's actions throughout the course of the play is his
desire to secure personal salvation, in the face of the enticing
temptations of the Vices and the hardships involved with following
Mercy's counsel--the very point of a morality play.[3] This spine
establishes intellectual credibility by giving Mankind a rational basis
for his actions within the context of his medieval existence.
Mankind's actions throughout the play have an understandable and
logical progression. He resolves to be industrious and faithful, is
tempted to sin and despair, and is saved by his admission of frailty,
sincere confession, humble repentance, and Mercy's intercession and
sacramental absolution. All of this conforms to orthodox medieval
theology and religious observance. This spine also engages the actor's
emotions. His objectives and thresholds are specific, concrete,
active, and personal. The more he values the attainment of his
objectives and the more he works to overcome their thresholds the more
deeply felt will be his successes and failures, not only by him, but
also by his fellow actors and the audience. Despair, for example, is
not a thing in itself which the actor can call upon directly. It is,
instead, the emotional consequence of a failure to attain some valued

objective, after the investment of considerable personal effort.

Lastly, this spine excites the actor's will to perform. Its objectives necessitate <u>action</u>—something specific and concrete for the actor to walk on stage and <u>do</u>. No one action is an end in itself, but is, instead, one dynamic moment connected to all of the actions that have gone before and all those that will come after. The actor has individual direction and purpose throughout. And at no time is the actor playing Mankind acting outside the context of the other characters. He is always part of a community of meaning, a realization that not only gives him confidence and support but is also related to the meaning of the play—its super-objective. Mankind is saved within, and not outside, the community of believers. So, too, is the actor.

The character of Mankind was the simplest one in the play to interpret. That he is human and labors as a farmer gave early, helpful interpretive clues that could be expanded into a complex and workable character spine rather straightforwardly. But <u>Mankind</u> presents other and more difficult problems in characterization for directors and actors, as do all of the moralities. These problems cluster around the meaning of the play's "allegory" and the question of how (if?) an allegory can be played on the stage. Only one character in the play, Mankind himself, must necessarily be taken to be human. Only one character in the play has a proper name, Titivillus. All of the other characters are named for some general quality—Mischief, New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought. Did <u>Mankind</u>'s playwright have any idea of how difficult—in fact, how impossible—it is for actors to play general qualities? If he did know, did he care? Did he grow more interested

in purely intellectual concepts and less interested in the physical demands of stage performance? Is the script flawed? Are all of the moralities flawed in the same fatal way? _Everyman_, for example, describes itself not as a work for the theater at all, but as a "treatyse . . . in maner of a morall playe." The inescapable tension between the written word and the stage enactment must be resolved before any of these moralities can find performance expression.

This difference between the written expression and the theatrical performance is made more difficult to present when written expression is intended for performance, especially when that writing is presumed to be allegorical. Good scripts suggest, perhaps even compel, speech patterns, movement, and action. Certainly Mercy's lines in _Mankind_, "Do wey, do wey þis reull, sers! do wey!" (82) compel some movement and action. Mercy's final call, "Aryse and aske mercy, Mankend, and be associat to me" (827), suggests the most desperate plea for repentance and reconciliation. But even the best of scripts cannot prescribe exact intonation or action, nor would they want to. Such constraints on the actor's interpretive abilities would be deadening. In fact, they would deny the spontaneous essence of live theater. All productions and performances of the same play would seem identical. Such is the rightful property only of the cinema, and even there it is the product of directors and film editors, not screen writers. In the best of scripts, playwrights yield absolute concern for ideas to the concrete and specific demands of the stage. In short, the best of playwrights recognize that meaning in the theater is essentially experiential, not conceptual.

Herein lies the problem which allegory presents to the stage. The necessities of the stage admit no generality, no abstraction, no constancy. Play production requires that whatever appears general be made specific, that whatever appears abstract be made concrete, and that whatever appears constant be charged with physical and emotional energy. It is simply impossible for actors, even the purest of mimes, to play generalities or abstractions or to appear on stage without acting. Any attempt to do so results in the most tiresome cliché or simple quietude. Try standing in front of the mirror to act out "patience" and see what looks back at you. And yet, do not these moralities seem to ask just this? A number of apparently allegorical characteristics seem evident: the internal struggle of the soul, the personification of abstract qualities, the fixed nature of constant values, and in some, the sense of a closed order of relationships. In what sense are these plays to be taken as strictly allegorical?

As a director (and sometime actor), I must think that these plays are not meant to be allegorical at all. That is to say, the better that these moralities work on stage the less they are allegorical; when they have trouble on stage they have trouble with allegory. Mankind, perhaps, is the least allegorical of all the moralities. New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought are almost completely the representatives of the external world, not the interior chambers of Mankind's soul. Mankind is named for his species, not his character. Mischief is the active agent of secular chaos. Titivillus is an envoy from Hell. And Mercy, as the counterpoint to Titivillus, is an envoy from holy orders. In

fact, the great enemies of Mankind are not identified as the failings
of his own constitution, but as the corrupting pressures of external
vice: "the Dewell, þe World, þe Flesch and þe Fell" (884). These
characters play out their drama in the combat zones of daily life, in
the earthy revelry of a tavern, in the industry and hardship of farm
labor, and in the order and observances of the church. Only Mankind's
nightmare, which the stage demands that Titivillus dictate, attempts to
reveal the conflicts that rumble within his soul. Mankind does as much
as any play can to thrash out its conflicts in the concrete terms of
the stage.

In contrast, the play Everyman has greater difficulty stepping
forth onto the stage in bodily form. Its characters do not easily
admit the work of actors. What are actors to do with the characters
Knowledge or Discretion or Five Wits or Goods? Everyman moves its
drama back and forth, from interior conflicts of the soul to the
external distractions of the world. Though we may assume that the
drama is ongoing in both realms and each realm affects the other, the
play anticipates the stage best in Everyman's dealings with the
external world. Any director loves to see the potential for the stage
in Fellowship's lines:

> And yet, yf thou wylte ete & drynke & make good chere,
> Or haunt to women the lusty company,
> I wolde not forsake you whyle the daye is clere. (272-274)

This could all spring to life, if placed within a crowded tavern, with
Fellowship as the barkeep. But where is an actor to go with
Discretion? We know that Discretion accompanies Strength and deserts
Everyman soon after Strength does. That he is addressed by Everyman

identifies him by name, but that alone will not define his character
nor describe his speech and action. What does he look like? What does
he do? How is he different from all of the others who first favor then
reject Everyman?

Questions like these constantly plague the staging of these
moralities. They occur wherever their writers grew more interested in
"the silent society of mental images evoked by written characters" than
the very audible and physical business of the stage (Lewis 65). That
these questions are capable of answer is evident in each successful
production of the moralities, but their answers are more a testament to
the imaginative powers of director and actor than to the expressive
clarity of the playwright. These questions cannot avoid being answered
and still have the actors play the play. In the case of such an
internal capacity as discretion, directors must search the text for
some clue to a human act that an actor may walk on stage and do. There
may be many workable answers to the same question. One that occurs to
me is based simply on the text's suggestion that Discretion waits at
the grave for Everyman to be done with Extreme Unction and join him.
Perhaps Discretion, at his oily best, could be the funeral director.
Likewise, Knowledge might be played as a clerk, Five Wits as a reeve,
and Confession as a priest. Of course, even the most inventive of
these interpretations must be grounded on the foundation of the text
and be proved by their efficacy on the stage.

The character of Mercy in Mankind, in contrast to that of
Discretion in Everyman, demonstrates a particularly important
development in medieval dramatic composition. In fact, all of Mankind

does, but Mercy will here serve to typify its character. The most
persistent criticism of our production of Mankind was that Mercy did
too much and had too much done to him. Mercy entered the set to break
up the sinful revelry of the tavern. He stopped the dancers, silenced
the music, and struck out at the Vices. In turn, Mischief interrupted
and mocked his sermon; Nought (then played by a woman) taunted him with
verbal abuse and attempted seduction; the Vices, acting together,
struck back. Throughout the play, Mercy exchanged blow for blow, and
finally rescued Mankind by attacking the Vices with a staff and cross,
the counter to Titivillus's trident and the Vices' gallows tree. In
short, he acted instead of was. The objection to all of this was that
Mercy was meant to be simply the personification of one attribute of
God. The exact words were, "I so much wished that you had just let
Mercy alone, to be and to speak. I wanted to hear the rhythm and
beauty of his lines." Such was the apparently persistent influence of
allegory upon one critic of our production.

But words alone cannot make a play or sustain a character. Words
must be spoken with a purpose, a purpose that will engage the actor
into the drama of the play and compel him to act. Mercy does not speak
simply to be heard but to effect the conversion of all who hear.
Moreover, Mercy is not simply the static personification of an abstract
attribute. Sister Mary Philippa's monograph on Mankind establishes
that the playwright envisioned Mercy to be a Dominican friar with
priestly powers (1-21). We played him as such. All that Mercy says
implies activity. He tells Mankind that the life of man is a battle
("'Vita hominis est milicia super terram'" 228) and that, "Yf 3e wyll

be crownyde, 3e must nedys fyght" (231). He expects no less of
himself. Furthermore, his lines betray his frustration at Mankind's
inconstancy: "I kan not bere yt ewynly þat Mankynde ys so flexybull"
(741). He is anxious to his soul about the strength of his own
spiritual resources. Finally, his name does not describe the sole
quality of his character, but the one, critical expression of its love
which reconciles Mankind to God and thereby saves his life. He is, in
Arnold Williams's happy thought, "a dramatic individual capable of
generalized application" (Drama 145). As with all characterizations on
the stage, the irony of Mercy's character is that the more he becomes a
believable individual with universal concerns, the more general is his
thematic significance. The first rule of character interpretation is
that the universal comes out of the specific and the concrete, not the
other way around. My character spine for Mercy follows.

Character Spine: Mercy

UNIT I

Objective:	To bring the tavern patrons (including Mankind) to repentance.
Threshold:	The Vices' resistance.

UNIT II

Objective:	To fortify Mankind with good counsel.
Threshold:	Mankind's inconstancy.

UNIT VI

Objective:	To call Mankind away from Mischief and the Vices.
Threshold:	The strength of the Vices' hold on Mankind.

UNIT VII

Objective:	To find the means to rescue Mankind.
Threshold:	Mankind's rejection of his doctrine.

UNIT VIII

Objective: To save Mankind.
Threshold: Mankind's despair.

MAJOR OBJECTIVE AND THRESHOLD

To reconcile Mankind to God.
The insufficiency of doctrine alone to effect reconciliation.

Character Notes:

Male. 20-25. Dominican Friar. Mercy's intolerance of
human inconstancy, his essential character flaw, stems from
the insulated nature of his clerical life. I imagine him
approaching the tavern on his first preaching mission outside
the moral order and security of the friary. He is a young
and as yet untested combatant for the soul of Mankind. His
faith is sound and his doctrine is right, but he must learn
to temper absolute truth with human compassion. He must
grow, too, in order to effect Mankind's salvation. It takes
the desperate jeopardy of Mankind's spiritual peril and slide
toward despair and death to awaken Mercy's sense of the need
for human compassion. That he is able to rescue Mankind and
restore his right relationship to God testifies to Mercy's
personal (and painful) growth. He has, in the end, become
Christ-like and equal to the calling of his holy order.

The idea of playing Mercy as a Dominican friar with his own array

of character objectives and thresholds, strengths and weaknesses, and

sequences of stage actions was the critical interpretive decision for

our production. It turned what otherwise could have been a high-

spirited simple drama into one of surprising complexity and dramatic

tension. Mankind's salvation depends on two closely interrelated

conflicts. One conflict centers on the character of Mankind, and can

be resolved only by Mankind's willing choice to forsake the temptations

of the flesh, repent, and be reconciled to God and the church. But the

"very mene for . . . restytucyon" is not solely within Mankind's

control (17). Mankind must be led back to God and the church, and

Mercy, his guide, must inspire not only doctrinal confidence but also

the positive attractions of sympathetic understanding and humane compassion. It is not sufficient that Mankind simply know that he ought to repent; he must also want to repent to make his confession and reconciliation true.

The second conflict centers on the necessity for Mercy to grow into a priest of truly Christ-like stature and compassion. Salvation does not come on the cheap. Mercy must learn that "mankynde was dere bought" (9), a notion to which he gives easy lip service early in the play and must grow through sufferings of his own to fulfill by the end of the play. If Mercy is interpreted to be simply the personification of one attribute of God, without human dimension, the successful resolution of the drama is virtually without doubt. Mercy would be unbeatable, and the whole dramatization of Mankind's and Mercy's conflicts with the Vices and Titivillus would be mere diversion. Instead, if Mercy's character has to undergo change to attain its major objective, then the successful resolution to the drama is more precarious, and both the actors and the audience enjoy a drama of greater thematic richness and dramatic tension.

All of the characters in Mankind work this way. Each combatant for the soul of Mankind is given his own specific gravity and concrete identity. Mankind may be played as a poor farmer, New Guise as a henpecked fop, Nowadays as a drunk, Nought (when played by a woman) as a whore, Mischief as the barkeep who dabbles in witchcraft, and Titivillus as a winged devil from Hell. Mankind's playwright evidently realized that the stage was a different world from the "silent society of mental images." In writing Mankind he found a way to translate the

thematic concerns of allegory into the language of the theater. He developed the battle for the soul into the physical play of dramatic individuals whose personal motives reflect the general tendencies of our lives. If there is any allegory at work here it is to be sought out more properly in the interpretive mechanics of the audience's mind.[4]

The actors who play the Vices and Titivillus, just as much as those who play Mercy and Mankind, need to know that their characters fit into some integrated pattern of dramatic conflict that will constitute the play. Drama is a collective enterprise; no one actor or role defines the play's interpretation or its performance. All work together to create a complex through-line of character action. In the previous chapter, I provided examples of through-lines of action based on the thematic content of Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant. Through-lines of action can also be constructed on the basis of character objectives and thresholds. The two through-lines of action serve different but complementary purposes. The thematic through-line of action is an interpretive way into the drama of the play. The character through-line of action is an early step out of the dramatic text into the exigencies of performance. They display for the whole cast the relationships among the play's characters in terms of their individual desires and obstacles, all of which contribute to making up the play's performance super-objective—a statement of its overriding thematic conflict.

Effective through-lines of action express each character's major objective and threshold in active verbs that necessitate interaction on

stage. Mercy's major objective in Mankind, for example, may be taken to be a desire to reconcile Mankind to God, an objective that forces him to interact with Mankind and against those who would prevent him from achieving his objective. I took the major obstacle to Mercy's achievement of this objective to be the insufficiency of doctrine alone to effect reconciliation. Mercy must learn to infuse doctrine with human compassion--in short, to become Christ-like. Mercy's secular antagonist, Mischief, has as her major objective the desire to bring Mankind to corruption and despair by encouraging the Vices and invoking Titivillus. Not surprisingly, Mischief's major obstacle to achieving this objective is Mercy's counsel and Mankind's desire for salvation. And so on. In devising the following character through-line of action for Mankind, I tried to express each of the major objectives in terms of active verbs that would necessitate character interaction. The major thresholds were either obstacles put in the characters' ways by others, by circumstances, or by deficiencies in their own personalities. My character through-line of action for Mankind follows:

<div align="center">Through-Line of Action: Mankind</div>

<div align="center">Major Objectives (Ob.) and Thresholds (Th.)</div>

Mercy:	Ob.	To reconcile Mankind to God.
	Th.	The insufficiency of doctrine alone to effect reconciliation.
Mankind:	Ob.	To secure his personal salvation.
	Th.	The temptation to self-doubt and despair.
Titivillus:	Ob.	To drive Mankind to corruption and despair by frustrating his labor and destroying his faith in Mercy.
	Th.	Mercy's counsel and Mankind's desire to live a pious life.

| Mischief: | Ob. | To bring Mankind to corruption and despair by encouraging the Vices and invoking Titivillus. |
| | Th. | Mercy's counsel and Mankind's desire for salvation. |

| New Guise: | Ob. | To revenge his humiliation on Mankind by bringing him to Mischief and despair. |
| | Th. | His loss of self-respect through Mankind's attack and his own failed (and ridiculed) attempts at leadership, wit, and style. |

| Nought: | Ob. | To revenge her humiliation on Mankind by bringing him to Mischief and despair through sexual debasement. |
| | Th. | Her loss of self-respect through Mankind's rebuke and her own sexual excesses. |

| Nowadays: | Ob. | To revenge her wounded pride on Mankind by bringing him to Mischief and despair. |
| | Th. | Her loss of self-respect through Mankind's rebuke and her own alcoholic excesses. |

SUPER-OBJECTIVE:

In his struggle to secure his personal salvation, Mankind suffers the vengeance of New Guise, Nowadays, Nought, and Titivillus, who lead him by worldly temptation, demonic deception, and personal humiliation to Mischief and suicidal despair, until Mercy's compassion brings him to admit priestly intercession and spiritual rescue through the sacrament of penance.

*   *   *

The characters in the Second Shepherds' Pageant present different but equally demanding challenges to directors and actors. The characterizations for the shepherds are difficult, for though the play is about them, they have not received nearly the amount of scholarly attention that Mak has. Simply knowing that they are shepherds and that each begins the play with a revealing complaint does not amount to a characterization. These shepherds are individuals who come to the

fields and each other's company for reasons of their own. They are
moved to say and do things that reflect their own desires and
temperaments. They also walk, talk, dress, and move in ways that are
their own and that are outward signs of their inward characters. Who
is tall, who short? Who is old, who young? Who is slim, who stout?
Who is critical and testy, who ameliorative? Questions multiply the
more that directors and actors pore over the text. The Wakefield
Master, however, is not very forthcoming with abundant or obvious
answers. There is, unfortunately, little scholarship to help the
performer fashion individual characterizations for the shepherds. It
falls to directors, then, to extract from the text the defining
qualities and motivations for action that will become the actors' bases
for character invention. Perhaps for that reason, in our production
the shepherds' characters were the most interesting and rewarding for
the actors and me to discover.

The character spine for the first shepherd in the Second
Shepherds' Pageant may help to illustrate how directors work upon texts
and background information to suggest playable characterizations. We
know that the first shepherd's name is Coll, not because he identifies
himself but because others address him or refer to him as such (449).
He is also the oldest of the shepherds. His opening complaint includes
references to bodily aches and pains (2-3, 40-41), and he is the only
one to have lived long enough to make critical comparisons between an
earlier social order in England and the one in which he finds himself
"now on dayes" (28). Also, Coll's language, especially in his address
to Daw reveals a distance of age and rank; Coll always addresses Daw

and Gib in the familiar (thee, thou, thy,), and they in turn address him formally (ye, you, your). We know, too, that he can be hot-tempered and violent. He is the one who carries a weapon (615) and wants to do Mak and Gyll to death (621). Coll's interactions with Mak throughout have the bluntest and most physical aspects ("Bot, Mak, is that sothe?/Now take outt that sothren tothe,/And sett in a torde" 214-216). Daw, the youngest shepherd, has to caution him to restrain his wrath, even after the business with Mak and Gyll has been completed (635-37).

We may posit other things about his character and background. We know from internal and external sources that the Second Shepherds' Pageant was composed sometime in the 1430s. It is not too great a stretch to imagine that Coll, the oldest, most combative shepherd, is a veteran of military service, perhaps a veteran of Agincourt itself (fought in 1415). In our production we played him as such, an interpretation that allowed Coll to use the Agincourt Carol for the song (unidentified in the text) that he teaches Daw around the campfire (189). Its chorus of "Deo gracias Anglia/Redde pro victoria" (England, give thanks to God, in return for victory) nicely fits his character and heralds events and meanings to come. Also, playing Coll as a military veteran gave added authority and poignancy to his observation that "It is true as steyll/That prophetys have spokyn" (699-700). His motivation was shaped from a line near the end of his opening complaint. We meet him at the play's opening, suffering alone on the fields and in the midst of a raging storm (neatly reflective of the times and of his own stalwart, volatile character), waiting to find

solace in the company of "trew men" (52). That motivation--to find true men to trust, true men to bear hardship with, true men to give steadfast meaning to mutable and treacherous times--ultimately finds fulfillment in his call to witness the birth of Christ--his and the world's true Lord.

Coll's character spine follows. I have tried to express his unit objectives and major objective in terms of his search for truth, particularly the truths of the social contract and his personal fealty. Coll's unit thresholds are especially important for the play, for they reveal the heart of the shepherds' problems with Mak and Gyll. In the previous chapter I argued that the shepherds came to the fields to escape the tribulations of the world by making a sanctuary for themselves on the fields. The more they believe that they have succeeded in making a sanctuary, the more their false sense of security makes them susceptible to Mak's deceptions; they fool themselves as much as (probably more than) Mak fools them. Coll's thresholds for units II, IV, and VI are the spots where this little drama of the shepherds' self-deception takes place. In unit II Coll underestimates Mak's threat to the shepherds' fellowship. He quickly asserts physical dominance over Mak and forces him to sit down in the midst of the shepherds' company where they can keep close watch over him (214-216). And a little later he explodes Mak's pretensions directly ("can ye now mene you?" 220). Because Coll is so confident that he has quelled Mak's threat to the fellowship, Gib and Daw are confident in their safety, too. In unit IV, Coll cannot believe that Mak could have stolen the sheep, for that would mean that his efforts to protect the

fellowship were inadequate. Daw is the only one to have any suspicion
at this point; both Coll and Gib protest that Mak went nowhere and that
Daw's dream has distressed him overmuch (359-376). Things come to a
head in unit VI, where both Daw and Gib insist that Mak is the only
possible suspect. Coll still resists; his self-respect and prowess are
at stake. He says to Daw, "peasse, man, be still! I sagh when he [Mak]
went;/Thou sklanders hym yll thou aght to repent,/Goode spede" (460-
462). Having to accept that he has been fooled by Mak makes Coll the
angrier, when the truth does come out and the sheep is recovered. His
quick response, then, to do the thieves to death not only fits his
character but also the particular shocks to his pride and the
psychological stresses that the subordinate conflicts of units II, IV,
and VI have put upon him.

Character Spine: Coll

UNIT I

Objective:	To escape the injustice of the world by making a sanctuary for true men.
Threshold:	The bickering between Gib and Daw.

UNIT II

Objective:	To protect the fellowship by exposing Mak's true identity and character.
Threshold:	Mak's apparent harmlessness.

UNIT IV

Objective:	To assure Gib and Daw that the sheep (and the fellowship) are safe.
Threshold:	Daw's suspicion that Mak has stolen a sheep.

UNIT VI

Objective:	To defend the record of his protection of the flock by protesting Gib's and Daw's accusation of Mak.

| Threshold: | Gib's and Daw's insistence that Mak is the only suspect. |

UNIT VII

| Objective: | To exact capital punishment on Mak and Gyll, "Syn thay manteyn thare theft" (621) in the face of the truth. |
| Threshold: | Gib's and Daw's appeal to spare Mak's and Gyll's lives when they are at mercy. |

UNIT VIII

| Objective: | To confirm the truth of the Angel's message to the shepherds. |
| Threshold: | His difficulty in believing that poor men such as they would be the first chosen to hear the news of Christ's birth. |

UNIT IX

| Objective: | To honor and comfort the Christ-child. |
| Threshold: | The humbleness of his gift and the apparent inadequacy of his means. |

MAJOR OBJECTIVE AND THRESHOLD

To find a true lord to serve in a changing and deceitful world.
The temptation to betray his standards in anger at Mak and Gyll--the temptation to kill them when they are at mercy.

Character Notes:

Coll describes himself as "yll happyd" (1), "al lappyd/In sorow" (4-5), and as one who "has neuer rest" (8). He lives "by myn oone" (46) in "payne Anger, and wo" (40), seeking out his subsistence with a simple, but tough integrity. He is now about fifty years old, hoary and lean, and armed with a sword.

I imagine Coll to be well into middle age. He has led a strong, vigorous life. He is tough and weathered--an old campaigner. He has rather basic values: personal integrity, loyalty, strength, and courage, though his strength and skill at arms belong now more to the past than the present. He is a freeman, but is desperately poor.

In his youth Coll fought at Agincourt, distinguishing himself with bow and sword. His honor and integrity have been hard fought for and won. In the best sense of the word, Coll is a proud man. Soon after Agincourt, however, his lord died, and since that time Coll's favor with his patron family has steadily waned. Coll has seen the erosion of his social status mirrored in the apparent collapse of the old order.

Now (c. 1435) well into the reign of Henry VI, England seems
to be slipping toward confusion and weakness. England is
losing ground abroad and seems to be slipping into economic
and social distress at home. Traditional feudal structures
seem to be increasingly undermined by emerging middle-class
guild and money values. Old loyalties, old forms, old
courtesies and duties seem to be withering. Coll has been
replaced in favor by younger, liveried men who have not
earned their station, but who enjoy social advantage "thrugh
mantenance/Of men that are gretter" (35-36). He resents
their arrogance and inexperience.

Coll has been left to eke out his meager existence as
best he can. He is an unequal partner in the sheep-raising
business with Gib. He paid his own way into this business,
but his share is very small. Though neither one will ever
say it, Coll is indebted to Gib for this means of preserving
his independence and integrity. He drags his cold, weary
bones to the fields to preserve his self-respect and to
harbor and protect the ancient values he loves. He is not
one to be comfortable with intellectual niceties or moral
ambiguities; his fundamental senses of right and wrong, good
and bad, though simple, have served him well and are
staunchly held. He seeks a true lord to serve, and he finds
him in Bethlehem.

Such directorial interpretation, based first on the text and then
on outside sources, gives the actor enough suggestions for him to begin
to flesh out his character's look and sound and movement and choice of
action. Coll becomes a believable, understandable, concrete
individual, one who can be played with authority and conviction from
first appearance to last exit.

Similarly, Gib and Daw also have their individual characters. Gib
is the dominant partner in the sheep business with Coll. Whereas Coll
contributes strength, traditional values, and stout senses of loyalty
and duty to the fellowship, Gib contributes food and drink and
friendship. He finds a social warmth on the fields that he does not
experience at home. He spends his energies in the play seeking the
basis to make this fellowship true and lasting. At Bethlehem, he finds
that love and compassion have been perfectly revealed in the birth of

Christ and have been sanctified in his own life. Daw is the youngest
of the shepherds, hardly more than a boy. He has attached himself to
Gib as his first hired hand. At the beginning of the play, he is
easily frightened by the floods, winds, rains, and storms of the world
and the "sodan syghtys" (137) on the fields at night. In the testing
and proving of his loyalty to the fellowship and husbandry of the
sheep, Daw affirms for himself traditional senses of right and wrong,
duty and honor. From Coll, he has learned something like the chivalric
values that a squire might have learned in earlier times, but he
applies them here to different and more humble circumstances. At
Bethlehem, Daw finds the greatest of "meruels" in the humblest of
settings, something which ennobles and validates his humble life
immediately where and as it is. In his tenderness and with his gift,
Daw combines the insights of Coll and Gib to see that Christ is both
lord and servant to the world. Ultimately, it will be Daw who carries
this new vision into the future.

The shepherds are difficult to characterize because there is
little to work with in the play itself, and there is not a great deal
to be found about their individual characters in the scholarship as
well. The same cannot be said of Mak, however. The difficulty in
determining a characterization for Mak is that there is nearly too much
written about him and his role in the Second Shepherds' Pageant. Like
the audiences who enjoyed (and enjoy) these plays, scholars have been
most fascinated by the cycles' malcontent characters—Eve, Cain, Mrs.
Noah, Herod, Pilate, and Mak. On top of that, scholarly interest in
Mak has especially emphasized his typological significance, and with it

the typological significance of the whole play. Rosemary Woolf's

comments are not atypical. She writes:

> The placing of the Mak episode is in fact important, for,
> whilst in one way it provides a type or rather, like the Fall
> of Man, an antitype of part of the Redemption, it also
> pretends to be in itself a fulfillment of earlier typological
> patterns. This is particularly clear in the relationship of
> Mak and his wife. Mak in his cottage is obviously a debased
> version of St. Joseph, and like St. Joseph he sees himself in
> the role of the unhappily married man. But his wife, who is
> the leading partner in the fraud, to some extent casts
> herself as the second Eve. Thus whilst Mak complains about
> the sufferings in an evil marriage, his wife is given to
> sententiae about the virtues of women. . . . Other figures
> should similarly be seen in a twofold relationship: for
> instance, the sheep purporting to be a baby anticipates the
> baby who was symbolically a lamb, but it is also a grotesque
> fulfillment of the lamb offered by Abel and the sheep offered
> in place of Isaac. (191)

John Gardner makes the direct connection between Mak and Satan:

"Moreover, Mak, however charming and harmless in the pageant, does

introduce, in his character as false God or devil, darker

possibilities--the war of Christ and Satan" (95). And this is only a

small portion of the typological interpretations given to this Nativity

play and those of other cycles.[5]

These typological interpretations may or may not be helpful in the

characterization of Mak. Arnold Williams, in "Typology and the Cycle

Plays: Some Criteria," offers three criteria to help determine how

useful any typological interpretation may be to the staging of these

cycle dramas. First, the typological connection or metaphorical

"transference should be striking if it is to have any impact.

Otherwise it is obvious, and so not a real transference" (679).

Second, the typological explication needs to be able to be

"communicated in an actual production designed to be seen and heard,

rather than read" (679). Williams's third criterion is perhaps the most important. He writes: "A play, if it is to have unity, must have a dramatic purpose, some central meaning, capable of realization within the limits of stage presentation, around which the whole play is organized. Granted that a suggested typology is playable, [is it] appropriate to the dramatic purpose of the play" (682-83)? Applying these criteria to the Second Shepherds' Pageant, he cites both the possibilities and the problems with incorporating typological interpretations into Mak's characterization.

Of the possibilities, Williams notes that the "text itself strongly suggests that Mak is a diabolical creature. He enchants the shepherds, he wears a wolfskin, he promises to make a fire, which, by stage lighting, could easily suggest the fires of hell" (682). This typological identification of Mak with the demonic works. Not only does Mak look the part of wolf, but he also acts out the wolf's part in his theft of the sheep. If Christ is the Good Shepherd and his sheep the Christian faithful, then the wolf, as a devourer of sheep, may be taken as an image of the devil (cf. Matthew 7:15). The typology is playable. In our production, the shepherds fell asleep by line 264. Mak began his enchantment by commending himself to Pontius Pilate (265-268) and blessing himself and mocking the shepherds with a left-handed cross. He drew an enchanted "serkyll as rownde as a moyn" (278) about the shepherds by dropping sparkling dust around their reclining bodies. While he was doing that, the campfire effect lighting grew more brightly red to suggest both the unnatural spell and Mak's association with demonic forces. Our sound effects of lightning and thunder also

meant to suggest Mak's disturbance of the natural world. Williams

asks, "Why not make Mak's sheep black. . . "(682)? And so we did.

Having one "black sheep" steal another worked and was easily enacted.

This typological connection between Mak and the devil contributes to

the play's unified dramatic meaning. The shepherds search for truth

throughout the play; Mak practices deception. God reveals; the devil

conceals. Christ brings truth into the world (cf. John 1:14; 14:6);

the devil deceives (cf. John 8:44).

There are problems, however, with pushing typological

interpretations too far. Some typological readings can become so

subtle as to be useless to the theatrical medium which depends on

audiences being able to grasp meaning immediately in the play's

physical representation, without the benefit of footnotes or learned

commentary. Williams writes:

> When we turn to the interpretations suggested in recent
> scholarship, we encounter much subtler readings. Here, we
> find that Mak's sheep is a symbol of the "lamb of God"
> instead of an anti-type. One of the Shepherds says,
> "Chrystys crosse me spede," another, "Chrystys curs, my
> knave". . . [118, 148]. The anachronisms have been
> interpreted as prophecies of the event the shepherds are
> about to witness. How does one convey that meaning on a
> stage? Or establish the identification of Mak, not as a
> generalized diabolic agent, but specifically as Antichrist?
> (682)

Well, Mak could be played as the Antichrist, but doing so would

disintegrate the play. Mak's role would become more important and

Mak's character would become more serious than either deserves to be.

To play Mak as the Antichrist would make the play his, as if it were

another Herod play. But this would so distort the intent of this

Nativity play as to make it unrecognizable as such. More than this,

Mak's character is _comic_, pathetically comic in fact, just as all pretensions to illicit power and evil must be pathetically comic to the eye of God. And therein lies the problem of assigning too much typological significance to him. Mak is not any of those things, sorcerer or devil or Antichrist. Perhaps he would like to be, but he is, in the end, only the bumbling, ineffectual pretence of them. He is no more than a small-time, local hoodlum, who wants to be taken as someone of great importance--by the shepherds, by Gyll, by himself. The only one he convinces is himself, and even then the charade does not last very long.

The actor who plays Mak must search for his character in the concrete realities of his impoverished life, in his miserable circumstances of having a scold for a wife and a horde of children to feed. The actor must devise a rationale for Mak's pretentious behavior that will sustain his invention and make it comic rather than serious. Stanislavski's experience in playing Molière's imaginary invalid is helpful here, for he had the same problem. He described his search for his character's major objective this way:

> Our first approach was elementary and we chose the theme [i. e., the objective] 'I wish to be sick.' But the more effort I put into it and the more successful I was, the more evident it became that we were turning a jolly, satisfying comedy into a pathological tragedy. We soon saw the error of our ways and changed to: 'I wish to be thought sick.' Then the whole comic side came to the fore and the ground was prepared to show up the way in which the charlatans of the medical world exploited the stupid Argan, which was what Molière meant to do. (_An Actor Prepares_ 257-58)

Just so with Mak. His major objective is not so substantial as _to be_ powerful and important, but only _to be thought_ powerful and important, something closer to his abilities, anyway. My character spine for Mak

follows. In it, I have tried to counter the shepherds' search for truth with Mak's desire for respect and need to deceive. His thresholds, of course, are the shepherds' relentless search for and discovery of the truth and Gyll's withering derision of his feeble competence even to deceive.

Character Spine: Mak

UNIT II

Objective: To steal one of the shepherds' sheep.
Threshold: The shepherds' suspicion.

UNIT III

Objective: To impress Gyll with his cleverness at stealing the sheep.
Threshold: Gyll's manipulation of his fear of being caught.

UNIT IV

Objective: To dissociate himself from the shepherds' concern for their sheep.
Threshold: Daw's accusations.

UNIT V

Objective: To get Gyll's assurance that she will assist him in concealing the stolen sheep.
Threshold: Gyll's demand that he acknowledge her superiority in the home.

UNIT VII

Objective: To conceal the stolen sheep by deceiving the shepherds.
Threshold: The shepherds' discovery of the truth and their recovery of the sheep.

MAJOR OBJECTIVE AND THRESHOLD

To establish himself in the eyes of the world and Gyll as a superior man.
The pursuit of the shepherds after truth, which threatens not only the success of the theft but also his self image.

Character Notes

Mak is essentially a weak man, spiritually and physically, with pretensions to superiority. Early in the play, even Daw feels safe to mock him (218). But Mak is bent on a course of self-deception and is thus inconstant and dangerous to those who encounter him. He is now a braggart in the world ("ich be a yoman" 201) and is frustrated and bitter at home. He fancies himself better than others, but through indolence, self indulgence, fundamental cowardice, over appetite, and pride he has failed to establish personal strength and integrity. He has wasted his gifts, neglected his family, and reduced himself to ridicule, poverty, and near starvation. He seeks not fellowship but subservience, and he is frustrated all round.

Mak's theft of the sheep comes on the heels of this recent infatuation with the occult, his association with exotic personalities, and his participation in the exercise of forbidden knowledge. He has begun to feel that he has entered into that special status that he has so long deserved but has been denied. In the back of his mind, Mak is terrified at his trafficking with the demonic, but his lack of will has left him defenseless against temptation. His danger to others is heightened because he does not fully understand what he has gotten himself into, and he has not reckoned what price instant power will exact. It is doubtful whether he has come to understand the price even at the end of the play.

I imagine that his theft of the sheep represents Mak's first attempt to work demonic spells against men. Contrary to his expectations—even though the magic worked—he is left in frustration and humiliation. The shepherds still do not take him seriously! In fact, their blanket-tossing belittling of Mak suggests that they think him not to be more dangerous, but simply more ridiculous. Mak's humiliation at the shepherds' hands will drive him to more subtle, more serious, and more dangerous ambitions. He will not retract or repent his choice. He will stray farther and farther from the truth to become more frustrated, more profoundly evil, and in the light of Christ's birth, more pathetically comic.

The character spines in the Second Shepherds' Pageant align opposing wills. The shepherds seek truth, Mak and Gyll seek personal gain through theft and deception, and the Angel and Mary seek witnesses to the fulfillment of divine prophecy. There are multiple conflicts. Each shepherd comes to the fellowship to escape some conflict in the

world, whether social injustice, marital discord, or the upheavals of nature. The shepherds' efforts to make a sanctuary for themselves are disrupted by Mak's invasion of their privacy and violation of their trust. Among the shepherds there is the tension of Coll's denial of Gib's and Daw's accusation that Mak stole their sheep. Mak has no peace at home. Gyll explodes his pretensions and dominates his behavior. And between the shepherds and Mak and Gyll there is conflict between those who would find the truth and those who would evade it. All of these separate conflicts are subordinate to one overriding quest, that of the shepherds for truth and joy, which finds its sublime fulfillment in the birth of Christ at Bethlehem. My character through-line of action for the Second Shepherds' Pageant follows. Its statement of character major objectives and thresholds outlines these several conflicts and directs them all toward the play's super-objective.

Through-Line of Action: <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u>

<u>Major Objectives (Ob.) and Thresholds (Th.)</u>

Coll: Ob.   To find a true lord to serve in a changing and deceitful world.

               Th.   The temptation to betray his standards in anger at the theft and deceit of Mak and Gyll--the temptation to kill them when they are at mercy.

Gib: Ob.   To find true faith in a life of marital tribulation and circumstantial woe.

               Th.   The temptation to believe, because of Mak, that human relationships are treacherous and evil.

Daw: Ob.   To find true security in a mutable and terrifying world.

               Th.   The temptation to believe, because of Mak, that the world will ever be in upheaval and danger.

Mak:	Ob.	To establish himself in the eyes of the world and Gyll as a superior man.
	Th.	The pursuit of the shepherds after truth, which threatens not only his retention of the sheep but also his guarded self-image.
Gyll:	Ob.	To secure what she believes is rightfully hers: comfort, respect, gentility.
	Th.	The pursuit of the shepherds after truth, which threatens not only her retention of the sheep but also her guarded self-image.
Angel:	Ob.	To direct the shepherds to the birthplace of their Lord and Savior.
	Th.	The reluctance of the shepherds to be "taken in" twice.
Mary:	Ob.	To confirm the truth of Christ's birth.
	Th.	Her concern for the safety and protection of her child.

SUPER-OBJECTIVE:

In their search for truth and joy amid the circumstantial hardships, crumbling values and cheap deceptions of a sinful world, three humble shepherds endure theft, deception, and disappointment at the hands of Mak and Gyll, resist the temptation to exact deadly retribution, reaffirm their faith in God's providence, and find his truth revealed to them in the birth of Christ.

The amateur actors who typically perform in modern productions of the medieval cycle and morality plays need special help from their directors. Many have never acted before, and only a few have had any systematic actor training. Almost all of them have not stood before an audience for any purpose in years. Their initial excitement at the prospect of acting may turn to anxiety, even stage-fright. Moreover, as actors of the medieval religious drama, they have to contend with the special problems of allegory in the morality plays and typology in the cycle plays, even if they choose to reject those interpretive approaches. The tension between the written word and the physical performance--the abstract idea and the specific, concrete act--never

lets up. To find their characters the actors must look first to the
human desires, obstacles, conflicts, and resolutions inside the play.
The task is never easy, for good acting requires that actors confront
kindred desires, obstacles, and conflicts within and among themselves.
Constructing character spines not only gives the actors useful and
practical assistance, but it also makes the work of characterization
less intimidating. Actors can anticipate stage actions to perform and
character traits to develop. They have early assurance that their
appearances on stage will be purposeful and important, and that they
will not act the public fool. Each spine helps the individual actor.
Collectively, the spines assure that the independent inventions of the
actors integrate to produce a unified, ensemble performance. The
cumulative expression of these individual spines is summarized in the
play's character through-line of action—the actors' first assurance
that the rehearsals and the performance have credible and attainable
goals and the practical means to reach them.

Stanislavski's device of constructing character spines and
through-lines of action served the needs of the actors in our
productions of Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant well. But
developing successful character spines and through-lines of action for
these plays has also had collateral benefits. Both plays developed
their dramatic conflicts from the nature of the character relationships
within them, and not from some external place. That is to say, both
the Mankind playwright and the Wakefield Master wrote character-based
plays. Our happiest discovery in performing Mankind was that Mankind's
salvation depended on the change in and growth of two characters,

Mankind _and_ Mercy. Their relationship and the relationship between them and Mischief, the Vices, and Titivillus made the play truly dramatic. Its successful resolution was no foregone conclusion, but the result of acute conflicts and hardships and active compassion, repentance, and forgiveness. The _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ had an equal portion of character development. The answer to a director's most fundamental question about the play--why are _these_ shepherds chosen to witness the birth of Christ and not others?--lies altogether in the nature of the shepherds' characters. The Angel's selection of them was not random but reflective of their true hearts and proven faith. They can recognize, and more importantly, they can testify to, the truth of Christ's birth, for they themselves have been proven true. After having read so much of Mak and Gyll in the scholarship, it was my pleasure to discover the characters and affirm the dominant importance of the shepherds in their own play! Neither of these plays is readily forthcoming with abundant and obvious character details, but they do not thwart a director's looking for them, either. Rather, they reward such efforts. As with the outline of their dramatic constructions in the last chapter, the success with which _Mankind_ and the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_ sustained constructions of character spines and through-lines of action suggests that their playwrights were closer in talent and dramatic achievement than the long standing disparity in their plays' reputations warrants.

NOTES

1. For an extended discussion of the medieval audience's capability of sensing associated Biblical and theological meanings behind the literal contexts of medieval drama, see Erich Auerbach's chapter, "Adam and Eve" in *Mimesis* (143-173), especially: "Being a living representation of Biblical episodes as contained, with their innately dramatic elements, in the liturgy, [medieval drama] opens its arms invitingly to receive the simple and untutored and to lead them from the concrete, the everyday, to the hidden and the true--precisely as did that great plastic art of the medieval churches . . ." (155). And, "This [i. e., the figural interpretation of history] implies that every occurrence, in all its everyday reality, is simultaneously a part in a world-historical context through which each part is related to every other, and thus is likewise to be regarded as being of all times or above all time" (156). And, "Everything in the dramatic play which grew out of the liturgy during the Middle Ages is part of one--and always the same--context: of one great drama whose beginning is God's creation of the world, whose climax is Christ's Incarnation and Passion, and whose expected conclusion will be Christ's second coming and the Last Judgment. The intervals between the poles of action are filled partly by figuration, partly by imitation, of Christ" (158). See also Auerbach's discussion of "figura" earlier in the same work (72 ff.). Arnold Williams's articles, "Medieval Allegory: An Operational Approach"

and "Typology and the Cycle Plays: Some Criteria," are also useful in sorting out allegorical functions and characteristics and their practical applications to the staging of medieval drama.

2. As the quotation that begins this chapter illustrates, Stanislavski called the plotting of a character's cumulative sequence of unit objectives leading to a major objective a "score," a carry-over from his early years of musical training. Over time, the term "spine" has come to replace "score," connoting better Stanislavski's idea of constructing an imaginative, living conduit for the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the actor's character.

3. As Arnold Williams writes: "Newguise, Nowadays, and mischief [sic] are engaging fellows, if you don't look too deeply. Mercy seems priggish and pompous. But isn't vice always more attractive than virtue? Would there be any moral problem were it not so" ("Moral Play" 18)?

4. The intentions of Mankind's playwright are not wholly recoverable. Nor is it possible to demonstrate that what he thought he was doing is altogether what I may now think he was doing. Nonetheless, they need thinking about. What stands between the Psychomachia, the Romance of the Rose, the Confessio Amantis, and Hamlet (or Our Town, for that matter) are these old moralities. They are good plays in themselves, but more than that, they suggest themselves to be the workshops in which writers for the theater developed a way to enact the drama of the soul upon the rough-hewn boards of the stage.

5. Woolf suggests that the shepherds' references to sheep rot in the
Chester Nativity play are meant to invoke a connection between
"the sheep dying of _rot_" and "mankind before the Incarnation"
(186). Writing about the shepherds in the Nativity play in _Ludus_
Coventriae, she says that the "author is evidently influenced by
allegorical expositions in which the shepherds (_pastores_)
mystically signified the clergy who also watch over their flocks
and can penetrate to a spiritual meaning beneath the letter of the
text" (183). V. A. Kolve suggests that the shepherds' feasting in
the Nativity Plays may be taken as a type of the Christmas feast
that followed a season of Advent fasting (159-166). Though Kolve
cites possible typological connections between the apparently
contentious relationships of the youngest of the shepherds and his
elders in the Chester and Towneley plays and the festive role of
the Boy Bishop, the overthrow of Herod, and the harrowing of Hell
only to reject them, Rosemary Woolf extends the connection by
suggesting that the wrestling match in Chester is a type of "the
defeat of Goliath by David, 'that Shepherd with his Sling', as
Herod calls him in the next play" (187). John Gardner argued
that: "The _Secunda Pastorum_ is in a sense an exploration of the
Christian significance of the number three: the pageant focuses on
three shepherds; it begins with three soliloquies which open the
first of three distinct movements; it treats three motifs
appropriate to the Nativity story--law, charity, and wonder--and
associates these motifs with parts of the Holy Trinity; it closes
with three adorations of the Christ child and the giving of three

symbolic gifts. The threes are by no means simply graceful
embellishment. They are the heart of the matter" (85). Gardner
went on to argue that "each of the three shepherds calls to mind a
specific aspect of the Trinity. Coll comes to be related to
Wisdom, Gyb to Love, Daw to Power" (92). Martin Stevens, however,
finds a different "heart" for the play in the significance of its
music. He writes: "What has happened then in the overall progress
of the Second Shepherds' play is a wholesale elevation of tone.
The most dissonant voices of the secular world have been stilled,
and the singers of popular song have been inspired by angelic
example to raise their voices in sacred harmony to celebrate the
birth of Christ. For the Wakefield author the ultimate interest
in the Second Shepherds' play is to elevate the language of his
rustics in order that they might find the right tone in which to
hail God" (179). The stolen sheep has several typological
meanings. As Lawrence J. Ross writes: "For the sheep, the figure
for spiritually graced simplicity and innocence, is not only the
most common symbol of the eucharistic Victim (the Paschal Lamb
being the _typus Christi incarnandi_). It is also used to represent
'that which was lost' which 'the Son of Man is come to save'
(Matt. 18:11). In the parable in Luke 15:3-7, the shepherd's
placing of the found sheep upon his shoulders was glossed as
Christ's assumption of human nature in order to carry the burden
of human sin. And the sheep of 'Rejoice with me for I have found
my sheep which was lost' was interpreted, not just as the
individual repentant sinner, but as all graced humanity which the

Pastor restored to heaven. _Periit et inventa est_; 'What grace we haue fun' [found] cry the shepherds at the close (l. 751)." And on and on. The list of typological reverberations in this play seems almost endless.

V. A Community of Players:
Actor Training, Rehearsal, and Performance

> The poet, the actor, the artist, the tailor, the stage hand
> serve one goal, which is placed by the poet in the very basis
> of his play. (Stanislavski, _My Life in Art_ 298)

No one who acts in any play acts alone. Even in plays that have

only one character (e. g., _Mark Twain Tonight_ or _The Belle of Amherst_),

the actor still does not act alone, for he or she works closely

throughout rehearsals and may continue to work intermittently during

performance runs with the director. He or she may have occasional

rehearsal and performance assistance from vocal, movement, dance, and

dialect coaches, or from other specialty support people. During

performance, the actor works in collaboration with a small army of

technical support people, applying, maintaining, "aging," or otherwise

changing character make-up with the help of specialists in that art,

changing costumes with the aid of wardrobe personnel, acting on a set

that has been constructed and is maintained by a crew of skilled

artisans, using properties supplied and arranged by the property master

and crew, being "presented" to best effect by acting in coordination

with complex and delicately arranged lighting and sound cues set and

run by highly skilled technicians, and on and on. If the production

travels, then there are additional crews to handle the special demands

of transportation. The list of personnel involved in even the most
modest productions can thus be long.

The same network of group effort and mutual support works in more
elaborate productions that include numbers of characters. Each
character has purpose and meaning in relation to all of the others. No
one actor in those plays can appear on stage and be seen or heard or
understood without the help of fellow actors, costumers, make-up
artists, set designers, and lighting, sound, and property crews. These
relationships are complex and dynamic. They are never exactly the same
from one performance to the next. A popular method of staging Jean
Anouilh's _Becket_, in fact, is to have the actors playing Thomas Becket
and Henry II switch roles periodically! Sometimes unexpected
circumstances can change relationships during a single performance, one
reason for understudies. In short, there are no absolutes in
performance, except perhaps for the constant state of mutual
dependency. What is more, the work of the actors is not complete until
expression becomes communication. The play is fulfilled in the actors'
communication with an audience that is willing to share belief (or to
suspend disbelief) in the imaginative reality of performance. For the
duration of the play, actors and audience share belief, empathy, trust,
good faith, and mutual dependency, and thereby unite their separate
communities into one.

Like all communities, the community of performance is a collection
of individuals united by common senses of value and identity. The
person most responsible for ensuring that the actors and technical
support personnel for a dramatic performance will share one common

interpretive vision of the play and its production is the director. As
I have argued in the preceding chapters, directors are responsible for
the construction of performance scripts, the articulation of both the
thematic and the character-based through-lines of action, and the
development of the character spines. That work, as Stanislavski
characterized it, is bent on articulating the "one goal" of
performance, "which is placed by the poet in the very basis of his
play" (My Life in Art 298). All of that preliminary work is completed
long before directors ever cast their plays or meet with the technical
support personnel. But that is not all of the work that directors have
to do. The director is also responsible for devising strategies by
which those who will constitute any play's production may realize the
performance goal. Directors of medieval drama are responsible, more
often than not, for devising strategies for enthusiastic, but
inexperienced students and community volunteers to become actors,
actors to become characters, individual characters to become casts, the
casts and technical crews to become production companies, and the
companies to achieve performances. At every stage of the progress
toward performance, the one overriding purpose to any director's
interpretive and production strategies is to turn a collection of
individuals of widely different backgrounds, interests, experiences,
and abilities into a community of singular purpose.

This chapter, then, presents strategies of actor training,
rehearsal, and performance to achieve that end. It assumes that most
who are interested in producing medieval drama will have to teach the
fundamentals of acting to bright, but inexperienced students and

volunteers. In many cases, these "directors" may be as new to the theater arts as their student and volunteer actors. Their likely training as literary scholars, though helpful to the work on the performance script and the through-lines of action and character spine interpretations, may become something of a hindrance when theory has to become practice. Nothing kills an actor's will to perform more quickly than exhaustive lectures or discussions. Rather sooner than later, the actor needs to quit listening and talking about the play and begin acting it out. Understanding must become some order of concrete experience shared and expressed by all who participate in the production. While this chapter will have its say on actor training, rehearsal, and performance, it cannot supplant, but only complement the actual experience of "doing" medieval drama by giving those who undertake it some assurance that the experience can be well structured, enlightening, and enjoyable.

The fundamental lesson of acting--that actors need to get their minds off themselves and on what they are doing--is easy to state, but difficult to practice. The exercises to help beginning actors learn this truth accomplish two ends. Not only do they teach a fundamental truth of acting, but they also begin the process of establishing a sense of community among the players. All share the same arduous, sometimes silly and embarrassing exercises together, and their common experiences are mutually binding. The rehearsal period concentrates on translating collective individual understandings into believable group behavior appropriate to the imaginative reality of the play. The processes of building a character and creating a role are integrative.

The actor builds a character by integrating the separate moments of the character's life on stage into a seamless movement, something which is initially plotted by the director in the character spine. The actor creates a role by integrating the movement of his or her character into the complex progress of the whole play, something which is outlined in the play's through-lines of action. Performance is the medium through which practiced expression among the actors becomes active communication with an audience. Among the joys of live performance is the actors' gradual realization that they are not simply "on display," but are instead interacting among themselves and with the audience. What is more, the audience has come to the performance for the very experience of participating in imaginative play by supporting the actors' efforts. In the end, both actors and audience constitute one community of players.

Before I go on to provide more details of the strategies and mechanisms to train actors, conduct rehearsals, and sustain performances, I need to make explicit an ethos of human relationships in the theater that I have as yet only implied. I do this because I want to make very clear that the translation of intellectual understanding into human behavior is not simply the result of scholarly research, no matter how brilliant. The drama of any play lives among those who enact it, and nowhere else. No amount of program notes or post facto rationalizations can mask the failure of a production to express something true about the human condition, however ancient or modern. That human truth is what the actors are ultimately responsible for portraying. As the actors come to realize and accept that

responsibility, they face the prospect of behaving in ways that may be quite beyond the expressive range of their normal public selves. The confidence and power that stage actors may seem to have in performance are not infrequently preceded--and perhaps accompanied--by doubts and fears and feelings of acute vulnerability. Responsible work in the theater can be exhilarating; irresponsible work can be devastating to the psyche of the actors and the production companies. Ultimately, director are responsible for ensuring that the artistic and ethical bonds among all those involved in any production are nurturing, supportive, and principled.

What helped to attain a principled order of relationships for Stanislavski and the actors of the Moscow Art Theatre and what has helped to attain a similar order of relationships among my casts and crews is a statement of purpose that subordinates personal ego to performance integrity. The ideal of the Moscow Art Theatre was based on a clearly understood hierarchy of values and ethics. At the top of that hierarchy is the inviolate integrity of the play itself, "placed by the poet in [its] very basis." Next in importance is the work of the actors, who bear responsibility for making the drama live among its characters; they serve the play by serving each other. Serving the actors are all of the technical support personnel, whose work is meant to make the actors' task easier and more communicable. And serving all of them--actors and crews--is the director. The detailed work of the previous chapters may suggest that the entire production exists to fulfill the overriding purpose of the director, but just the opposite is true. My work as a director is meticulous because the work of so

many other people depends on it. By the time my production company begins performance, I ought to be the least important (and least necessary) person in the whole company. Like a parent who must let go of the child grown to maturity, the director who has done his work well needs to let the production company take confident charge of its own play and then get out of the way. The director's love, too, is one that wills toward separation.

*   *   *

The processes of actor training, rehearsal, and performance are progressive, moving always from understanding to expression, from the needs of the single actor to the needs of the cast, from the experience of the production company to the experience of the community of performance. The guide through these progressive stages is the director. Once work on the performance script has been completed, once the research on the play is completed, once the through-lines of action and character spines have been devised, the director must leave the library and begin the process of transforming the performance script into human behavior. The director is the one who coaxes the actor out of the person and the play out of the cast. At every stage of these processes the director restates and reinforces the fundamental lessons of giving expression to understanding and of integrating the single person or event into the communal experience.

Most who act in the modern productions of the medieval cycle and morality plays need some introduction to the actors' craft. Apart from the relatively professional productions of these plays in England at York and Chester, Cornwall and Wakefield, productions elsewhere have

relied heavily on volunteer amateur actors, mostly students and
interested townsfolk in or associated with an academic community, as at
the University of Toronto or in Professor Edgar Schell's current
project to produce and videotape the N-Town cycle at the University of
California at Irvine.[1] Of the graduate students who have acted in the
five productions of medieval drama that I have so far directed (some 50
students), none had any actor training, and only three had any
university level theater experience of any sort. One term's or
semester's work on producing one of these plays will not make these
actors professional or even very polished. However, one term's or
semester's work done responsibly will ensure that their understanding
of how drama comes to be fulfilled through production will be well
grasped and that their resultant performance will be credible at least,
and receptive to inspiration. To neglect training in the actor's craft
would risk putting people of good will and generous spirit into
positions of public discomfort (at least) or excruciating
embarrassment. Medieval drama for them and their audiences would thus
carry indelible associations with theatrical experiences of the crudest
sort--a disservice to the drama, the actors, and the audience.

The work of actors toward the perfection of their craft can occupy
a lifetime. Stanislavski and his colleagues at the Moscow Art Theatre
devoted their lives to the discovery of new insights into the actor's
art. They would rehearse some plays for months. One reason that
Stanislavski's record of his discoveries has taken so long to be
published outside the Soviet Union is that he never stopped revising
his notes, just as he never stopped refining his acting technique. Lee

Strasberg, Harold Clurman, and Cheryl Crawford envisioned the same sense of dedication and discipline for their actors, when they founded the Group Theatre in America in 1931. The work begun by the Group Theatre survives in part in The Actors Studio, which provides advanced training in Stanislavski techniques for experienced actors. Much of what occupies the time of such actors there is work on subtle internal and interpersonal techniques that may take years to master. That level of performance is quite beyond the normal expectations for the amateur actors in university productions of medieval drama. But simply because these actors cannot become young Brandos or Woodwards in one term or semester does not mean that they cannot perform credibly on stage and that their performances cannot have meaning and emotive power for them and their audiences. After all, Stanislavski's techniques were devised for young, untrained actors first. These techniques will not inhibit the flowering of genius, but they do not require it.

The fundamental elements of actor training amount to providing a means by which beginning actors can bring themselves to a state of readiness for rehearsal and performance. In theatrical parlance, this training amounts to "tuning the instruments" of the actor's body, attention, imagination, and will. Actors need to be able to move easily and expressively, and their voices must project clearly and without strain. Their performance will not be hindered if their movement can attain some grace and their voices produce some variety, if not music. The medieval cycle and morality plays are written in verse, and the style of acting they require includes some ability to reflect the timbre, pitch, and rhythm of their lines. In many of these

plays (certainly in Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant), the characters have occasion to sing. In Mankind, Mischief, the Vices, Titivillus, and a reluctant Mankind also dance. Actors need to be able to execute actions with conviction, and without self-defeating inhibitions. They need to be able to focus attention on the stage, and not let routine distractions from outside the field of play disrupt the progress of dramatic action. And actors need to sense that their work individually and collectively becomes "drama" when it involves some degree of struggle to attain some objective against some obstacle threshold. These five elements--physical relaxation, vocal projection, concentration on action, focused attention, and objective/threshold struggle--constitute the basis of training for those who have acted in our productions of medieval drama. They are as much as any beginning actor can learn in half a term or semester, and while they do not address all aspects of the actor's craft, they are enough to ensure credibility and inspire self-confidence.

I have used exercises in physical relaxation and vocal projection both to teach expression and to cultivate a sense of community. In every cast, I have found that at least two of the actors have had experience in physical conditioning and vocal training. Instead of conducting the exercises myself, I have asked that these cast members take on the responsibilities of leading regular, low-impact stretching and aerobic warmup exercises and of leading vocal warmups and singing before every class meeting and rehearsal. I plan the progressive regimens with them, but follow their lead along with the rest of the company. The physical warmups accomplish two ends. The exercises

themselves over time serve to limber and strengthen the actors' bodies. The stretching exercises, from head rolls to leg and back stretches, are important sources of relaxation. Tight muscles cannot be very expressive; it is essential that the actor's primary instrument be relaxed and flexible. Also, the actor needs some amount of physical conditioning, for live performances do not allow for commercial respites every six minutes or so, as in television, or for the play to stop midstream for the actors to rethink, reset, and try the scene again, as in film. The actor who played Mischief in our production of Mankind, for example, had to speak, sing, whisper, shout, walk, run, dance, crawl, leap, strut, swagger, and tiptoe about the stage.

The same principle applies to the relaxation, conditioning, and articulation of the voice. We have used our vocal warmups not only to teach and practice breathing techniques, tone production, articulation, and projection, but also to structure frequent and regular practices in singing the music of the play. The Agincourt Carol that we used in the Second Shepherds' Pageant is not simple, and our repeated singing of it not only assured our learning it, but also the group effort in practicing the carol was effective support for the actor who played Coll, who had the greatest responsibility for singing it during performance. From the very first training session, the actors take significant responsibilities for themselves and thus begin to create a group identity. And it is vitally important that they begin to sense early on that their identity is separate from the director's, whether they are consciously aware of it or not.

The most basic lesson in acting is that the actor must concentrate on action, and not on self. Behind Stanislavski's dictum that "One must love art, and not one's self in art" (My Life in Art 298) is the fundamental truth that actors cannot perform with full expression or credibility if their attention is dominated by a self-conscious and inhibiting awareness of themselves in the act of performing. Stanislavski attacked this problem by giving his beginning actors ever more complicated physical problems to solve on stage, thereby forcing them to concentrate more and more on attaining some tangible objective and less and less on being watched by themselves or anyone else. The goal was for the actor to be able to create a sense of "Solitude in Public," which Stanislavski described as the ability to concentrate attention on specific "circles" of details and activities so that during "a performance, before an audience of thousands, you can always enclose yourself in this circle like a snail in its shell" (An Actor Prepares 78). Stanislavski's snail simile is a little unfortunate, for the actor neither intends to hide from the audience nor construct impenetrable barriers against expression or communication. Rather, public solitude is meant to free the expressive powers of the actor and enhance communication, for the actor's concentration is absorbed by detail and action and not by self. The actor becomes the action, much as Yeats's dancer became the dance.

The first actor exercise that I was taught, and the first exercise that I teach my actors, is one that counteracts the beginning actor's tendency toward self-conscious inhibition. The exercise amounts to having each actor, one by one, sing four repetitions of "Happy

Birthday," changing the circumstances of the song each time. The first
time that the actor sings the song, I ask that he or she sing simply,
without "interpretation" or gesture, stand still, and keep the arms
relaxed and at the side. The actors almost always have a difficult
time. They are nervous, stiff, and awkward; they fidget. Their voices
are strained and at a higher-than-normal singing pitch for them. Their
fellow actors who make up the audience are equally nervous, and their
anxious laughter easily distracts the singer. The second time that the
actor sings the song, I ask that he or she do all that I asked the
first time, but also jump up and down. There are more protestations,
false starts, apologies, and embarrassed laughter, until my insistence
carries the actor through. The third time, I ask that the actor sing
the song while skipping in a circle (or dancing a dance), holding each
note for exactly the same length of time: "Haaap Pyyy Birrrth Daaay
tooo Youuu. . . ." The actor continues until the simultaneous tasks
have been mastered, which usually takes about three or four repetitions
for the actor to resolve to get down to business, concentrate on the
multiple actions, and complete the exercise. The fourth time that the
actor sings the song is under the same circumstances as the first.
There is always a change in the actor's performance. The actor's body
is more relaxed, the voice has lowered to a more comfortable pitch, and
the song is sung simply, directly, and without hesitation.

There are many useful lessons for the actor packed into this
apparently simple song exercise. Lee Strasberg, who routinely used his
own variation of this exercise at the Actors Studio, thinks that it
trains "the actor to break his verbal habits and to extend his ability

to control his expressiveness" (A Dream of Passion 156). He thinks

that the lessons are so important and the exercise so beneficial that

he devotes seven pages to describing its effects on his actors (153-

59). Strasberg emphasizes again and again that the key to the

performance of this song is the exercise of the actor's will, and that

in exercising that will the actor learns that he may speak and move in

ways that are far removed from those that are habitual and

conventional. Strasberg believes that the discovery of such capacities

is liberating for the actor. He writes that this exercise and others

like it "develop and strengthen the voice and body by eliminating the

stifling grip of habit and the inhibiting factors of nonexpression

encouraged by social conditioning" (159-60). Strasberg also writes

that he discovered something of additional value:

> . . . the actor's basic attitude when he faces the public.
> No matter what the actor is prepared to do on the stage, he
> is more concerned with the audience than he is with what he
> should be doing. In this particular exercise, I discovered
> that the actor did not have any imaginary life to hide
> behind; there was nothing to deflect his attention from the
> audience. . . . This was the first time I was aware that the
> actor could be concerned about the audience even when he was
> not called upon to act. The mere attitude of standing before
> the public would start many things going in the actor, even
> when he was called upon to perform a seemingly simple task.
> (154-55)

Strasberg's insights into the actor's work and relation to the audience

are true, but perhaps directed too much to the needs of the

professional actor. The "Happy Birthday" song exercise makes sense to

and does useful service for the beginning actor as well.

My beginning actors and I have had the same reactions to the song

exercise as Strasberg's more experienced actors at the Actors Studio,

and I have two lessons to add to his that are based on our experience.

First, the exercise is well suited for beginning actors because its
execution depends more on the director's will than that of the actors,
who may have great difficulty at this time in overcoming performance
inertia on their own. The exercise is an immediate "ice-breaker." The
actors conform to the director's will for any of several reasons: the
desire to learn, the desire to please, the desire to retain membership
in the "community" by sharing a common (and unavoidable) experience.
Whatever the reason, their primary motivation to do this first exercise
is external. Eventually, the actors must find a method of developing
self-sustaining motivations to action. As a first step, though, this
exercise is invaluable, for the actors learn through immediate and
personal experience that performance requires concentration on detail
and action. The greater the actor's ability to concentrate on detail
and action, the greater the likelihood that performance expression will
be free of self-conscious inhibitions. And second, by having every
member of the company go through the same exercise the director creates
something like a rite of initiation. From that moment on, the actors
share a common experience that begins to give them a feeling of
individual achievement and a sense of group identity, both well earned.

The attention that I have given to the "Happy Birthday" song
exercise may seem disproportionate to the needs of amateur actors
preparing to perform medieval drama. Some readers may wonder if the
cycle and morality plays require actors to sing with such apparent
abandon or accompany their singing with anything like the exercise
behavior. The answer was found in the very first production that we
staged. The Vices in <u>Mankind</u> taunt Mankind with a scatological song

that is "about as bad a sample as has ever been written down"

(Williams, _Drama_ 156). In our production Nought led the antiphonal

singing, and had the audacity to ask the audience to join her,

Mischief, and the rest of the Vices in singing the repetitive

responses. The lyrics are:

> Yt ys wretyn wyth a coll, yt ys wretyn wyth a cole,
> He þat schytyth wyth hys hoyll, he þat schytyth wyth hys
> hoyll,
> But he wyppe hys ars clen, but he wyppe his ars clen,
> On hys breche yt xall be sen, on hys breche yt
> xall be sen. (335, 337, 339, 341)

The actors who were required to launch that assault on decency with

lusty voices and pantomimed obscenities must have felt then that the

"Happy Birthday" song exercise more than justified itself. Perhaps by

then, it may have seemed a bit tame.

There was another occasion for song that required even more of my

actors. In our production of the Second Shepherds' Pageant, Daw was

called upon to revive the spirits of Coll after the final confrontation

with Mak and Gyll. We inserted a reprise of the Agincourt Carol just

after line 637, which we rewrote to read "Do, as I say you." The

challenge for the actors was to use the song to express Daw's love and

understanding to Coll, and by that expression of love to rescue Coll's

sense of purpose and personal worth. That the actors were able to play

the moment truthfully meant two things. Their expression of genuine

affection for one another was no longer constrained by "the stifling

grip of habit and the inhibiting factors of nonexpression encouraged by

social conditioning." And the motivation to express the love between

them was by then their own, and no longer the imposition of the

director's external will.

The method by which actors may learn to develop a self-sustaining motivation to action is progressive, beginning with the most elemental pantomime and ending with two-person scene work. The object of this progression is to refine the actor's focus of attention through successive stages of ever more complicated stage action. I have used a five-step progression, three pantomime exercises for individual actors, one silent two-person exercise, and one two-person dialogue scene. These exercises are not just more progressively complicated. Each separately and all five together require that the actors work to attain some specific objective by overcoming some order of resistance, the basis of dramatic conflict. Each exercise depends on the actors inventing their own objectives and obstacle thresholds. Their motivation to act is directly related to their own invention, and their will to perform ever more internal and self-sustaining. There is nothing sacrosanct about this five-step progression, but I have found that the pace of one step a week provides the actors with sufficient orientation to the craft and leaves enough time in the term or semester to rehearse and perform the play.

The first pantomime exercise is to carry a heavy object from one side of the stage to the other. The pantomime includes the lift, the carry, and the setting down of the object. The challenge for the actors is that they can use no props. They must choose an object at home, practice the exercise with it, and then re-create their movements without the physical object itself. To perform this pantomime well, the actor needs to pay attention to the size, shape, weight, and texture of the object, the muscle coordination and effort to lift, the

strategy by which the legs, arms, hands, and back adjust to carry such
a load, and the redistribution of weight and muscle tension to set the
object down and release it. For the audience to "believe" the work of
the actor, it must be able to "see" the non-existent object and the
effect of its shape and weight on the actor. If the actors do not see
these things, no one else will either. Typically, the problems actors
face with this exercise are losing the object's weight and shape. The
handles on suitcases, for example, have size and form, and the actors
fail to convince anyone if their hands simply squeeze shut and carry
nothing more than air. The more that the actors become absorbed in the
detail of this exercise, the more their attention is focused on
accurately replicating the actual work. The greater the attention to
detail, the more they believe their own actions, and the more the
audience believes them, too.

This exercise had direct applications to the stagings of <u>Mankind</u>
and the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u>. Both of our productions of <u>Mankind</u>
had minimal sets, only two tables and a few benches and chairs, and no
walls or backdrops. We intended to keep the spirit of the original
troupe of players, who had to adapt their performance to the
circumstances of many different settings (cf. Eccles xlii). Our
productions of <u>Mankind</u> were performed on campus lawns, on portable
outdoor stages, and on the indoor stage of the Shaw Theatre in
Kalamazoo, Michigan. Wherever we performed, we had to make the play's
tavern and cornfield settings real to ourselves and to the audience,
something which demanded that we "see" and believe in surroundings that
were not actually there. Also, the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u> begins

with the shepherds taking shelter from the cold, wind, and rain of a raging storm by huddling around the warmth of a campfire. We had no actual temperature drop or wind or rain or fire, though we did have sound and lighting cues to help create the illusion of these elements. The actors had to create the realities of those elements, though, largely through the strength of their pantomime, the direct performance application of their first pantomime exercise.

The second and third exercises require the actors to add physical and musical elements to their individual pantomimes. The exercises are two to three minutes each. In the second exercise, the actors use three actual props to define a "dramatic" circumstance, clarify an objective, and overcome an obstacle threshold. For his exercise, one actor pantomimed a strategy for a child to use a kitchen step ladder to pilfer cookies from a jar set high on a shelf, without making a sound. Similarly, in our production of the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u>, Mak had to steal food, drink, and an uncooperative sheep without waking the three shepherds. The third exercise adds music to the pantomime. The music requires that the actors learn to synchronize their actions to external rhythms and to sense an appropriate connection between the emotional content of the music and that of the dramatic moment. A three-minute piece of music will likely have a well-developed construction that builds toward a musical climax, something that also affects the pacing and content of the pantomime exercise. When I first did this exercise myself, I used a few minutes of recorded music from the film <u>From Russia, with Love</u>, a "James Bond" spy thriller, to accompany my pantomimed theft of a watermelon from a farmer's field.

The senses of timing and emotional connotation and movement also have their application to medieval drama. In the _Second Shepherds' Pageant_, for example, the shepherds move from the farce and anger of the confrontation at Mak's cottage to the pathos of their recovery on the fields and then to the sublime visitation by the Angel in a matter of minutes. The physical and emotional transitions within and among these scenes are handled by a mixture of dialogue, pantomime, set changes, and music.

The last two exercises in this short course on acting involve two actors working together. The first of the two—the "mirror" exercise— is a staple of beginning acting classes. One actor initiates a sequence of action, while a second actor (facing the first) duplicates those actions as a "mirror" reflection. That is, if the first actor raises her right arm, the second actor raises his left. Viola Spolin notes that this exercise "can give you a quick index into each student's natural sense of play, clowning, inventiveness, ability to create tension, and timing" (60). It is also a means to sharpen observation skills and to discipline the attention. Spolin suggests a useful variation to this exercise:

> Have student-actors use this exercise without telling their
> audience which one of the two is the mirror. This effort to
> confound the audience demands a heightened concentration and
> produces a more intense involvement with the problem and each
> other. This is an early step in breaking down the walls
> between actor and actor and actor and audience. (61)

As with the first pantomime, this exercise requires that the actors who are "playing" mirrors focus attention off themselves and on what their partners are doing. Both actors must work as a team; the illusion

cannot work if either actor breaks concentration or acts without consideration for the other.

The effects of actors working closely together in this fashion can be compelling. In <u>Mankind</u>, the actors playing Titivillus and Mankind worked closely together to make the nightmare dream sequence (594-604) the turning point of the play. Titivillus's nightmare vision has its own "build," climax, and denouement. From "Alasse, Mankynde, alasse! Mercy has stown a mere" (594) to "Trust no more on hym, he ys a marryde man" (600), Titivillus plants one lie after another in the brain of the sleeping Mankind. Mercy "stown a mare" (594), "runn away fro hys master" (595), "stale both a hors and a nete" (596), "brake hys neke as he rode in Fraunce" (597), and "rydyth on þe galouse" (598). As the lies got worse and worse, our Mankind's reactions in sleep got more and more agitated, a new and more violent reaction to each new lie. Each reaction so tortured Mankind that he was wrenched up, even in sleep, so that at the gallows lie he was propped up to nearly a sitting position by the full extension of his right arm to the ground. At "Trust no more on hym" Titivillus's demeanor turned from one of "playful" torment to one of ferocious hatred. With each new command, Titivillus hammered at Mankind's vulnerable spirit, until it and his body were flattened by despair. Jabbing at Mankind with his trident, Titivillus says "Aryse and aske mercy of Neu Gyse, Nowadays, and Nought" (602), "þi own wyff brethell, and take þe a lemman" (604), with each phrase knocking Mankind back down a bit more. The coordination of this sequence between the two actors playing Mankind and Titivillus was carefully done, for Mankind had to be able to react without being able to see

Titivillus. And Titivillus could not rush headlong through his lines, without attending to Mankind's reactions. Action and appropriate reaction, one character's behavior having meaning only in the context of the other character's response, and attention focused on doing several things simultaneously—these are the essential lessons of the "mirror" exercise.

The last exercise that I have used with these beginning actors is a two- or three-minute "nonsense" dialogue. Two actors work with a page of dialogue that has been taken out of an existing dramatic context or invented by me out of whole cloth. Their task is to integrate the work of the first four exercises and add the dimension of speech to their pantomime and work with props. The heart of the exercise lies in the actors' collective struggle to invent for themselves a dramatic circumstance that will provide character motivations and one overriding conflict for this scene. It is not necessary for the audience to recognize what the dramatic circumstance or conflict is. The important lesson is in the actors creating a dramatic moment that has an imaginative reality for them. Often the audience can recognize the dramatic circumstances, but the exercise is a success if the audience is convinced that the actors are behaving according to some mutually understood and compelling reason.

I have adapted some lines from Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot for this exercise, because a number of its passages at first seem unconnected and barely referential to other moments or events inside or outside the play. For the purposes of this exercise, the less referential the dialogue the better. The following scene is an example

of one such adapted excerpt. I have omitted the character names and
stage directions to minimize the chance of character recognition or
external interpretive influence.

"Nonsense" Dialogue

A: Now? . . . . There you are again . . . . There we are
again . . . . There I am again.

B: You see, you feel worse when I'm with you. I feel
better alone too.

A: Then why do you always come crawling back?

B: I don't know.

A: No, but I do. It's because you don't know how to defend
yourself. I wouldn't have let them beat you.

B: You couldn't have stopped them.

A: Why not?

B: There was ten of them.

A: No, I mean before they beat you. I would have stopped
you from doing whatever it was you were doing.

B: I wasn't doing anything.

A: Then why did they beat you?

B: I don't know.

A: Ah no, . . . the truth is there are things escape you
that don't escape me, you must feel it yourself.

B: I tell you I wasn't doing anything.

A: Perhaps you weren't. But it's the way of doing it that
counts, the way of doing it, if you want to go on
living.

B: I wasn't doing anything.

A: You must be happy too, deep down, if you only knew it.

B: Happy about what?

A: To be back with me again.

B: Would you say so?

A: Say you are, even if it's not true.

B: What am I to say?

A: Say, I am happy.

B: I am happy.

A: So am I.

B: So am I.

A: We are happy.

B: We are happy. . . . What do we do now, now that we are
happy? (_Waiting for Godot_ 38-39)

There is no one right solution to playing this scene, because its
dramatic circumstances are wholly within the control of the actors'
imaginative response to the dialogue. If six teams of actors do the
exercise, there ought to be six very different scenes played. Each

team must invent a situation, determine characterizations, and define the underlying conflict. The actors then pursue their characters' motivational objectives and struggle to overcome their obstacle thresholds. They use the dialogue as the principal expression of their action. Each team's success is directly related to its willingness to share the process of invention and to believe in and depend on the work of each other.[2]

The problems of this little scene are not so far removed from those often presented by the cryptic dialogue in much of the medieval drama. A first reading of the campfire scene in the Second Shepherds' Pageant (145-189, plus the song) seems to present problems similar to the "nonsense" dialogue exercise. Its brevity seemingly defies the actors' attempts to find the playwright's clues to the character and history of the relationship among the three shepherds. What is their reason for congregating together on such a night? What conflict, if any, exists among them? Is it serious or playful? Are they friends or enemies? What resolutions do their speech and action effect?

The campfire scene is the only place in the whole play where the Wakefield Master gives the actors a brief, but uninterrupted opportunity to define their relationship. They must not waste the moment. In our production, the shepherds came to the fields for true fellowship. They were escaping the tribulations of the world, which seemed to pursue them everywhere--in social oppression, marital woe, and unnaturally stormy weather. They worked together to make a sanctuary against such hardship and to affirm the value of their mutual esteem and love. These 45 lines of dialogue are crucial to the whole

play, for they establish the inherent good nature and good will of these three men. Without first establishing this relationship, the events that eventually befall the shepherds would have little justification or emotional effect. Beyond the dialogue, though, the shepherds shared fire, food, drink, blankets, laughter, and song. They enjoyed themselves. The scene was the actors' fusion of focused attention, concentrated action, and compelling character objectives and obstacle thresholds expressed through dialogue, pantomime, and prop handling. Each actor willingly supported the work of the other two. Their belief in a shared reality among them made the work of each the stronger. The work of the actors, in short, became the work of the characters.

*   *   *

The rehearsal period concentrates on translating the collective individual understandings and sensibilities of the actors into believable group behavior appropriate to the imaginative reality of the play. It integrates each actor's individual work to build a believable character with the cast's collective work to create roles that complement each other. I have usually set aside five weeks of rehearsal time to prepare a medieval play for performance. Such a time frame has been useful for several reasons. Five weeks is about the standard period of time that experienced actors need to rehearse conventional plays of some two hours or more duration. Medieval plays are shorter, but the actors in them are likely much less experienced, so the extra time serves them well. The extra rehearsal time allows the actors to learn the rudiments of stage movement, blocking,

projection, and the like, while they work on building their characters and creating their roles. Also, the actors in medieval drama are usually balancing rehearsal time with other commitments—classes, work, family, community, and so on. The extra time thus compensates for a rehearsal schedule that cannot include daily rehearsals or rehearsals that extend much over two or three hours at any one time. Five weeks of rehearsal may seem at first too generous for a play that will not have much more than an hour's running time, and probably less. It is not.[3] "Apropos of this," Harold Clurman writes, "I cannot refrain from citing a Stanislavsky quip: 'No matter how long one rehearses one always needs two more weeks'" (On Directing 90).

The work of the actors during the rehearsal period passes through various stages which take them from being simply a collection of individuals to being a company of mutually supportive, ensemble players. Though different directors may identify more (or perhaps different) stages, I have looked for four at least, with each stage dominating something like a week of rehearsal, more or less. I have generally thought of these stages in terms that are roughly analogous to those of human growth: orientation, exploration and discovery, development, and maturity. The relative importance of the director to each of these stages is steadily less. The director, for example, dominates the actors' orientation to the play, for it is in that stage that all of the director's preparatory work on and interpretive vision of the play are presented to the cast. The last stage of the rehearsal period belongs to the actors, who have by then taken charge of their own play and are "setting" their work in anticipation of performance.

In between the first and last stages, the relationship of the director to the actors undergoes gradual change. As the actors grow more confident and inventive, the director becomes more of an editing audience and less of a dominating manager. In the exploration and discovery stage, the director may need to work hard to coax, cajole, even force the actors to experiment with character interpretation. Conversely, by the time that the actors are well into the development stage, the director may have to work hard to rein in their invention. All directors should hope to reach a moment in their rehearsals when the actors come to identify themselves as a mature and unified company. At that moment, the company will assert its proprietary rights to the play, and the director must then be wise enough to yield place.

Rehearsals of a medieval play begin with the director's orientation of the actors to their individual and collective work. The director's orientation encompasses four concerns. The first part of the orientation links the modern production of one medieval play to some knowledge of the genre itself. The actors should not only have an idea of how this modern production relates to the original, but also some notion of how this production may relate to other attempts to stage it in recent times. The actors do not perform in an artistic or historical vacuum.[4] The orientation also includes an introduction to the stage. Many, if not all, of these actors have never heard of or worked with the terms that actors use to describe the logistics of stage movement.[5] The orientation includes, too, the director's presentation of the production's interpretive vision. Much of this

work is included in the actors' first reading of the performance script and in the director's presentation of the through-lines of action and character spines. And finally, the director may also provide a preview of what the production will look like and the rehearsal schedule for the cast and crews to reach that end.

The overriding concern throughout the various aspects of the orientation is that the actors gain early confidence in the purpose, integrity, and worthiness of the production. They take that confidence first from the authority and enthusiasm of the director, much as they first depended on the director's will to motivate their "Happy Birthday" song exercise. The director gives them the performance script, a comprehensive interpretive vision in the through-lines of action, and individual character spines. For the actors who know that they will have to face an audience in five weeks, this body of work provided by the director at the first rehearsal is immediately reassuring. They know that will not be left to fumble their way blindly toward a public performance of uncertain quality. But actor confidence also comes from something more, and that something is more difficult to express.

The actors need to sense the worthiness of their individual and collective work to produce the medieval drama, a sense of worthiness that goes beyond course requirements or the director's accumulated research notes or the intellectual construct of the play. The actor's will to perform emanates as much from the heart as the head, and as much from the spirit as the body. During the orientation stage, the actors look to the director for some external spark to fire their

imaginations and stimulate their wills to perform. (Later on in the

rehearsal process that fire will burn within the actors themselves.)

In my attempt to spark the actors' wills to perform, I appeal to their

powers of imagination and empathy, and to their pride. I ask them to

imagine themselves to be archaeologists of a rather special kind.

Their labors will recover one dramatic artifact buried in the literary

archives of the English Middle Ages, an artifact that has no chance to

be seen or heard, experienced or understood in its intended and

rightful medium of expression apart from their effort. Their

imagination and labor will give theatrical life to this play once

again. That recovery work alone has value--for the play itself, for

our greater understanding of medieval drama, and for the audience whose

lives its performance will broaden and enrich.

I ask my actors to do more. I ask them to stretch their

imaginations to sense the presence of the original community of players

in our recovery of their work. Why did these medieval playwrights and

actors make any effort at all to preserve their plays? Not so that

their plays would die with them, certainly. Nor did those ancient

playwrights and actors write them down solely to protect commercial

properties, either, though they were surely not naive about the

economic value of their plays even then. Rather, I like to imagine

that they took care to make records of their plays so that they would

survive the fleeting moment of one performance to live again somehow

else--to entertain, even inspire, actors and audiences of other times

and perhaps of other places. (Even in their own times, the <u>Second</u>

<u>Shepherds' Pageant</u> was performed year after year and <u>Mankind</u> was taken

from place to place.) The import of the ephemeral nature of live
theater was not lost on the medieval players and their audiences. It
was at once the image of the transitoriness of earthly life and the
perpetual acting out of resurrection, very like the power of the drama
of the Mass itself.[6]

And now, some five or six hundred years later, one of their plays
has survived the vicissitudes of time and fortune to come to us. What
are we to think of ourselves for being so lucky--indeed, privileged--as
to have one of their few surviving plays to produce now? Does not our
production awaken some ancient spirits? Our commitment to perform
Mankind or the Second Shepherds' Pageant or any one of the rest of the
surviving medieval plays is a pledge to honor the trust of an ancient
and distant community of players who believed in the value of their
dramatic work, but who cannot now protect its interpretation or oversee
its production. Whatever else the modern production of medieval drama
is, it is also a solemn act of faith. And if O. B. Hardison's
observations about the intimate connections between the aesthetic power
of medieval vernacular drama and the divine power of the drama of the
Mass are right, then the resurrection of these old plays for modern
actors and audiences might well effect a communion of spirits of
impressive dimensions.[7]

The exploration and discovery stage of rehearsal begins the moment
that the actors first stand up to walk through the director's
preliminary plan of stage "blocking" (the actors' movements) and
character "business" (personal actions) and ends the moment that the
content of the director's preliminary plan is exhausted. It is the

first time that the actors see that the director's idea of the play has

practical consequences, and it is the first time that they interact

physicalaly with one another. It is also the first time that the

director sees the actual results of what up to that time had only been

a sequence of notations and diagrams made in the margins and on the

blank sides of the pages of the script. Both the actors and the

director explore new territory. Both make discoveries.

The guiding principle for the director in designing the blocking

and character business of a play is to plan a sequence of movement and

action that reveals dramatic meaning and focusses the audience's

attention on the crucial point of interest in each motivational unit.

The director of experienced actors may be able to approach blocking the

play without having determined very many specifics ahead of time.

Experienced actors can be comfortable inventing blocking as they go

along, letting the director react more than direct. The director of

medieval drama, however, needs to anticipate the insecurities of

inexperienced actors. As Carl Allensworth writes:

> With inexperienced actors, a director will be better advised
> to work out in his own mind almost all of the moves his
> actors will be expected to make on stage and get them down in
> the margins of his script. He should make a note of where
> and when and how his actors will enter, how and when they
> cross, when they sit, when they get up, when they start for
> the door, and when and how they exit. While this sort of
> detailed blocking out leaves very little to the discretion of
> the actors, it does give them a sense of security, which is
> essential for them to function at all. (195)

I have plotted the preliminary plan of blocking in great detail because

it also saves a considerable amount of time in the early rehearsals and

gives the actors a "moving picture" preview of what their play will

look like. The blocking cannot be arbitrary. It must, as Charles
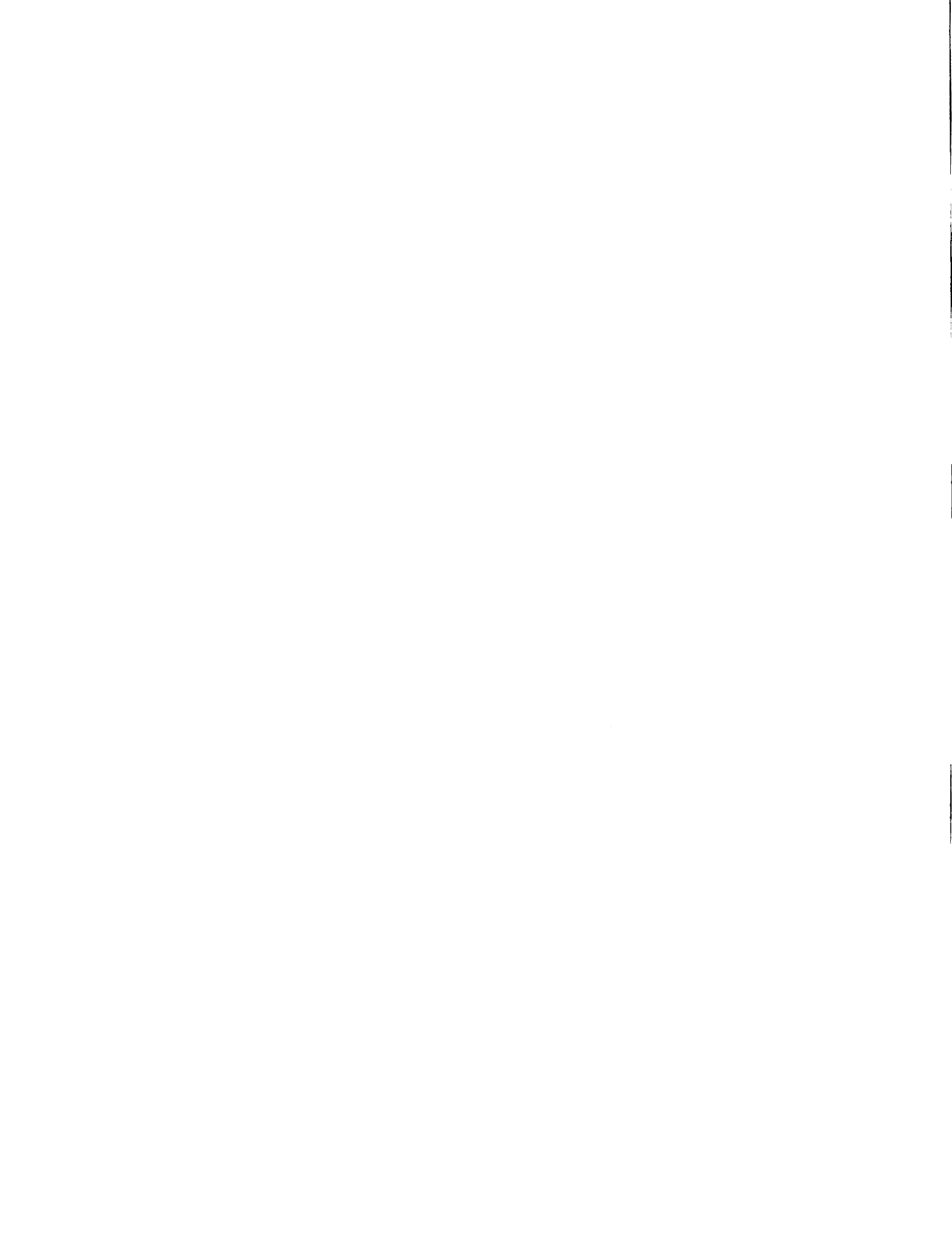
McGaw writes, "be able to justify the movement in terms of the
character's wants [i. e., the major and motivational unit objectives].
Otherwise, no movement has any reason for being" (133).

I will have more to say about the contributions of stage blocking
and character business to the thematic unity of performance later.
Here, I need to speak to their contributions to the actors' and the
director's experiences of exploration and discovery into the new
territory of the physical and interpersonal implications of the script.
One example may encapsulate the quality of this experience. In our
production of Mankind, Nought was played by a woman and was interpreted
to be the tavern whore. Her relationship to New Guise, Mercy, and
Mankind could thus have highly charged sexual connotations. Early on
in the play, Nought says to Mankind:

> My name ys Nought. I loue well to make mery.
> I haue be sethen wyth þe comyn tapster of Bury
> And pleyde so longe þe foll þat I am ewyn wery.
>   3yt xall I be þer ageyn to-morn. (273-276)

The actor who played Nought (and the rest of the cast, for that matter)
first thought of these lines as simple self-description--virtually the
playwright's commentary on the character. Such a reading is much too
passive an approach. All lines are tools for the characters to apply
toward attaining their objectives. In this instance, I took Nought's
objective to be a desire to intimidate Mankind sexually. Her lines
imply that she is very familiar with the life of the tavern. Her
pronouncement that she loves "to make mery" constitutes an open-ended
invitation to all sorts of folly. To block the lines, I first had
Nought insert the sweet-as-treacle address, "Oh, Mankind," just before
she began to move toward him. As she walked slowly toward Mankind

(crossing from stage left to stage right) speaking the lines in her best "come hither" voice, she reached her hands behind her back, and pulled down the left sleeve of her baggy sweatshirt, thereby flashing a stunningly white and very bare shoulder. In performance the exposure of her shoulder was more striking, since Nought wore an easily rearranged, bright red dress.

The effect on the cast was immediate and electric. The movement and character action seemed startling in their revelations of dramatic relationships, character objectives, and expanded senses of what could happen on stage. They were immediately understandable, appropriate to Nought's character and circumstances, and full of comic surprise. All at once, it seemed, the actors were seized by a sense of newly expanded possibilities for their own inventions. The actor playing Nought was delighted with herself, not simply because she got to do something a bit racy on stage, but more importantly because her actions were right for her character and had immediate and positive effects on the work of the other actors in the scene. Mankind could sit up to take notice, Mercy could intercede to protect his naive and vulnerable pupil, and the tavern could urge Nought on with boisterous encouragement. Each time that we played the scene, the effect on the audience was much the same as the effect on the cast the first time we blocked it--surprise, recognition, and delight.

Whether the director's initial plot of blocking and character action is extensive or minimal, it initiates the actors' exploration and discovery of their roles. For the generally inexperienced actors who make up the casts of medieval drama, it gives them a sense of

security while it also stimulates their invention. Eventually, though,
the cast exhausts the content of all the pre-rehearsal marginal and
diagram notations on blocking and character business in the director's
prompt script. In effect, the actors exhaust the director's
preliminary inventions and have to face the continuation of rehearsal,
not as the passive receptors of the director's predetermined will, but
as active and equal collaborators. The rehearsal passes into its
development stage.

During the development stage of rehearsal the relationships among
the actors become more important than their relationship to the
director. Also, it is during this stage of rehearsal that the actors
will develop their sense of belief in the imaginative reality of the
drama. Belief comes from concentrated action and focused attention,
the essential elements that the actors practiced so hard to learn in
their training exercises. The principal difference between the
training exercises and the rehearsal is that the actors are learning to
adapt their actions and reactions to the needs and temperaments of
their characters. The more that they commit themselves to working to
attain their characters' objectives the more self-sustaining "reality"
their characters have for them, for one another, and for the audience.
The success of this period of development depends on the director's
increasing willingness to accept--even invite--the actors'
contributions to characterization, blocking, and stage business.

The director's work during the development period lies primarily
in assisting the actors in integrating the separate moments of their
characters' lives into a seamless movement of motivated stage action.

That process of integration has two parts: the integration of the separate actions of each actor's character and the integration of all of the actions of all of the characters into one play. The director's work to segment the play into motivational units and beats helps the actors to focus first on small portions of the drama and then gradually to integrate the separate moments of their characters' lives into ever larger portions of the play. Rehearsals move gradually from doing mostly "sectional" work at the beginning to doing more and more frequent "run-throughs" later on. Development begins with the actors' intense concentration on fulfilling their own character spines. The development period ends when the actors together concentrate on fulfilling the play's through-line of action. Throughout the development period the director's overarching task is to help the actors come to sense the emerging authenticity of their collective work. By the end of the development stage, the actors have come to esteem the value of their ensemble play as much as—perhaps more than—that of their individual inventions.

The development of the actors' individual character spines and that of the play's through-line of action run on parallel tracks. Both may be described as the development of a seamless movement of corresponding subordinate and dominant sequences of action. As Stanislavski describes it, the essence of one character or of an entire play is expressed in an "unbroken chain of changing objects on which [performers and audiences] concentrate [their] attention" (An Actor Prepares 243). The play, in fact, is not made up of static tableaux vivants, but "living" beats and units of motivated action that evolve

so quickly and accommodate so many complexities that they become a kind of visible metamorphosis. Each beat and unit transforms itself into the next with an apparent inevitability that seems the "natural" and logical consequence of all that has gone before.

One example from the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u> may help to make this process clear. Gib's major objective in our production of the play was "to find true faith in a life of marital tribulation and circumstantial woe." He appears in six of the play's nine motivational units, and in each one he makes some small progress toward his major objective. In each of these units his progress is marked by some act that comforts or protects others. Gib is increasingly the reconciling agent among the shepherds, reconciling them to each other, to Mak and Gyll, to the message of the Angel, and finally to Christ. What is striking about Gib is his persistent humility. I suggested to the actor that he imagine two imperatives for his actions. One was from the Sermon on the Mount. Christ's injunction to replace the old law of retaliation (the <u>lex talionis</u>) with a new one of charity penetrates Gib's heart:

> But I say to you not to resist evil: but if one strike thee
> on thy right cheek, turn to him also with the other: And if a
> man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy
> coat, let go thy cloak also unto him. (Matthew, 5:39-40)

The second was more personal. I asked the actor to think of some moment from his own experience when an act of selfless charity resolved some interpersonal conflict. I did not ask the actor to tell me what that moment was, and he never did. I did not have to know what that moment was any more than I had to know what lay behind the actor's interpretation of the "nonsense" dialogue exercise. (The actor who

played Gib, I might add, had gained earlier and invaluable experience acting out several classroom demonstration scenes from <u>Waiting for Godot</u>.) What was important was that the actor bring to Gib's actions an understanding and a commitment validated by kindred experiences of his own. I was not disappointed.

More often than not, Gib's simple act of providing blankets for someone else expressed his motives in recurring acts of humble charity. In the first motivational unit he brought a blanket to the fields for Coll. In response to Daw's line, "We ar oft weytt and wery when master-men wynkys" (156), Gib later (at "Peasse, boy" 174) moved to Daw's side and wrapped him in a blanket. Before all went to sleep in Unit II, Gib made sure that everyone had food and drink and blankets. In the seventh motivational unit of our production it was Gib who suggested that Mak be tossed in a blanket, more to save Mak from Coll's wrath than to inflict a humiliating punishment of his own. And at Bethlehem in the last motivational unit of our production, Gib was the shepherd who noticed that the Christ child lay "full cold" (748) and gave Coll a blanket to wrap him.

The actor who played Gib was the least demonstrative of the actors playing the shepherds. At the beginning of rehearsals his work was rather overshadowed by the boisterousness of Coll and the excitability of Daw. Gib, by contrast, was heavy-laden, deliberate in manner, and measured of speech. His character did not at first seem as "dramatic" as that of the other shepherds. But Gib's character had the effect of ballast on the other two. Coll could rage because Gib was there to sympathize. Daw could panic because Gib was there to calm his fears

and protect him. The relationship between Coll and Daw developed as well as it did because Gib was their intermediary. After the shepherds' confrontation with Mak and Gyll, it was Gib who pointed out Coll's dispirited exhaustion to Daw and moved him to compassion and spiritual rescue. The more this sense of progressive dramatic value came to grip the actor playing Gib the more his individual scenes were marked by increased concentration on the import and effect of each of his actions. His first action upon meeting Coll was to give him a blanket for himself, and Coll silently acknowledged Gib's charity. His last act was to give Coll another blanket, but this time so that Coll could comfort the Christ-child--one act of charity that initiated another. The significance of that moment was not lost on either actor, for it was the perfect fulfillment of Gib's character objective and the inevitable consequence of all of his previous actions. I was always pleased to see with what unaccustomed quiet and studied recognition the actor playing Coll would follow Gib's direction. Gib's simple, unassuming actions almost always caused some real goodness to befall another character. He found true faith because he practiced it. The actor playing Gib always remained the least demonstrative of the shepherds, but by the end of the development period of rehearsal he was at least the equal of the other two in self-esteem and confidence.

Gib's personal drama is also connected to the larger drama of the whole play. It is a subordinate sequence of action that provides one standard of good faith to judge the larger relationship between the shepherds and Mak and Gyll. Mak and Gyll have their own minidrama involving a blanket, but theirs is a contrasting one of theft,

selfishness, and deception. In our production Gyll first entered the
set carrying a bag in which she concealed a stolen blanket. As she
took it out to admire it in the quiet and safety of her own home, Mak
rushed in with the stolen sheep and snatched the blanket away from her
to hide the sheep. Gyll was furious at being deprived of her booty,
and Mak was at an immediate disadvantage, without ever knowing why.
Later they both used the blanket to hide the sheep in their bed. And
it is the same blanket in which the shepherds tossed Mak in
retribution. At the blanket tossing, two personal dramas--Gib's and
Mak and Gyll's--involving blankets as emblems of good faith or deceit
merged into the progress of meaning through the whole play. That
merging was not only one of several thematic elements, but also one of
the entire cast around one action that for a moment defined all of
their relationships. As the actors came to sense the intimate
connections between the authenticity of their individual actions and
the integrity of the drama itself, they came to consider themselves as
less a collection of individuals and as more of a cast. The several
characters and their personal dramas became one play.

There are several unmistakable signs of maturation in rehearsal.
All of them signal the emerging dominance of the cast in determining
the final character of the play. Groups of two or three actors or so
arrange "homework" rehearsals of their own to prepare for work with the
rest of the cast. The cast assumes control of "setting" (i. e.,
finalizing) the blocking and stage business. The actors invest their
characterizations with as much nuance, belief, and emotion as they are
then capable of. They arrive at such a state of confidence in

themselves that the character of their rehearsals shifts from work to play. They grow both proud and protective of their corporate identity. They look to the director for informed and interested responses to their work, but no longer for primary inspiration. Whatever inspiration exists finds its source among the actors themselves. And they discover that they have a longing to perform, a feeling that a few of the actors may have thought impossible to experience only a few weeks before. The director encourages all of this.

During the maturation stage of rehearsal, the director functions more and more like a surrogate audience for the cast. The actors come to look to the director for an informed, critical response to the progress of their collective work, for "objective" correction of its faults and confirmation of its merit. As that role has come to me toward the end of rehearsals, I have kept in mind the three qualities that George C. Scott once said that he looked for in a good performance. First, he said that he looked for technical competence. Did the performance give evidence that those connected with the production knew the grammar of their art? Second, he looked for inspiration. Was there something about the production that revealed meaning in ways that were at once true and fresh? And third, Scott looked for the joy of performance. Were the actors able to "play" on stage? Were they able to enjoy themselves in the act of acting? By the end of rehearsals only one of those criteria matters. The actors have already learned as much of the grammar of their art as this production will permit. The quality of inspiration is the product of months of research and planning by the director and weeks of training,

orientation, exploration and discovery, and development by the director
and actors. The quality of their inspiration is directly related to
the quality of their work before and during rehearsal.

What is left is the cultivation of a sense of the joy of
performance. The audience never wants to see actors "work." Instead,
it wants to participate in the deep pleasure of experiencing the result
of the actors' rehearsal labor--the liberating play of the imagination.
One important contributor to the senses of play and joy among the cast
is improvisation. Unlike many directors, I reserve improvisation for
later stages of rehearsal. Improvisation is difficult. While it is
not the godlike creation of something out of nothing, it is a kind of
free invention based upon some preexistent idea, something like what
jazz musicians do to some chosen musical "theme" or "sentence."[8] As
Stanislavski writes, the actor lets

> . . . his inner impulses as they spontaneously shape
> themselves in him prompt the most immediate objectives and
> also the superobjective of the improvisation. However, while
> he is doing this work the actor should not forget the
> circumstances proposed by the playwright, which are those the
> actor has already been through, and which, in any case, he
> would unwillingly part with since he has grown so close to
> them in the previous period of experiencing his part
> emotionally. (_Creating a Role_ 96)

Stanislavski, too, deferred improvisations to later stages of the
rehearsal period, until his actors were familiar with the fundamental
dramatic themes and lines of action in the play. The ability to invent
action based upon some notion of an idea requires that the actors have
a basic command of the grammar of their art, much as the jazz musician
must know key signatures, scales, tempos, and sheet music "charts."

Near the end of the development stage of rehearsal the actors begin to give evidence that they have grown comfortable enough with their roles and with acting itself for me to introduce some improvisation. Improvisation can have several important benefits to performance. It can help the actors to explore lines of character and conflict development that might not have occurred to them otherwise. It can also help the actors learn to adjust to--in fact, make use of-- the inevitable variations (inspirations or accidents) that occur during rehearsals and performances.[9] And improvisation can help the actors develop or recover the sense of play, the joyous act of "pretending."

Improvisation helped to make the shepherds' campfire scene in our production of the Second Shepherds' Pageant more effective. In our effort to reaffirm the shepherds' dominance of their own play, we paid special attention to the character of their campfire fellowship before Mak's arrival. I especially wanted the scene to affirm that the shepherds' search for truth and joy was quite capable of making an interesting drama all by itself, and was not at all dependent on Mak. When Mak did arrive he would be taken as an interruption to the interesting drama already in progress. The campfire scene was crucial to this end, for it was only there that the shepherds could establish their own context of meaning. The shepherds improvised a variety of ways to share food, drink, blankets, song, and verbal and physical horseplay. As the actors grew more comfortable with each other, their characters began to develop a greater sense of intimacy and affection. We settled on a gradual emotional transition in the scene from gaiety to seriousness. The shepherds began the scene glad to see each other

and content to share food, drink, and a bit of jostling and good natured verbal abuse. By the time they began to sing the Agincourt Carol, though, their demeanors had turned serious, and the character of their fellowship aspired to higher purposes. When Mak's first line broke into Daw's joyous repetition of the carol's chorus, I trust that the audience was as irritated by Mak's interruption as the shepherds were.

Improvisation also provided a crucial "spark" to our second production of <u>Mankind</u>. We performed <u>Mankind</u> over a period of two years in a variety of settings and before a variety of audiences. No performance was more challenging than our last, given before an audience made up of medieval scholars attending the Eleventh International Congress on Medieval Studies hosted by Western Michigan University. We had a technical run-through of the play the afternoon of the performance on stage at Shaw Theater that became our most enjoyable and important improvisation. I noticed that the actors were unusually tense. They were performing for the first time in an indoor theater, and were immediately intimidated by all of the unfamiliar technical support apparatus. They were also intimidated by the prospect of performing before an audience that would undoubtedly be our most critical. The tension was bad on two counts. First, it shifted the actors' attention away from the play to themselves. They forgot the first lesson of their actor training. Second, the tension began to erode their confidence in a production that we had performed many times before. They forgot the lesson of their "nonsense" dialogue exercise: at the moment of performance, no one knows as much about what the

actors are doing on stage than the actors do. No one in the audience
spent months (in our case, years) preparing that play for that
performance.

Since I also played the character of Mercy, I could act on stage
to change (and control) the circumstances of the rehearsal to make the
actors interact in new ways. My intent was to so disrupt their self-
defeating self-consciousness that they would have to focus their
attentions on wholly unanticipated character responses, and in so doing
recover their senses of spontaneity, confidence, and shared joy. My
tack was to do and to say all of the things that Mercy's rigid sense of
decorum would never otherwise have let him express--in short, to make
the subtext of Mercy's lines explicit. As New Guise got to about the
middle of his long, obscene assault on Mercy's dignity, at "Ande sey me
þis in clerycall manere" (134), I interrupted his favorite speech by
interjecting the modern idiom: "Up yours, New Guise!" New Guise was
speechless for a beat or two, then he caught on to the invitation to
improvise and began to invent modern idiomatic dialogue and stage
action based on the theme of the play and the objectives and thresholds
of his character. The other actors were quick to join in. I think
that they thought that if the director was so comfortable with the
quality of the play that he could have such fun taking last minute
liberties with it, then their work must be very solid indeed.

In fact, the confidence of our improvisation was infectious, for
the Shaw Theater technical support personnel caught on as quickly as
the actors. The technical cues for our performance were relatively few
and simple. Also, Mankind had only an hour's running time, so the

technical crews were willing to have us play the whole play, instead of
jumping from one technical cue to the next, skipping over parts of the
play that did not require the technical personnel to take any action.
Our improvisation did not stray from the dramatic progress of the play
or so far from the script that the crews could not follow it easily.
And except for their insistence that we play the individual cue lines
and the whole of the last scene "straight" (because it called for a
timed light cue), the crews came to have as much fun as the actors and
soon felt themselves a part of our company. The strategy to improvise
was a gamble, but not much of one, given the cast. What could have
been a terrifyingly cautious technical run-through (and subsequent
performance) became instead a joyous celebration of our mastery of the
play and of our two-year experience of acting together. I believe that
our last performance was our best.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Performance is an invitation for two, perhaps even three, separate
communities to become one. The community of actors invites the
audience to share an imaginative experience with them. The quality of
their belief in the imaginative reality of the characters and their
conflicts directly affects the audience's capacity to share belief and
participation in the play. I do not believe that any audience comes to
any play to be separated from the significance of its imaginative
reality. Even Bertolt Brecht's argument for an "epic theater" that
would so distance the actors and audience from the emotive power of the
action that they could make critical judgments, describes performance
as a "social function" (244). Actors and audiences in Brecht's model

still agree to share some order of common experience. There may be a
third community that unites with the actors and audiences of medieval
drama, and I have encouraged my actors at least to sense its presence.
Their performance can have the effect of becoming a medium through
which both they and their modern audiences share realities with
playwrights, actors, and audiences of the English Middle Ages. In this
sense, the modern performance of these old plays can resurrect matters
that moved a distant and now ancient people to laughter and tears,
thought and reverence. Modern actors and audiences can discover how
important those matters continue to be by the laughter and tears,
thought and reverence their dramatic representation may still evoke.
As with any drama, the final test of these old plays is the quality of
performance that they can sustain.

The director's contribution to the quality of performance is to
provide the company with an integrative design for production staging.
The director's design for the production staging of the medieval drama
ensures that its material appearances, stage blocking, and actor
business all reflect and reinforce the play's super-objective and
through-lines of action and that they will be communicable to the
audience. The design of the material appearances of the production
account for set construction, costumes, properties, make-up, lighting,
sound, and special effects. Each element of the material appearance of
the production contributes to a complex, but unified expression of the
play's dramatic environment. The patterning of blocking throughout the
play reveals character relationships, conflict development, and
thematic meanings that reinforce the play's super-objective and

through-line of action. Actor business and the use of props also reveal character relationships and conflict development that reinforce the play's super-objective. All of these elements are expressions of meaning that provide an environment for and a physical accompaniment to the actors' dialogue. Their design should strive to provide such a clear physical representation of the play that its dramatic circumstances, characters, conflict, and resolution could be well perceived even without the benefit of dialogue.

The design of the material appearances for our productions of Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant emphasized the simple humanity of both plays. These plays are not about extraordinary people, but about people with whom members of the audience could readily identify and sympathize. Mankind had no constructed set, only two tables, several benches and chairs, a hanging tavern sign, and a variety of stage properties. The idea was to suggest something like the sort of "pick up and make do" playing circumstances Mankind's original cast worked in. Its cast of some six or seven men travelled to "villages in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk" and performed inside inns or in the inn yards (Eccles xlii). The "playing area" for our production became whatever the actors believed it to be, eventually including the audience itself, when the production stopped to collect money just before Titivillus's entrance. We performed Mankind on a grassy knoll in the center of campus, on a portable stage set up in a downtown East Lansing street, and on the indoor stage of the Shaw Theater in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The set for the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u> followed Arnold Williams's suggestion for a tri-level stage. "It must be obvious that the <u>Second Shepherds['] Play</u> is constructed to suggest the universal significance of the Nativity. The three locales of the play, moor, Mak's hovel, and manger, inevitably suggest the three levels of the universe, earth, hell, and heaven. By dividing the stage into three parts--you have to in any event--you can certainly externalize this meaning" ("Typology" 682). Mak's and Gyll's hovel was a simple stone cottage that had no right angles. It was, in fact, a rustic version of the sort of expressionistic set designs that are epitomized by the 1919 German film, <u>Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</u>. Our idea was not to modernize the play or to make it expressionistic, but to use the "untrue" design of the cottage to heighten the contrast between the natural world of the shepherds and the unnatural lives of Mak and Gyll. Also, the odd angles of Mak's and Gyll's cottage stood out in contrast to the artless simplicity of the Manger and the play's closing Nativity scene.

All of the material appearances of both productions were kept to a simple level. Costumes and properties were based on medieval models (e. g., shepherds, farmers, Dominican friar, tavern folk, peasants), and were entirely naturalistic. The one exception to this, of course, was Titivillus, who was costumed as a horned and winged devil and carried a trident and magic net. Titivillus's flamboyant, red-winged costume and silver trident were balanced by Mercy's ecclesiastical habit, staff and cross, and purple stole. All of the human characters wore natural make-up, though Nought, Nowadays, and Gyll had overlays of garish cheek rouge and lip and eye liner. Titivillus wore a horned

devil's mask. All of the music for both productions was produced by live musicians and singers. The musicians for Mankind played on stage as part of the tavern entertainment, and used replicas of medieval instruments. The singers for the Second Shepherds' Pageant sang offstage to accompany the appearance of the Angel and the last exit of the shepherds.

The special effects for both productions were kept to a minimum, and were sometimes done in partial view of the audience. In the outdoor performance of Mankind, a black-clothed stagehand in partial view of the audience ignited a pot of black powder at Titivillus's entrance and exit. For the indoor performance, we used flashpowder which was triggered electronically by the Shaw Theater stage crew. Titivillus's entrances and exits were also accompanied by the rumbling of a thunder sheet, effected by one of the actors while his character was off-stage. On the indoor stage, Titivillus entered and exited through an upstage center trap bathed in pulsating red light. In the indoor stage performances of the Second Shepherds' Pageant, the shepherds' complaints were accompanied by electronic lightning and thunder effects. The shepherds' campfire had a red light "special" that could be surreptitiously brought up to a demonic brilliance as Mak began casting his spell over the sleeping shepherds. The ethereal appearance of the Angel was effected by an "Angel Special" light and was accompanied by an offstage chorus singing the gloria in excelsis.

The intent behind the simplicity of the material appearances of both productions was twofold. I intended to produce these plays in a manner that would not be altogether removed from the sort of technical

capabilities of their original producers. The necessities of indoor performance, of course, required that we use some different production means than those available to the medieval stage. But even there, we meant to keep a simplicity of spirit and appearance. Also, I intended for the simplicity of the production to decrease the aesthetic distance between the actors and the audience. The idea was to make the audience feel as close to and as much a part of the play as possible. I know that we succeeded with at least one member of the audience at Shaw Theater. I am not sure whether the man who cried out, "Watch it!" as Titivillus bent forward to "ronde" (593) nightmares in Mankind's ear meant to scare Titivillus away or to waken Mankind. Either way, he found himself caught up in the imaginative reality of the play and ready to interject his rescue to compensate for Mercy's untimely absence![10]

The patterning of blocking throughout the course of the play reveals character relationships, conflict development, and thematic meanings that reinforce the play's super-objective and through-line of action. The spatial relationships in Mankind, for example, were very important. The changes in Mankind's fortunes were always reflected in relative stage posture and position. Generally, characters were at their strongest when they were standing and at their weakest when they were prostrate. I blocked more of Mankind's temptations and all of his trial to stage right, and more of Mercy's counsel and the sacrament of penance to stage left. Mercy's first great counsel to Mankind was down center, as were Mankind's evensong prayer, nightmare sleep, collapse into despair after his rescue, and Mercy's closing benediction to the

audience. Patterns of stage composition would thus keep reappearing,
but their elements would be changed to reflect the changing orders of
relationships among the characters.

Who knelt to whom and when and where also became important parts
of the blocking pattern. I blocked much of this movement to repeat
itself in different contexts to measure changing states and degrees of
dominance and submission, strength and weakness, success and failure.
When Mankind first decided to appeal to Mercy, for example, he
announced his decision down right, kneeling to one of the tavern
damsels who sat on the ground. He then crossed to kneel before Mercy
at left center. When Mankind prayed at evensong, he knelt down center.
He succumbed to Titivillus's nightmare visions while lying asleep down
center. When he returned to the tavern to ask mercy of the Vices,
Mankind knelt to New Guise who sat left center just where Mercy had
earlier heard Mankind's pleas. When Mercy was later rebuffed by
Mankind, he knelt to pray down center. Mankind knelt to Mischief as
she sat as judge over her court at right center. After Mercy triumphed
over the last of the Vices, he turned to find Mankind prostrate with
despair down center, just where Titivillus had deceived him with the
nightmare vision. Mercy prayed over Mankind then, and implored him to
arise, assuming the same physical relationship to Mankind as had
Titivillus when he beat down Mankind's spirit. And finally, Mankind
knelt again to Mercy (standing in triumph this time at left center) to
receive the sacrament of penance at the same place they first met.
After the sacrament Mankind then stood, too, thanked God for his mercy,
and exited. There were also independent and intersecting patterns of

blocking for all of the other characters. This continuum of living

tableaux of character postures and relationships joins with the actors'

stage business and use of props to create a complex pantomime of the

conflict and resolution of the play.

A recurring thematic motif in Mankind is the characters' concern

with their necks and heads. The references to hanging or physical

violence to the head are almost always a sign of a soul (and body) in

peril. The actors invented a lot of stage business to convey that

meaning. The audience's first sight of Mankind was that of a poor,

befuddled farmer sitting at a table in the tavern and having to contend

with the encircling arms of one of the tavern damsels around his neck.

When Mercy called Mankind to leave the distractions of the tavern,

Mankind rose from the table with a scarf from one of the damsels still

around his neck, an emblem of worldly temptation which Mercy ripped off

and quickly discarded. As the Vices left to carry out Titivillus's

orders, New Guise warned the others to remember their neck verse, at

which admonition Nought grabbed her throat, bugged her eyes, and

pantomimed a gallows' strangulation. Titivillus ensnared Mankind by

putting him to sleep with the trident and wrapping his net of deception

around him. New Guise returned from a night of robbery with the broken

end of a noose about his neck. When Mankind begged to join the company

of the Vices, New Guise welcomed him by wrapping his arm around

Mankind's neck as he told him how to excel at lechery, nearly

strangling him. Mercy came to learn of the seriousness of Mankind's

peril by discovering New Guise's discarded noose. Mankind returned to

the court of Mischief despairing, and there Mischief held out the noose

as an inducement to suicide. New Guise put the noose around his neck
to demonstrate its use, and nearly got himself hanged a second time.
And finally, Mercy put the purple stole of his priestly office around
his neck to perform the sacrament of penance and lay hands on Mankind's
head to absolve him of sin. The individual and cumulative effect of
the actors' work with neck and head props in Mankind thus reinforced
dramatic values and character relationships in much the same way as the
actors' work with blankets did in the Second Shepherds' Pageant.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

The final test of any drama is the level of performance that it
can sustain. The best dramas sustain performances that depict the
dense complexities of the human condition and do not lose their
humanity in the process. It is their very "humanness" that sustains
the performers' and the audience's shared involvement in the drama's
conflict and resolution. A shared humanity, after all, is the common
bond between all actors and their audiences. Dramas that affirm that
truth deserve to survive. As David Samuelson explains, the power of
King Lear in performance lies in the actors' open invitation for their
audiences to share the experience of a horrible human tragedy.
Together, actors and audiences "refuse deflecting commentary and refuse
to look away. Instead they gaze with unspeakable care toward the
vanished image of nothingness, and in doing so they evince a human
image of 'heart,' the radical force Cordelia herself represents and
which underlies the 'bonds' in this play" (24-25). I repeat that
quotation from Chapter I now, because it speaks to the "binding"
experience of actors and audiences in all great dramas, comedies and

tragedies alike. If our performances of Mankind and the Second Shepherds' Pageant can be said to have been any good at all, then they can be said to have effectively bridged the gaps of time and cultural distance between the English Middle Ages and twentieth-century America by affirming their common humanity. I believe that is exactly what they did.

Our performances of Mankind demonstrated it to be every bit as effective a play as the Second Shepherds' Pageant. In some ways it is stronger. Its intellectual strength lies in its facing of moral and theological problems that are more complex than any raised by the Wakefield Master through his shepherds. Like Shakespeare, Mankind's playwright, within his limits, refused to "look away," too, and the result is a series of dramatic challenges to Mankind's sense of moral certitude that can still give us pause. Is it possible to live a moral life, or live any life at all, in the world without God? Why does evil and hardship befall those who have lived according to God's laws? What is the point of our laboring to perfect our lives, when human perfection is unattainable anyway? What are the causes of error and human suffering, and what is the way to salvation? "What ys a man wythowte mercy" (835)? Such questions as these are everywhere in Mankind. Any of them may still trouble reflective souls today. Mankind's playwright found answers to all of these questions in the order and observances of the church. More than this, our performance revealed that his answers were not impersonal. To effect Mankind's rescue, reconciliation to the church, and salvation, Mercy had to grow through pain and hardship himself to understand human frailty and to

embrace compassion. His reconciliation to Mankind, like that between any priest and humble penitent, was an intensely human act graced by divinity. In the end the play is a moral and spiritual cliffhanger. Will Mankind accept Mercy or not? Will he confess his sins or not? Will Mankind rejoin the community of believers or not? Will Mankind be saved or not? That our audiences hung so attentively on Mankind's last sequence of agonizing decisions may have meant that they were then recognizing in his struggles some daunting moral and spiritual struggles of their own.

The Second Shepherds' Pageant has less apparent ecclesiastical and theological sophistication than Mankind, but a greater sense of human "glee" and commonplace verisimilitude. The purposes of Mankind's Shrovetide occasion would not permit the celebration of human and worldly joy, but that is just what lies at the "heart" of the Second Shepherds' Pageant. Christmas, after all, reminds us that ". . . God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John 3:16). It is Shrovetide that warns of a "streyt examynacyon," wherein "þe chaffe xall be brente" (Mankind 42-43, cf. Matthew 3:12, Luke 3:17). The Wakefield Master's subject matter and artistic manner allow for greater grace and charity. He does not disappoint. His shepherds are real people who voice complaints that are still common: bad weather, high taxes, dishonest landlords, petty bureaucrats, marital discord, and natural disasters. Their joys, happily for us, are just as real. Their love of food, drink, spirited companionship, and song is as appealing to us in its uncomplicated directness as it must have

been to the Master's own audiences. But this is not all the shepherds love. Their faithfulness and devotion to each other and to standards of personal trust and social duty reveal moral strengths of character that are worthy even now. In contrast to the shepherds' strength of character, Mak's and Gyll's social pretensions and bungled thefts seem pathetically comic. The true order of the world rests with the shepherds' "somkyns gle" and in their acts of humble charity. The Master's Nativity scene gives the shepherds and the audience sublime confirmation of that vision. The human community in the persons of the shepherds receives the incarnation of divinity. The Master's artless depiction of the shepherds' adoration of the Christ-child is as aesthetically and emotionally satisfying as the sacrament that ended Mankind, and is not so far removed from the satisfactions of the Mass itself.

The community of performance, then, includes many players, actors, technical support personnel, and audiences. More than this, the performance of medieval drama may also include a sense of communion with playwrights, actors, and audiences from a distant time and place. This expansive sense of a community of players is important to any production, but especially so for the modern productions of the medieval cycle and morality plays. It is important to grasping some understanding of the place these dramas had in their original communities. It is also important to assuring the quality of their modern productions. And it is important to the actors who perform them. As I have worked with the graduate students in English who have largely made up the amateur casts for these plays, I have been struck

again and again by the effect of our productions on them. The Stanislavski techniques that I have adopted for actor training, rehearsal, and performance require that these students learn to transform the literature of drama into concrete experience and to believe in the worthiness of their individual and collective labors. For many, this experience first reveals that the literature of drama is fulfilled only through physical action on a stage; contemplation alone is insufficient to its purpose. Also, for many of these students this experience first reveals that whatever is understood by one is useless until it finds its proper expression among the many. These two lessons are not antithetical to the character of the Middle Ages or of medieval drama. The best life for medieval people was one that combined contemplation and action. And the way to salvation and eternal life for them was within, and not outside, the community of believers.

1.   Cf. John R. Elliott, Jr., <u>Playing God: Medieval Mysteries on the
     Modern Stage</u> and the "Calendar of Twentieth-Century Revivals of
     English Mystery Cycles and Other Major Religious Plays of the
     Middle Ages in England" in Glynne Wickham, <u>The Medieval Theatre</u>
     (234-238). See also Glynne Wickham, "The Staging of Saint Plays
     in England." In addition to his general discussion of the modern
     revivals of the surviving English cycle plays, Elliott also notes
     the experiments of Meg Twycross to reproduce medieval acting
     methods in her productions at Oxford in the early 1970s. He
     writes that, "Working backwards from seventeenth-century materials
     on the art of elocution, Twycross taught her actors a set of
     stylized hand-gestures, each expressing a different feeling or
     action, which they used to illustrate the phrases in their
     dialogue. The technique brought a visual rhythm to the speeches
     (given in the original Middle English), not the least benefit of
     which was to greatly increase their intelligibility. The
     resulting style struck some spectators as more oriental than
     western. It may be that the mysteries, or at least some of them,
     were acted more like Non and Kabuki than we have suspected" (131).
     Information about completed productions and videotapes of the
     University of California-Irvine N-Town cycle project may be
     obtained from Professor Edgar Schell, Department of English and
     Comparative Literature, University of California, Irvine, CA
     92717.

2. When I directed <u>Waiting for Godot</u> in 1971, I took this little

   passage to be crucial to an understanding of the relationship

   between Vladimir (A) and Estragon (B). Why was it that they were

   continually separating, and then continually struggling to get

   back together? My solution to their character tug of war was that

   Vladimir was a confidence man and Estragon was a pickpocket. They

   worked their scam together. Even though they did not like each

   other very much, they needed each other to survive. Vladimir's

   talk distracted the "mark" from Estragon's theft. Without

   Estragon, Vladimir got no money or goods. Without Vladimir's

   distractions, Estragon always got caught (and beaten). As in a

   tug of war, these two disgruntled and begrudging characters, too,

   are bound together.

3. I remember the amazement of one of my actors who came to realize

   just how much time it took to rehearse a play well. We had just

   finished the first blocking rehearsal of our 1990 production of

   the Chester <u>Noah's Flood</u>. After two hours of work we had blocked

   only the first half of the play, which was as much as I had

   planned to complete. My actor, though, was stunned. She reported

   to me that when the class began she did not know how we could

   devote five weeks to rehearsing a play that took only twenty

   minutes to read. After that first blocking rehearsal, though, she

   said that she was suddenly terrified that we would not have enough

   time to complete all that had to be learned and done!

4. The productions of <u>Mankind</u> and the <u>Second Shepherds' Pageant</u> were

   extracurricular projects associated with the Michigan State

University Department of English that drew heavily upon the good will and scholarly assistance of Professors Arnold Williams, John Yunck, and John Alford. Not only did they offer much useful counsel on the preparation of the performance scripts, but they also supplied much information and assistance in production. Their expertise in medieval dramatic literature was complemented by their having seen several modern productions of medieval plays in England and America. They were thus able to help assure that our productions would fairly represent the plays' medieval qualities and yet not become mere antiquarian oddities. The last two productions of the medieval drama that I have directed have been included as part of the Department of English's graduate course in early English drama (English 812). Professor Lister Matheson, who taught the course, provided the students with a survey background in medieval drama and served as the producer of both plays.

5.   Every acting text and play production handbook has a glossary of stage terms. Charles McGaw's chapter, "Learning the Lingo," for example, in Acting is Believing (123-131) is perfectly adequate to the needs of the beginning actor.

6.   Cf. Hardison, "Just as the Mass is a sacred drama encompassing all history and embodying in its structure the central pattern of Christian life on which all Christian drama must draw, the celebration of the Mass contains all elements necessary to secular performances. The Mass is the general case--for Christian culture, the archetype. Individual dramas are shaped in its mold.

As theologians have long known and anthropologists have recently discovered, man does not make God in his image. Rather, he makes himself in the image of his gods" (79).

7.   Cf. "The Mass as Sacred Drama" in <u>Christian Rite and Christian Drama</u> (35-79), especially: "That the service which has just been described is dramatic cannot be doubted. The nature and, as it might be called, the tonality of the drama is another matter. It has a configuration which may be experienced but which cannot be fully communicated. The problems confronting the would-be critic are not unlike those posed by the analysis of a poem. The history, genre, ideas, social background, and rhetoric of the poem can be described, but its <u>raison d'être</u>, its mode of existence in the mind at the moment of full aesthetic response, eludes definition for the very simple reason that the only adequate expression of the poem's meaning is the experience of the poem itself" (77).

8.   Viola Spolin has a longer and more detailed definition of improvisation. She writes that it is

> Playing the game; setting out to solve a problem with no
> preconception as to how you will do it; permitting everything
> in the environment (animate or inanimate) to work for you in
> solving the problem; it is not the scene, it is the way to
> the scene; a predominate function of the intuitive; playing
> the game brings opportunity to learn theater to a cross-
> section of people; 'playing it by ear'; process as opposed to
> result; not ad-lib or 'originality' or 'making it up by
> yourself'; a form, if understood, possible to any age group;
> setting object in motion between players as in a game;
> solving of problems together; the ability to allow the acting
> problem to evolve the scene; a moment in the lives of people
> without needing plot or story line for the communication; an
> art form; transformation; brings forth details and
> relationships as organic whole; living process. (383-84)

9. Our 1990 production of the Chester *Noah's Flood* provides an example of this improvisational capacity to adapt to surprises. The outdoor performance was accompanied--but not interrupted--by rain showers that began and ended virtually on God's cue lines (and the audience's gasps, laughter, and applause). The showers made it seem as if we had the technical support of a superlatively capable stage manager. The audience's cheerful willingness to get a little wet, right along with Noah and his family, supported the players greatly and made the performance truly communal.

10. A similar incident happened to me during the first performance of *Mankind*'s second production. I played the character of Mercy as a Dominican Friar and entered from the back of the audience, crying "Do wey, do wey þis reull,sers! do wey" (82), to put an end to the tavern revelry. As I made my entrance, I bumped into a young man who had turned to see who was disrupting the play, saw me, and in shock and surprise could only stammer, "Oh, sorry, Father."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I.   Works Cited.

Allensworth, Carl, with Dorothy Allensworth and Clayton Rawson. The
     Complete Play Production Handbook. New York: Crowell, 1973.

Auerbach, Erich. Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western
     Literature. Trans. Willard R. Trask. 1953. Princeton: Princeton
     UP, 1968.

Beckett, Samuel. Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts.
     Translated from the original French text by the author. New York:
     Grove, 1954.

Biblia Sacra. Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem. Stuttgart: Deutsche
     Bibelgesellschaft, 1969.

Brecht, Bertolt. "A Model for Epic Theater." The Sewanee Review July
     (1949): 1-12. Rpt. in Directors on Directing: A Source Book of
     the Modern Theater. Ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy.
     Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1963. 234-244.

Browne, E. M. "Producing the Mystery Plays for Modern Audiences."
     Drama Survey 3 (1963): 5-15.

---. The Production of Religious Plays. London: P. Allen, 1932.

Browne, E. Martin. "Medieval Plays in Modern Production." Religious
     Drama 2: Mystery and Morality Plays. Ed. E. Martin Browne.
     Cleveland: World, 1958. 305-314.

Brown, John Russell, ed. The Complete Plays of the Wakefield Master,
     in a New Version for Reading and Performance. London: Heinemann,
     1983.

Cameron, Kenneth, and Stanley J. Kahrl. "Staging the N-Town Cycle."
     Theatre Notebook 21 (1967): 122-388.

Cawley, A. C., ed. Everyman. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1961.

---. The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle. Manchester:
     Manchester UP, 1958.

Chambers, E. K. English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages. New York: Oxford UP, 1945.

Chinoy, Helen Krich. "The Emergence of the Director." Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theater. ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy. Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1963. 1-77.

Clurman, Harold. "In a Different Language." Theatre Arts 34 (1950): 18-20. Rpt. in Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theater. Ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy. Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1963. 272-278.

---. On Directing. New York: Macmillan, 1972.

---. "The Principles of Interpretation." Producing the Play. Ed. John Gassner. New York: Dryden, 1941. 285-286.

Cole, Toby, ed. Acting: A Handbook of the Stanislavski Method. New York: Lear, 1947.

The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. 2 Vols. New York: Oxford UP, 1971.

Coogan, Sister Mary Philippa. An Interpretation of the Moral Play, Mankind. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1947.

Copleston, Frederick. Mediaeval Philosophy. Westminster, MD: Newman, 1950. Vol. 2 of A History of Philosophy. 9 vols. 1950-75.

Copleston, Frederick C. Medieval Philosophy. London: Methuen, 1952. New York: Harper, 1961.

Craig, Hardin. English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1955.

Davis, Norman, ed. Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments. Early English Text Society, Supplemental Series No. 1. London: Oxford UP, 1970.

Eccles, Mark. The Macro Plays. Early English Text Society, No. 262. London: Oxford UP, 1969.

Eliot, T. S. "Poetry and Drama." Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot. Ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt, 1975. 132-147.

Elliott, John R., Jr. Playing God: Medieval Mysteries on the Modern Stage. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1989.

England, George, and Alfred W. Pollard, eds. The Towneley Plays. Early English Text Society, Extra Series No. 71. 1897. London: Oxford UP, 1925.

Gardner, John. The Construction of the Wakefield Cycle. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1974.

Hardison, O. B., Jr. <u>Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama</u>. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1965.

<u>The Holy Bible</u>. Douay-Rheims trans. of the Latin Vulgate. Baltimore, MD: John Murphy, 1899. Rockford, IL: TAN, 1989.

Hornby, Richard. <u>Script into Performance: A Structuralist View of Play Production</u>. Austin: U of Texas P, 1977.

Kahrl, Stanley J. "The Civic Religious Drama of Medieval England: A Review of Recent Scholarship." <u>Renaissance Drama</u> 6 (1973): 237-248.

---. "Teaching Medieval Drama as Theater." <u>The Learned and the Lewed: Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature</u>. Harvard English Studies, 5. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1974. 305-18.

---. <u>Traditions of Medieval English Drama</u>. London: Hutchinson, 1974.

Kazan, Elia. <u>A Life</u>. New York: Knopf, 1988.

---. "Notebook for <u>A Streetcar Named Desire</u>." <u>Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theater</u>. Ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy. Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1963. 364-379.

Kelley, Michael R. <u>Flamboyant Drama: A Study of The Castle of Perseverance, Mankind, and Wisdom</u>. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1979.

Kolve, V. A. <u>The Play Called Corpus Christi</u>. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1966.

Kurath, Hans, et al., eds. <u>Middle English Dictionary</u>. 10 vols. to date. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1956- .

<u>The Last Judgment</u>. A medieval cycle play from Wakefield, England. Dir. William G. Marx. Prod. Lister Matheson. Videotaped in live performance by the Department of English, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. 4 June 1988.

Lewis, C. S. <u>The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition</u>. 1936. London: Oxford UP, 1951.

McGaw, Charles. <u>Acting is Believing: A Basic Handbook for Beginners</u>. New York: Rinehart, 1955.

Mack, Jr., Maynard. "The Second Shepherds' Play: A Reconsideration." <u>PMLA</u> 93 (1978): 78-85.

<u>Mankind</u>. A fifteenth-century English morality play. Dir. William G. Marx. Prod. Peter C. Mott. Department of English, Michigan State

University. Videotaped in live performance by the Instructional Media Department, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan. 1 May 1976.

Miller, Jonathan. Subsequent Performances. London: Faber, 1986.

Nelson, Alan H. The Medieval English Stage: Corpus Christi Pageants and Plays. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974.

---. "'Sacred' and 'Secular' Currents in the Towneley Play of Noah." Drama Survey 3 (1964): 393-401.

Noah's Flood. A medieval cycle play from Chester, England. Dir. William G. Marx. Prod. Lister Matheson. Videotaped in live performance by the Department of English, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. 2 June 1990.

Olivier, Laurence. Confessions of an Actor: An Autobiography. New York: Simon, 1982.

---. On Acting. New York: Simon, 1986.

Roney, Lois. "The Wakefield First and Second Shepherds Plays as Complements in Psychology and Parody." Speculum 58 (1983): 696-723.

Ross, Lawrence J. "Symbol and Structure in the Secunda Pastorum." Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual. Ed. Jerome Taylor and Alan Nelson. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1972. 177-211.

Samuelson, David A. "Performing the Poem." Shakespeare: The Theatrical Dimension. Ed. Philip C. McGuire and David A. Samuelson. New York: AMS, 1979.

Second Shepherds' Pageant. A medieval cycle play from Wakefield, England. Dir. William G. Marx. Prod. Peter C. Mott. Department of English, Michigan State University. Studio videotaped by the Instructional Media Department of Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan. May, 1978.

Shakespeare, William. The Complete Works. Ed. G. B. Harrison. New York: Harcourt, 1952.

Spolin, Viola. Improvisation for the Theatre. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1963.

Squires, Lynn. "Law and Disorder in Ludus Coventriae." Comparative Drama 12 (1978): 200-213.

Stanislavski, Constantin. An Actor Prepares. Trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. 1936. New York: Theatre Arts, 1956.

---. _Building a Character_. Trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. 1949.
New York: Theatre Arts, 1964.

---. _Creating a Role_. Trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. Ed. Hermine
I. Popper. 1961. New York: Theatre Arts, 1965.

---. "Direction and Acting." _Encyclopaedia Britannica_ Vol. 22
(1947): 35-38. Rpt. in _Acting: A Handbook of the Stanislavski
Method_. Ed. Toby Cole. New York: Lear, 1947. 22-32.

---. _My Life in Art_. Trans. J. J. Robbins. 1924. London: Geoffrey
Bless, 1962.

Stevens, Martin. _Four Middle English Mystery Cycles: Textual,
Contextual, and Critical Interpretations_. Princeton: Princeton
UP, 1987.

Strasberg, Lee. "Acting." _The New Encyclopaedia Britannica_. Vol. 28
(1986): 524-530.

Strasberg, Lee. _A Dream of Passion: The Development of the Method_.
Ed. Evangeline Morphos. Boston: Little, 1987. New York: New
American, 1987.

Styan, J. L. _Drama, Stage and Audience_. Cambridge: Cambridge UP,
1975.

Wickham, Glynne. _The Medieval Theatre_. 1974. Cambridge: Cambridge
UP, 1988.

---. "The Staging of Saint Plays in England." _The Medieval Drama:
Papers of the Third Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval
and Early Renaissance Studies_. Ed. Sandro Sticca. Albany, NY:
State U of New York P, 1972. 99-119.

Williams, Arnold. _The Drama of Medieval England_. East Lansing:
Michigan State UP, 1961.

---. "The English Moral Play Before 1500." _Annuale Mediaevale_ 4
(1963): 5-22.

---. "Medieval Allegory: An Operational Approach." _Poetic
Theory/Poetic Practice_ 1 (1969): 77-84.

---. "Typology and the Cycle Plays: Some Criteria." _Speculum_ 43
(1968): 677-684.

Woolf, Rosemary. _The English Mystery Plays_. 1972. Berkeley: U of
California P, 1980.

II. General References.

Boleslavsky, Richard. _Acting: The First Six Lessons_. New York:
    Theatre Arts, 1949.

Benedetti, Jean. _Stanislavski: A Biography_. London: Methuen, 1988.
    New York: Routledge, 1988.

---. _Stanislavski: An Introduction_. London: Methuen, 1982. New York:
    Theatre Arts, 1982.

Bevington, David. _Medieval Drama_. Boston: Houghton, 1975.

Briscoe, Marianne G. and John C. Coldewey, eds. _Contexts for Early
    English Drama_. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989.

Cantelupe, E. B., and R. Griffith. "The Gifts of the Shepherds in the
    Wakefield _Secunda Pastorem_: An Iconographical Interpretation."
    Mediaeval Studies 28 (1966): 328-335.

Chekhov, Michael. _To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting_. New York:
    Harper, 1953.

Clopper, Lawrence M. "_Mankind_ and Its Audience." _Comparative Drama_ 9
    (1974-75): 347-55.

Clurman, Harold. _The Fervent Years_. New York: Da Capo, 1983.

Cole, Toby, and Helen Krich Chinoy, eds. _Actors on Acting: The
    Theories, Techniques, and Practices of the Great Actors of All
    Times as Told in Their Own Words_. New York: Crown, 1954.

---. _Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theater_.
    Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1963.

Eliot, T. S. "Religious Drama: Medieval and Modern." _Edinburgh
    University Journal_ (Autumn, 1937): 8-17.

Gardner, John. "Structure and Tone in the Second Shepherds' Play."
    Educational Theatre Journal 19(1967): 1-8.

Gorchakov, Nikolai M. _Stanislavski Directs_. Trans. Miriam Goldina.
    Trans. Ed. Virginia Stevens. N.p.: Minerva, 1954.

Hirsch, Foster. _A Method to Their Madness: The History of the Actors
    Studio_. New York: Norton, 1984.

Magarshack, David. _Stanislavsky: A Life_. London: Macgibbon and Kee,
    1950. London: Faber, 1986.

Nelson, Alan H. _The Medieval English Stage: Corpus Christi Pageants
    and Plays_. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974.

Reitz, Mathias. "The Application of Selected Dramatic Theories of
     Stanislavski as a Solution to Disunity in Readers' Theatre." The
     Speech Teacher 15 (1966): 191-196.

Southern, Richard. The Medieval Theatre in the Round. London: Faber,
     1957.

Stanislavski, Constantin. Stanislavski's Legacy: Comments on Some
     Aspects of an Actor's Art and Life by Constantin Stanislavski.
     Ed. and Trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. London: Max Reinhardt,
     1959.

Stanislavsky, Konstantin. My Life in Art. Trans. G. Ivanov-Mumjiev.
     Moscow: Foreign Languages, n.d.

---. On the Art of the Stage. Trans. David Magarshack. 1950.
     London: Faber, 1967.

Stratman, Carl J. Bibliography of Medieval Drama. 2 Vols. New York:
     Frederick Ungar, 1972.

Toporkov, Vasily Osipovich. Stanislavski in Rehearsal. Trans.
     Christine Edwards. New York: Theatre Arts, 1979.

Wickham, Glynne. Early English Stages, 1300-1600. 3 Vols. London:
     Routledge, 1959-1981.

Williams, Arnold. The Characterization of Pilate in the Towneley
     Plays. East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1950.

---. "The Comic in the Cycle." Medieval Drama 16 (1973): 109-124.