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BATTLING WITH THE BODY:
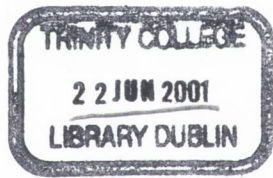
Physical and Allegorical Violence in the

English Morality Plays

by Mark Chambers

PhD Thesis

Trinity College, Dublin

2001

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Mark Chambers

SUMMARY

Battling with the Body: Physical and Allegorical Violence in the English Morality Plays investigates ways in which medieval allegory finds corporeal expression in the violence of the late medieval stage. Using the *Psychomachia* as a touchstone, the work analyzes many medieval sources and analogues, attempting to elucidate the unique dramatic expression of allegorical violence in the medieval English morality plays. *The Castle of Perseverance*, the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, *The Pride of Life*, and *Mankind* each contains moments of physical and allegorical violence in which significance confronts physicality and allegory jostles with dramatic verisimilitude. In each case the playwright must attempt to reconcile the idea -- usually weighted by non-dramatic narrative tradition -- with the medium of drama. As this investigation demonstrates, allegorical violence is where this struggle for reconciliation is most often manifested and where the morality playwrights most often exhibit their remarkable aristry.

In the first chapter, I attempt to define the terms for my study, concentrating primarily on the 'morality play' as a genre of dramatic literature, and on the definitions of 'allegory' and of psychomachia'. For a working definition of the genre, I begin by looking at textual references within the plays themselves and secondary textual material (from contemporary documents and civic accounts). I then augment this information with several modern critical deinitions of the medieval English morality play to derive a solid definition. I follow this by looking closely at the *Psychomachia* and its legacy in the literature of the medieval period. Finally, I focus on a definition of allegory based on classical, medieval, and modern definitions.

In each of the subsequent chapters, I focus on individual plays, discussing elements of staging, character, blocking, narrative, and physicality, using sources and analogues and finally determining the position, function, and development of violence within each of the play's dramatic allegory. The plays considered in detail include: *The Castle of Perseverance*, *The Pride of Life*, the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, and *Mankind*, as well as other primary texts which demonstrate the morality play's unique synthesis of allegory and dramatic violence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In memory of
Richard Southern

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EETS   Early English Text Society

             ES   Extra Series

             OS   Original Series

             SS   Special Series

MED   *Middle English Dictionary*

OED   *Oxford English Dictionary*

REED   *Records of Early English Drama*

(I have used official, two-letter postal codes for references to US states and Canadian provinces.)

INTRODUCTION

At the opening of the second act of Shakespeare's *King John*, John and King Phillip

of France are poised for battle before the gates of Angiers:

> KING JOHN: Peace be to France, if France in peace permit
> Our just and lineal entrance to our own!
> If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven,
> Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct
> Their proud contempt that beats His peace to heaven!
>
> KING PHILLIP: Peace be to England, if that war return
> From France to England, there to live in peace.
> England we love, and for that England's sake
> With burden of our armour here we sweat.
> This toil of ours should be a work of thine;
> But thou from loving England art so far
> That thou hast under-wrought his lawful king,
> Cut off the sequence of posterity,
> Outfaced infant state, and done a rape
> Upon the maiden virtue of the crown. [II.1.84-98]

As the scene unfolds, both kings make rival claims to legitimacy: John with a rather

insecure legal argument -- bolstered by his own strength of will -- and Phillip "in right"

(II.1.153) of the boy Arthur, John's elder brother's oldest son. Both kings offer the threat

of violence in support of their claims.

In John's defence, he was named successor in his brother Richard's will (II.1.191-2).

However, Arthur's claim is supported by the laws of succession, and Shakespeare presents

him as a powerless but intelligent boy, completely dependent upon his greedy protectors.

Consequently, Arthur's character is able to draw on our sympathies: "I am not worth this

coil that's made for me" (II.1.165).

The resulting scene before the gates of Angiers is a highly balanced, almost

allegorical *pas d'armes* of set speeches concerning the true nature of kingship. Much is

made of the difference between speech and action, as John accuses Phillip of hypocrisy:

> […] Behold, the French amaz'd, vouchsafe a parle;
> And now, instead of bullets wrapp'd in fire,
> To make a shaking fever in your walls,
> They shoot but calm words folded up in smoke,
> To make a faithless error in your ears;
> Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,
> And let us in -- your King, whose labour'd spirits,
> Forwearied in this action of swift speed,
> Craves harbourage within your city walls. [II.1.226-34]

Phillip responds with a lengthy discourse on Arthur's right to be king (II.1.235-62), and finishes by addressing the citizens of Angiers with a threat of violence stemming from a "signalled" rage:

> Then tell us, shall your city call us lord
> In that behalf which we have challeng'd it,
> Or shall we give the signal to our rage
> And stalk in blood to our possession? [II.1.263-6]

Speaking for Angiers, Hubert's response makes the allegory of the scene explicit by challenging the unity of word and deed and of title and reality:

> HUBERT: In brief: we are the King of England's subjects;
> For him, and in his right, we hold this town.
>
> KING JOHN: Acknowledge then the King, and let me in.
>
> HUBERT: That can we not; but he that proves the King,
> To him will we prove loyal. Till that time
> Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world. [II.1.267-72]

The two kings -- their armies at a stand-off at the base of the city walls -- are challenged to prove kingship through combat: to employ violence for validation. They now face each other in allegorical opposition, both having attempted to win over the city of Angiers through persuasion and legal rhetoric, but now both forced into physicality.

Continual personification of the city itself heightens the allegorical nature of the scene: "Before the eye and prospect of your town" (l. 208); "your city's eyes, your winking gates" (l. 215), "those sleeping stones / That as a waist doth girdle you about (ll. 216-7); "your city's threat'ned cheeks" (l. 225); "make a shaking fever in your walls" (l. 228); "the roundure of your old-fac'd walls" (l. 259). Through these exchanges, Angiers becomes a type of the Castle of Mansoul, to be physically conquered by the contending armies before it. John's appeal to iconography -- "Doth not the crown of England prove the King?" (l. 273) -- is insufficient, as Angiers calls for a battle whose outcome will be as symbolic as it is physically conclusive:

> HUBERT: Till you compound whose right is worthiest,
> We, for the worthiest, hold the right from both. [II.1.281-2]

Shakespeare transforms the scene into a dramatic allegory around a figurative castle, with the contending armies of John and Phillip representing the prosopopoeia of two differing notions of kingship. The proposed trial by combat draws this allegory in relief, as alternative readings jostle for ascendancy: Shakespeare deliberately invites an

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allegorical reading of what would otherwise be a straightforward trial by combat. Represented by living actors on the corporeal stage, the gulf between reality and allegory -- where violence is employed to prove abstract nominalism -- becomes all the more apparent.

In the two centuries before Shakespeare's *King John*, English drama employed dramatic allegory towards unambiguous and consummately didactic ends. As we shall see, the English morality play in particular revels in allegorical presentation. Plays such as *The Pride of Life*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Mankind*, *Wisdom*, *Everyman*, and even the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* are rooted in dramatic allegory, where character, action, and physicality are typically governed by allegorical necessity. In dramatic works, however, physicality often creates special demands on allegorical relationships within the plays, and violence on the stage often supercharges the allegorical action that it represents.

Looking at some of the late medieval English morality plays in detail, I will examine the link between physical violence on the stage and dramatic allegory. *The Castle of Perseverance* and the Digby *Mary Magdalen* each employ an elaborate psychomachia, but the differing allegorical stance of their protagonists create marked differences in the psychomachia of each play. *The Pride of Life* represents allegorical violence through the ancient contest between Life and Death, but the didactic Christian auspices of its ending place a strain on its allegory and shift the allegorical stance of its protagonist. *Mankind* focuses its attention on a moment in Mankind's life (rather than his life and death), disabling the exigency of its implied psychomachia. Its employment of allegorical violence is sparing, but -- as we shall see -- it is rendered all the more significant in consequence. The result of such analyses on each of the plays I will consider demonstrates a dynamic interplay between the constraints of total didactic allegory and the physical action of staged drama: essentially, a dynamic interplay between allegory and violence.

Returning to *King John*, the Bastard (Faulconbridge) -- "One that will play the devil" (II.1.135) -- decides to deconstruct the allegorical scene by calling the kings' (and the audience's) attention to its contrived signification:

> By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,
> And stand securely on their battlements
> As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
> At your industrious scenes and acts of death. [II.1.373-6]

He then convinces the two kings to focus their violence instead on the unruly town itself,

disarming the allegorical showdown that had been developing. Resolved to punish

Angiers for its attempt to force validation through a display of violence, the two kings

postpone their battle for kingship and turn their mettle on the town. The scene's allegory

shifts and is subsumed as its narrative develops, but the previous allegorical tableau

remains in the minds of the audience as a poignant reminder of the play's essential

meaning. The true nature of kingship will be tested by the play's subsequent action, but not

through direct physical allegory. Allegory has given way to verisimilitude, but not

before it infuses the subsequent violence of the play with powerful signification.

Shakespeare deepens his treatment of the subject by appealing to that element that had

been so central to the early English morality plays: the attempt to span the almost

ineffable gulf between body and soul, between allegory and verisimilitude.

CHAPTER 1: Allegory, Psychomachia, and the

Morality Play

In his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, William Tydeman notes that "Today there is probably greater awareness of the existence, nature and appeal of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English drama that at any time since its creation."[1] Indeed, it seems that pre-Shakespearean drama is finally in the process of achieving a more appropriate status, as new information and methods of research are revitalising the subject.[2] Even when medieval and Anglo-Saxon literary studies enjoyed a golden age before the Second World War,[3] the early drama remained a neglected shadow on the far side of the late Elizabethans. Their creators and audiences were seen as vulgar and small-minded in some sort of pre-Shakespearean innocence.[4] Today, however, scholars are providing new and more appropriate ways of studying the drama in its own context. Rather than studying medieval drama as a precursor to the development of Elizabethan drama, it is being considered in its own right within the development of English drama as a whole.[5] And, quite often, medieval drama moves outside of this development, manifesting itself as dramatically unique within the greater corpus of western theatre.

Previous Shakespearean criticism did play some part in initially revealing the merits of the earlier English drama, however. Works such as E. K. Chambers' *The Mediaeval Stage*,[6] A. P. Rossiter's *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans*,[7] and Bernard Spivack's *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*[8] remain landmarks in both

[1] William Tydemann, "An Introduction to Medieval English Theatre," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 1.

[2] Tydemann 1-4. He refers, for instance, to relatively modern documentary sources such as the Records of Early English Drama series and Ian Lancashire's *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography*, as well as a recent, more general interest in non-urban early East Anglian drama, such as the REED project, "providing as it will all the evidence available to modern systematic researchers [...]" (33).

[3] See John P. Hermann, *Allegories of War* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1989) 202-4. He points to scholars such as Tolkien and Lewis who were able to "succeed in modifying a Romantic and Victorian exegesis that read exotic pagan elements into Christian texts" (202), and he bemoans the "critique of ethnocentrism" following the Second World War that led to, among other things, the abolition of the Old English requirement by Harvard University in 1954 (203).

[4] Peter Happé, "A Guide to Criticism of Medieval English Theatre," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 312.

[5] Happé, "A Guide," 342-3.

[6] E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols. (London, Glasgow, New York, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1903).

[7] A. P. Rossiter, *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans* (London, Melbourne, Sydney, etc.: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1950).

[8] Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York/London: Columbia University Press/Oxford University Press, 1958).

Elizabethan and medieval dramatic scholarship. In tracing the origins and influences of Elizabethan drama, scholars were forced to peel away the layers of the earlier material, divulging new meanings and raising new questions about what had previously been taken for granted.[9] The communal doctrine and pageantry of the mystery cycles and saints' plays and the multi-faceted allegory of the morality plays, rather than being primitive or irrelevant to the English Renaissance, became obstacles in the line of Elizabethan development.[10]

The rich allegory of the morality plays is often problematic to students of Elizabethan drama, and it is with this element that Bernard Spivack wrestles. He notes the slow substitution of history for what began as pure allegory, and he struggles with the gradual disappearance -- or, at least, the extrinsic appropriation -- of the dramatised psychomachia, or battle-of-the-mind/soul.[11] The earliest morality plays often involve staged violence.[12] However, the open stage battles and allegorical warfare do diminish throughout the morality genre as more humanistic ideas prevail.[13] Taking Spivack's cue, we may examine the "degeneration of the epic hostilities"[14] in the English morality plays in an effort to understand their remarkable dramatic existence.

After centuries of literary criticism, contemporary scholars are still in some debate as to which individual plays should be included in the corpus of English "morality plays". Dispute has arisen around the term "morality play" itself, as it has come into common use despite its absence during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in which the plays first appeared.[15] Moreover, many contemporary scholars, such as Pamela King and Sumiko Miyajima, define the genre based on a very strict set of recurring elements; others, such as

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[9] In his comprehensive study, for instance, Chambers reveals that:
> My proper task would have begun with the middle of the sixteenth century. But it seemed natural to put first some short account of the origins of play-acting in England and of its development during the Middle Ages. Unfortunately it soon became apparent that the basis for such a narrative was wanting. (*The Medieval Stage*, vol. 1, v)

[10] Happé, "A Guide," 312-3.

[11] Spivack 60-129.

[12] For example, note the stage battles in *The Castle of Perseverance* (ll. 1899-2403). *The Castle of Perseverance* [1400-25], *The Macro Plays* (EETS, OS 262), ed. Mark Eccles (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969) 1-111; and in the *The Pride of Life* [14ᵗʰ century], *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments* (EETS, SS 1), ed. Norman Davis (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970) ll. 85-8.

[13] For a discussion of the rise of humanism in England see the introduction by Joanna Martindale in *English Humanism: Wyatt to Cowley* (London, Sydney, and Dover, NH: Croom Helm, 1985). She states that the humanists "had shared interests in history, education and ethics, and shared dislikes for metaphysics and logic; in general, they placed greater value on the concrete than on the abstract" (20).

[14] Spivack 92.

[15] Peter Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays* (London, New York, Toronto, etc.: Penguin Books, 1979) 9.

Happé and Spivack, loosen the dependence on these elements by looking more closely at contextual factors. Perhaps the best way of defining the morality play, however, is to examine the characteristic modes of thought and expression within the plays of the period; viewing the morality play as a evolutionary dramatic moment rather than as an ordered, static genre. Characteristics that might define the genre appear in drastically different ways in many of the plays commonly called moralities, and perhaps by looking at the flexibility of these characteristics we might find a more applicable way to try to group them.

It is difficult to assign an all-encompassing name to this group of late-medieval/early modern moral plays, and the plays themselves are of little help. Many of the older "morality" plays such as *Mankind* and *The Castle of Perseverance* come to us without any real commentary with regard to genre. Some evidence exists within the plays themselves, but it is limited. In the Banns of *The Castle of Perseverance*, for instance, a plot summary is given, but the rest of the invitational speech by Primus Vexillator avoids labelling the play:

> Grace if God wyl graunte us of hys mykyl myth,
>   Þese parcellys in propyrtes we purpose us to playe
> Þis day seueneyt before ȝou in syth,
>   At . . . on þe grene in ryal aray.[16]

The other older moralities, including *Mankind*, *Everyman*, and *The Pride of Life* fragment, exist without such banns and leave even less indication as to how their creators might have referred to them.

Some secondary material, such as bits of letters and civic accounts, give some reference as to how individual plays might have been referred to during the period; but it, too, is limited. Ian Lancashire, for instance, sees *The Castle of Perseverance* as an evolved version of the York Pater Noster "ludus" or "lusus," recorded in the civic accounts of York in 1521.[17] Similarly, a request is made for certain properties for a "ludo de Mankynd, et aliis ludis," on 18 August, 1499, in East Retford, Nottinghamshire.[18] While references such as

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[16] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 131-4. The lacuna indicated by the elipses indicates that a space was left in the manuscript, probably for the insertion of a place-name. See footnote no. 134, p. 7.

[17] Ian Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558* (Cambridge, London, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 169.

[18] Lancashire 128.

these are sparse, it is apparent that the use of the term *ludus* to describe plays during the medieval period was common,[19] and Marion Jones adds that:

> The old term *ludus* had meant 'game' or 'sport' in so wide a sense that it had needed qualification before it indicated gladiatorial combats, athletic exhibitions or stage plays. *Ludus* went forward into the vocabulary of the Middle Ages with a wide significance across a range of recreations: with it in much the same contexts was used another Latin term, *iocus*, and its associates.[20]

We have some indication, then, that the term *ludus* (and occasionally *iocus*) was used to describe the morality plays of the late-medieval period. But the term, as Jones points out, was used with broad connotations and did not necessarily refer to theatrical entities. Its use, therefore, could hardly be relied upon to identify a particular dramatic genre.

In the late fifteenth century, the advent of printing allowed for the practice of short introduction to the printed text.[21] Playwrights were no longer consigned to time-consuming handwritten copies, and they were able to preface their works for the reader. Perhaps the dominance of the title "morality play" itself in modern criticism has been aided by John Skot's introduction to his 1528-9 printed edition of the *Everyman*:

> *Here beginneth a treatise how the hye Fader of Heuen sendeth Dethe to somon every creature to come and gyve a counte of their lyves in this world, and is in maner of a* morall playe.[22]

Everyman, after all, has often "been seen as the archetypal moral play"[23] until quite recently. Early printed editions of the plays, then, have given scholars some idea of how the genre might have been labelled.

John Rastell introduces his play *The Four Elements* as "'A new *interlude* and a mery, of the nature of the four elementis.'"[24] Some twenty years before, Henry Medwall had similarly referred to his play *Nature* as a "'goodly *interlude*.'"[25] In fact, "interlude" was applied quite often to plays from this period, as Spivack's exhaustive bibliography

[19] See Lancashire's topography.

[20] Marion Jones, "Early Moral Plays and the Earliest Secular Drama," *The Revels History of Drama in English*, vol. 1, ed. Lois Potter (London and New York: Methuen, 1983) 229.

[21] For a discussion of the effects of the printing press in England, see C. S. L. Davies' *Peace, Print and Protestantism: 1450-1558* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976) 132-3.

[22] *Everyman*, *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, ed. Greg Walker (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) 282, l. 1 (s. d. -- my emphasis).

[23] Pamela M. King, "Morality Plays," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 255.

[24] John Rastell, *The Four Elements*, *Three Rastell Plays*, ed. Richard Axton (Cambridge/Totowa, NJ: D. S. Brewer/Rowman & Littlefield, 1979) 30, (my emphasis).

[25] Henry Medwall, *Nature*, *The Plays of Henry Medwall*, ed. Alan H. Nelson (Cambridge/Totowa, NJ: D. S. Brewer/Rowman & Littlefield, 1980) 92 (my emphasis).

demonstrates.[26] But it is difficult to separate those plays called "interludes" from their older moral ancestors. Jones points out that during an early stage "it became the standard term for plays of whatever nature perfomed indoors at the feasts of rich households."[27] *Mundus et Infans*, dated 1500-20 and printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1522, is introduced as "'a propre newe Interlude.'"[28] Yet, despite the growing emphasis on wit and brevity often demonstrated in these later plays, and despite their "abstract growth toward the individual and particular,"[29] they still demonstrate that unique taste for presenting moral conflict through allegory.

Happé suggests that "'Morality plays' and 'interludes' have so much in common that to distinguish between the two is bound to be controversial."[30] Moreover, if this distinction is made, what is to be done with plays such as John Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, Sir David Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, and John Bale's *King Johan*? Should a third categorisation be applied to long political satires and doctrinal plays that cannot be identified as "interludes" but that have such an obvious link to their moral, allegorical contemporaries? In his discussion of politically motivated morality playwrights such as Skelton, Lindsay, and Bale, Peter Happé notes that:

> it is clear that what they inherited -- their view of the morality play --
> was substantial and powerful: a flexible dramatic instrument which offered
> to its practitioners great scope for the achievement of dramatic effects.[31]

With this in mind, the flexibility of the morality play and its adaptable body of conventions becomes more apparent.

Pamela King, in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature*, takes up a strict stance in her definition of the morality:

> Only five medieval English morality plays survive: *The Pride of Life*, *The
> Castle of Perseverance*, *Wisdom*, *Mankind*, and *Everyman*, to give them their
> common titles, together constitute the entire corpus of an apparently influential
> native dramatic genre.[32]

Perhaps "medieval" is the important word in this grouping, for these five plays are the

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[26] Spivack 483-93.
[27] Jones 235.
[28] Spivack 490.
[29] C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, *A Handbook to Literature*, 6th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1992) 250.
[30] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 9.
[31] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 24.
[32] King 240.

only English moral plays that survive from what is roughly the end of the medieval period[33] (before the Tudor accession by Henry VII in 1485). But her definition is more general, suggesting that "they offer their audiences moral instruction through dramatic action that is broadly allegorical."[34] This characteristic may be easily applied to many plays from the period. She does, however, find a common sequence in the five plays that is quite important.[35]

Employing a similar sequence, King suggest that "The story of man's fall and redemption presented in a cycle of mystery plays as an epic historical narrative is thus encapsulated in the morality play."[36] While her observation is quite helpful in drawing links between early English dramatic genres, King seems to be interested only in locating the morality play convention within the confines of the medieval period. *Wisdom* and *Everyman* obviously utilise this sequence, while *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Mankind* run it through twice to demonstrate the constant recurring danger of sin. But the element that these plays pass on to early Tudor drama -- the dramatisation of an allegorised moral conflict -- remains their most remarkable and identifiable characteristic. It remains the chief element of the genre as a whole.

> Miyajima offers the following definition of the English morality:
>
> The English moral play or morality is a medieval genre of dramatised allegory employing the personification of abstract qualities for religious ends and performed by actors (who may be clerics but are predominantly lay and wholly or partially professionals) on a fixed stage in the open air or indoors.[37]

This is a very specific definition, and Miyajima goes on to note several other distinguishing characteristics among the five medieval moralities: 1. they all have anonymous authors, 2. there are no contemporary records of their performance, 3. none of them is divided into scenes or acts, 4. they all have very few stage directions, and 5. they all share the Christian theme of Man's ultimate fate.[38] All of Miyajima's listings,

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[33] Jones 221-3. Jones also points to the two fifteenth-century Winchester Dialogues *Lucidus and Dubius* and *Occupation and Idleness*, but notes that they are more "allegorical pieces" of debate rather than plays (222).

[34] King 240.

[35] Sumiko Miyajima, paraphrasing R. L. Ramsay, lists the major parts of the sequence as: "1. Innocence; 2. Temptation; 3. Life-in-Sin; 4. Repentance," *Theatre of Man* (Avon, Gt. Brit.: Clevendon Printing Co., Ltd., 1977) 133.

[36] King 240.

[37] Miyajima 8.

[38] Miyajima 8-9.

however, again tend to confine the five older moralities into a historically isolated genre. While this allows her to concentrate and particularize her study of the staging of these plays, it does not give proper weight to the slightly later moral plays which do not belong to her "relatively homogeneous group."[39]

Long moral plays such as *Magnyfycence*, *King Johan*, and *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* do spring from the same recognisable stock as the original five, and for this reason Peter Happé includes them in his volume of *Four Morality Plays*. In the Introduction, he notes that:

> The morality -- even when the author is unknown -- is normally the work of an individual who inherits and contributes to a series of conventions, and whose inspiration causes him to take an independent line.[40]

Later he suggests, "In the end the mystery cycles disappeared because they could not change, while the morality fades imperceptibly at first, but at the last completely into new styles of drama [...]."[41] Taken together, these two observations demonstrate the morality play's connection between the past ("inherits...conventions") and the future ("into new styles of drama").

It is in this way that the genre may be viewed as a vehicle of change during the final transformation of the late-medieval period into the ultimate evolution of the Renaissance under the Tudor monarchs. To study the five oldest moralities in isolation would be to limit the scope of their contribution to the later drama. Having stated this, however, it must be noted that the admitting of farcical and political material into the plays by the mid-sixteenth century did change the expression on the face of the genre, but to classify these later comic plays as strict "interludes" and to study them in isolation might be to deny their indebtedness to the genre as a whole.

Spivack lists some sixty plays as "morality plays". Many of the plays he includes display very diverse elements. He subdivides the genre based on temporal factors, calling those written in the fifteenth century *"early"* moralities, those written between 1500 and

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[39] Miyajima 8.
[40] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 11.
[41] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 11-12.

1550 *"intermediate"* moralities, and those written between 1550 and 1585 *"late"* moralities.[42] He notes a shift in ideologies and practices that divides each group:

> They exhibit a threefold development that reflects the whole secular revolution of the Renaissance. From the early to the intermediate [...] is a shift of emphasis from spiritual to secular values [...]. Transition from the intermediate to the late [...] is largely characterized by progressive reduction in scope [...]. The third and final step [...] is the gradual substitution of history for allegory [...].[43]

These divisions are apparent in the plays. The homiletic morality of the early play entitled *Everyman*, for instance, gives way to political satire in Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. Later plays such as *Wit and Wisdom* and Thomas Lupton's *All for Money* do exhibit a reduction in the scope of their subject matter as compared to earlier plays. But Spivack's temporal division of the genre seems somewhat limiting. Although his divisions are by no means intended to be strict, it is rather precarious to define an entire genre based on time periods.

In her introduction to *Three Tudor Classical Interludes*, Marie Axton defines interludes as "dramas of about a thousand lines, playable by a company of six to delight and instruct intelligent audiences for about an hour-and-a-half."[44] We have here several specific requirements, including length, number of players, type of audience, and tone. Moreover, the plays she includes in the volume -- *Thersites*, *Jacke Jugeler*, and *Horestes* -- are all "classical" in that they are all specifically based on classical originals. However, Spivack lists them all firmly as "morality plays," and they do still exhibit the age-old convention of moral didacticism mixed with a diffused, but still perceptible allegorical presentation.

So how are we to define the morality play? Do we identify the genre based on the thematic structure of innocence, temptation, life-in-sin, and repentance? Do we cut off the movement with the beginnings of the substitution of history for allegory? Does the increased inclusion of comical farce within the didactic material signal a new genre? Do we place temporal limitations on the movement? Do we ignore all of these factors and read Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* as a new, developed form of the same old genre?

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[42] Spivack 62.

[43] Spivack 62.

[44] Marie Axton, introduction, *Three Tudor Classical Interludes* (Cambridge/Totowa, NJ: D. S. Brewer/Rowman & Littlefield, 1982) 1.

It can be misleading to study certain specific plays in isolation and to bind them into strict catagories. English drama, like other forms of literature, has developed through the creation, acceptance, or rejection of certain conventions. The drama has built upon itself through its coming to terms with its own conventions. Perhaps it is best, then, to view morality drama as a unique dramatic moment occurring at the end of the medieval period that allegorised the human moral conflict and contributed directly to many elements of Elizabethan drama.

For the purposes of this study, however, it is important that I clarify my terms more precisely, and for this reason I will bow to currently accepted lexicography on the subject. The five earliest "moralities"-- *The Pride of Life*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Mankind*, *Wisdom*, and *Everyman* -- I will refer to exclusively as 'morality plays.' To them I will add the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, simply because it is moral in theme, uses extensive allegory, and was probably composed before 1485.[45] Those plays whose dates of composition fall after the accession of Henry VII in 1485, that is, after the beginning of the Tudor period, I will refer to as 'interludes,' unless they are of excessive length and scope such as *Magnyfycence*, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, or *King Johan*, in which case I will classify them individually, based on internal characteristics. However, I will hasten to reiterate my view that the morality genre, in its broadest sense, continued to evolve throughout the Tudor period. It did not come to a decisive end. Its function was ultimately moral, while its method was allegorical.

It is apparent in this description that allegory is central to the morality drama. It is of primary importance to the bulk of the narratives of the genre, and it links the plays to many other medieval and late-medieval non-dramatic writings, such as Chaucer's *House of Fame*, de Lorris and de Meun's *Le Roman de la Rose*, and other great non-dramatic allegorists of the late-medieval period.[46] It is quite important, then, to gain an understanding of dramatic medieval allegory as it is employed by the moralities.

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[45] Jones refers to this play as a "saint-play" (214-5). It is my opinion, however, that its use of several "morality" conventions such as the Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Daughters of God, and the preeminence of these characters in the play, merit its inclusion in the corpus of early morality plays for the purposes of my discussion.
[46] Spivack 82-4.

Perhaps we may gain insight into late-medieval allegory by looking at some of its composite parts. In their definition of *metaphor*, C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon make the following observation:

> According to a fairly ingenuous notion of language, abstractions can be treated only in terms that are not abstract, presumably because the primitive mind cannot handle abstractions. But no evidence establishes the existence of any such limitations. To presume that any human being has to have a grasp of physical "pulling away" [...] before being able to grasp an abstract "abstraction" is little more than bigotry.[47]

While this observation offers no alternative, it does indicate the danger of explaining medieval allegory in terms of a primitive understanding of psychology. It is easy to dismiss the often complex allegorical fabric of the morality plays, for instance, in light of their brief plots and simple characterisations. However, the writers of the medieval morality plays chose allegory as a way to demonstrate visually a universal ideal and to educate through knowledge of a common experience. Plot and characterisation take the back seat in this unique form of English drama.

In the fourth century, the Spanish poet Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (commonly called "Prudentius") devoted an entire poetic work, *Psychomachia*, to the allegorisation of the Christian's internal conflict. In his long Latin poem, abstractions pitch an open battle to decide the fate of Man's soul. In the opening stanza, while allegorising biblical stories, the poet gives us some idea of his intent:

> Haec ad figuram praenotata est linea
> quam nostra recto vita resculpat pede:
> vigilandum in armis pectorum fidelium,
>
> [This picture has been drawn beforehand to
> be a model for our life to trace out again with
> true measure, showing that we must watch in
> the armour of faithful hearts,][48]

The noun "figuram" may more accurately be translated as "shape" or "figure". This translation indicates the poet's desire to bestow his work and its characters with a recognisable sense of corporeality. While it was not the first allegorical "figura" to push

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[47] Holman and Harmon 288.

[48] Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, *Psychomachia*, *Prudentius: In Two Volumes*, trans. H. J. Thomson, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA/London: Havard University Press/William Heinemann, Ltd., 1949) ll. 50-30. This work and *Hamartigenia* are listed alphabetically under the poet's common name "Prudentius" in following notes and in the bibliography.

its way into popular literature,[49] it does represent an unprecedented attempt to personify internal conflict in an extended allegorical narrative.

Possibly drawing influence from Christian allegories such as the *Psychomachia* and a variety of other ancient and contemporary works,[50] the writers of the late-medieval morality plays created their unique dramatic genre by exploiting moral allegory. The developed personification of human vices and virtues became a method not only of moral and psychological communicative identification, but also of sheer spectacle and dramatic ardour.

The OED defines *allegory* as the "Description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance," or "a figurative sentence, discourse, or narrative, in which properties and circumstances attributed to the apparent subject really refer to the subject they are meant to suggest; an extended or continued metaphor."[51] This definition, however, offers a broad, modern explanation of the word and is not entirely sufficient in elucidating the highly structured late-medieval employment of allegory.

Early in the English Renaissance, certain writers attempted to define or describe what allegory actually involved, and through their sometimes pedantic descriptions we may come to understand the late-medieval employment of allegory a bit better. Henry Peacham, for example, suggests in *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593) that a metaphor is a single "'star,'" while allegory is "'a figure compounded of many stars [...] which we may call a constillation (sic).'"[52] While this is a simplistic understanding, it does give weight to the fact that allegory involved a careful arrangement of individual elements to form an inclusive whole. To this we will add Sir John Harington's challenge in *A Brief Apology* (1591) concerning classical allegory:

> 'Now let any man judge if it be a matter of meane art or wit to containe
> in one historicall narration either true or fained so many, so diverse,
> and so deepe conceits.'[53]

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[49] From the introduction by H. J. Thomson to *Prudentius: in Two Volumes*, xiii. He notes that Prudentius is employing an established, "genuine Roman tendency to personify abstract ideas," and he cites Discordia in Virgil's *Aeneid* as precedent (ix).

[50] Many of which are discussed in Spivack, 60-129.

[51] "allegory," *OED*, 3rd ed., 1970.

[52] Quoted from Marjorie Donker and George M. Muldrows' *Dictionary of Literary-Rhetorical Conventions of the English Renaissance* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1982) 4.

[53] Donker and Muldrow 4.

What we arrive at is a rhetorical literary mode of expression that eclipses mere *symbolism* in its coherency and possible multiplicity of meaning, with the intent that those who are able may "'finde a morall sence included therein, extoling vertue' and 'condemning vice,'" and, on occasion, may discover "'hidden mysteries of naturall, astrologicall, or divine and metaphisicall philosophie, to entertaine their heavenly speculation.'"[54]

In fact, the somewhat blurred line between developed *symbolism* and *allegory* was perfectly clear to fifteenth and sixteenth century playwrights such as Lindsay and Rastell. Plays such as *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* and *The Four Elements* are founded not only on a unified hierarchy of subject and theme -- as their names imply -- but also on a sense of unified, coherent allegorical narrative.

In *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* for instance, Flattrie fears the appearance of the virtue Veritie:

> Thair is now lichtit on the grene,
> Dame Veritie, be Buiks and bels!
> But cum sho to the Kings presence,
> Thair is na buit for vs to byde:
> Thairfoir I red vs all go hence.[55]

The 'grene' is not only the stage or acting area, but could be viewed as the dramatised, allegorical heart of the King. Flattrie and his fellow vices recognise that they may not exist in the presence of the King when Veritie is biding there. Whether paralleled or opposed, dominant or subservient, each personification exists only in relation to its fellow personifications.

This idea is examined in C. S. Lewis' opposition of *allegory* and *symbolism* (or *sacramentalism*). In his examination of medieval allegories of love, he suggests that the symbolist attempts "to see archetype in the copy," while the allegorist merely personifies abstractions.[56] In his argument, the medieval symbolist is more interested in giving corporeality to Neoplatonic truths, while the allegorist -- or, in this discussion, the playwright -- is interested in using *visibla* to depict human passions and emotions.

[54] From Abraham Fraunce's *The Third Part of the Countess of Pembroke's Yvychurch* (1592), quoted in Donker and Muldrow, 6.
[55] Sir David Lindsay, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis, Sir David Lyndesay's Works: Parts I-IV* (EETS, OS 11, 19, 35, 37), eds. J. Small and F. Hall (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969) 416, ll. 1079-83.
[56] C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (London, Glasgow, New York, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1936) 45.

He falls short in his definition of medieval allegory, however, when he states, "every metaphor is an allegory in little."[57] Allegory in the late-medieval and early-modern drama is a mode of thought and presentation based on interlocking congruities which form the action of the play. In *The Castle of Perseverance*, for instance, all of the characters represent some facet of the Christian moral spectrum: whether vices (such as Avarice, Pride, and Envy), virtues (such as Humility, Patience, and Charity), or other important features (such as Flesh, World, and Death).[58] Personifications form the drama only by being elements of the same overall allegory which (in this case) is the psychomachia. Thus a metaphor in the late-medieval drama may function as a building-block of allegory, but only as it functions in and contributes to the finished allegorical structure of the play.

When the character Measure enters the action in Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, for instance, he exists singularly as a personification. But when he unites himself to the other personifications, he becomes a vital piece of the allegory:

> MEASURE: Oracius to recorde in his volumys olde,
> With euery condycyon Measure must be sought.
> Welthe without Measure wolde bere hymselfe to bolde;
> Lyberte without Measure proue a thynge of nought.[59]

Even though his direct spoken identification with the personifications of Felicity and Liberty is not entirely necessary, it is important that the audience notes it and notes his character's relationship to the other 'virtues'. His words serve to indicate that his intentions are concordant with his personified virtue and that he will indeed live up to his name.

This is not to say that the morality plays only employ pure allegory. The character of Garcio in *The Castle of Perseverance*, for example, might seem to be a temporary disruption in the play's allegorical structure. A closer examination, however, reveals that Garcio is meant to represent, on a different allegorical level, the archetype of

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[57] Lewis 60.

[58] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 75-210.

[59] John Skelton, *Magnyfycence* [1515-23] (EETS, ES 98), ed. Robert Lee Ramsay (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1906) 5, ll. 114-7.

the mischievous young boy or "demonic boy-man."[60] He enters, giving thanks to his master the World:

> Werld worthy, in wedys wounde,
>   I þanke þe for þi grete ȝyfte.
> I go glad up-on þis grounde
>   To putte Mankynde out of hys þryfte.[61]

A *garcio* also appears in the mystery plays. The character Garcio has a part in both the Towneley *First Shepherd's Play* and in *The Killing of Abel* where he exhibits similar mischievous characteristics towards his master Cain:

> [CAYN:]   How! pike-harnes, how! com heder belife!
>   [*Enter GARCIO*]
> GARCIO: I fend, godis forbot, that euer thou thrife!
> CAYN: What, boy, shal I both hold and drife?
>   Heris thou not how I cry?
> GARCIO: Say, mall and stott, will ye not go?
>   Lemyng, morell, white-horne, Io!
>   Now will ye not se how thay hy?[62]

He is an archetypal representation of the vulgar *garcio*, the villainous page-boy. This is a different sort of allegory at work from that involving the vices and virtues. While Garcio is not a pure abstraction, like characters such as Pride and Humility, we learn through his position in the play and through his name ("I Wot Neuere Whoo"[63]) that we are not meant to understand him as a specific, realistic character. He is a composite, generalised representative of a certain type of humanity, and his name is consequently nameless.

This notion is useful in viewing the allegorical function of more obvious characters, such as the Mankind or Everyman figure, or the character named Taverner in Rastell's *The Four Elements*. James Wimsatt notes that "mixing has been criticized and can undoubtedly impair the allegorical representation; but it can also add variety."[64] By "mixing" he means the inclusion of both abstractions (such as Pride and Humility) and universalised types of humanity (such as a Taverner or an Everyman). Indeed, much debate has centered around the protagonist in whose heart the psychomachia is meant to be dramatised, as he is in "an absurd position from the point of allegory."[65] It seems difficult to reconcile the

[60] Miyajima 49.

[61] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2908-11.

[62] "The Killing of Abel" (*Towneley* II), *The Towneley Plays* (EETS, ES 71), ed. George England (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1978) ll. 37-43.

[63] *The Castle of Perseverance* l. 2968.

[64] James I. Wimsatt, *Allegory and Mirror* (New York: Western Publishing Co., 1970) 36.

[65] Miyajima 49.

position of an Everyman or a Mankind figure on the stage, as the vices and virtues fighting around him are elements of his own soul. But beyond this, the Mankind figure is a representation of all mankind, and is appropriately anonymous. The writers of the moralities were emphasising the universality of their themes in an identification with history through typology. Each member of the audience was an Everyman or a Mankind, and this identification is crucial to the nature of the genre.

By this, I mean that the diffused personality of the Everyman/ Mankind figure, his usual presentation devoid of individualising characteristics, and his presence within cosmically applicable situations such as the struggle between vice and virtue, allow this particular type of dramatic protagonist a direct identification with the audience that does not occur in other dramatic genres. He is not the distanced protagonist of ancient Greek drama, separated from the audience by chorus, status, and situation. Instead, morality drama founds itself on personalising its situations and identifying itself with the audience. Many of the later "interlude" dramatists attempt to move this particular form of dramatic presentation into the realm of history, and to what extent they succeed or fail will be discussed along with the individual plays themselves.

Even more, however, the presence of Mankind on stage seems to offer a suggestion of free will. Mankind *is* somewhat involved in the struggle between his vices and his virtues in the moralities. He does not exist as a helpless conquest or as an allegorical set piece as does the rose in De Lorris and De Meuns' *Roman de la Rose*.[66] In other words, as a human character, played by an actor on stage with the other characters, he must interact to some extent and is not left as a mere piece of an allegorical tableau.

Nor is he left out of the picture completely, as he is in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, where the battle itself is all, and universal Christian certainty usurps any individual's identification with the experience:

> dissere, rex noster, quo milite pellere culpas
> mens armata queat nostri de pectoris antro,
> exoritur quotiens turbatis sensibus intus seditio
> atque animam morborum rixa fatigat, quod
> tunc praesidium pro libertate tuenda quaeve
> acies furiis inter praecordia mixtis obsistat
> meliore manu.

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[66] Lewis 129. Lewis explains the function of De Lorris and De Meuns' allegorical rose, suggesting that it is "clearly the Lady's love," rather than the Lady herself, and its position within the allegory of the poem is that of an ideal to be achieved (and acted upon and around) rather than the allegorical representation of the character.

[say, our King, with what fighting force the soul
is furnished and enabled to expel the sins from
within our breast; when there is disorder among
our thoughts and rebellion arises within us, when
the strife of our evil passions vexes the spirit, say
what array with superior force withstands the fiend-
ish raging in our heart.][67]

By invoking Christ as his muse -- by asking Christ to "say" the narrative psychomachia -- Prudentius places an original, definitive, all-encompassing seal on his epic poem. This is the authoritative model, similar to the historically typological model of Abraham's triumph in Sodom and Gomorra, which he discusses in the poem's opening:

Haec ad figuram praenotata est linea, quam nostra
recto vita resculpat pede

[This picture has been drawn beforehand to be a model
for our life to trace out again with true measure][68]

But this requested psychomachia is Christ's own version, beyond our concepts of space, time, and individuality. Any reference to Man himself, or any attempt to place him bodily within the poem, would betray the poem's authoritative aspirations. Man himself has no control, nor even any role at all. It is specifically the *soul* that is the battleground in Prudentius' *Psychomachia* -- the soul, which does not interact with Man's physical world.

In this way, the battleground is different in morality drama. As Man *is* actively present most of the time, the battleground is the soul *within* the physical man's frame. Individual identification with the members of the audience is encouraged by the presence of a Mankind figure. The Mankind figure does seem to have a limited control over -- or at least an active awareness of – his own passions and emotions. His presence in the moral drama (with the exception of *Hickscorner*), moreover, could seem to indicate a level of psychological sophistication that includes a knowledge of the limited, but present activity of free will, developing alongside a still staunch, but increasingly intricate relationship with heaven's inevitable grace. The extent of this free will presented in the Mankind figure, however, differs from play to play, as will be demonstrated later.

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[67] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 5-11.
[68] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 50-1.

It is apparent, then, that characters such as Mankind, Garcio, and the Taverner all exist on a different allegorical level from that of the elements of the psychomachia. They are the representative strata of different universal or societal groupings in the mind of the audience, and they serve to buttress and even embellish the allegorised moral already present in the play. This agrees with Wimsatt's statement that "allegory and mirror represent the writer's attempts to locate and express the universal, unchanging substance of the life, objects, and actions of the world."[69] By intermingling the forces of an individual Christian soul with universalised types of humanity (the broadest being a Mankind or an Everyman), the morality playwright is able to elucidate the commonality of the experience to the audience and, perhaps, to make it more accessible. Generalised reality and abstractions of the soul are intermixed in a way that multiplies the possible allegorical strata infinitesimally. In this way, the morality playwrights were not limited by the allegorical mode; they were liberated by it.

It is furthermore apparent, then, why late-medieval playwrights chose allegory as their chief vehicle for action in a society dominated by universal parallels, cycles, and the struggling duality of the human soul. John Wesley Harris outlines the notion of "vertical" time in the medieval period,[70] and he concludes that "medieval man saw time not as a straight line but as a rising spiral."[71] He explains that:

> a *figura*, or 'figure', occurred when some episode in Christ's life appeared to be anticipated or re-enacted by another event occurring elsewhere in history, which thus became a 'shadow' or 'reflection' of the original event.[72]

This sort of exegesis permeates Christian writings so thoroughly that it is impossible to trace any single line of influence. In the biblical material itself, for instance, we find St. Paul drawing a parallel between Abel's death and Jesus' sacrifice in his letter to the Hebrews (12: 24), and linking the crossing of the Red Sea with baptism in his first letter to the Corinthians (10: 1-5). We have, then, a conscious adoption of this cyclic biblical

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[69] Wimsatt 221.

[70] John Wesley Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1992) 101. He explains that this concept is most easily apparent in the mystery cycles, as their structures are arranged along paralleling biblical narratives.

[71] Harris 101.

[72] Harris 94.

exegesis that had developed from Christianity's earliest writings, and it is certainly evident in the mystery pageant cycles.[73]

The struggle between vice and virtue for Mankind's soul -- the predominant theme of the moralities -- came to express itself through an extension of this sort of thinking. The relationship between the *figura* of the corporeal vice, on stage and in the flesh, and its "shadow" in the daily, individual vices of the average audience member, emphasises the commonality of experience of sin. In this way, the allegorical drama sought not just to instruct, but to identify with the Christians in the audience. Allegory provided a means of diffusing the particular and extracting the generalised essence of every man's internal struggle, and its use in the didactic drama of the period is understandable.

Bernard Spivack offers the suggestion that by:

> what must be regarded as a natural accommodation of method to subject, the language of personification became the means to render this invisible struggle explicit and its unseen soldiery vivid.[74]

Allegory is founded upon extended metaphor and personification, and it takes to the stage in ordered, cohesive *visibla*. If anything, the layered allegorical structure of plays such as *Everyman* and *The Castle of Perseverance* seems to involve a rather sophisticated, Christian attempt to portray artfully the conflict within the human heart. This feature -- probably more than all others -- has preserved the integrity of the morality plays even to the present.

In the introduction to her article entitled "Truth's Treasure: Allegory and Meaning in *Piers Plowman*," Laurie Finke offers a rather pessimistic, although entirely accurate view of medieval allegory. After discussing Quintilian's presumptive definition in *Institutio Oratorio*[75] and Augustine's self-defeating definition in *De doctrina Christiana*,[76] Finke eventually runs her own definition through some of the mechanics of post-structuralism, suggesting that:

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[73] Harris illustrates this idea in detail, 94-105.

[74] Spivack 77.

[75] He simply states, "allegory means one thing in the words, another in the sense." Quoted by Laurie A. Finke in "Truth's Treasure: Allegory and Meaning in *Piers Plowman*," *Medieval English Poetry*, ed. Stephanie Trigg (London and New York: Longman, 1993) 84.

[76] Finke notes that Augustine has difficulty with his definition of the "truths" represented by allegory when he states:
> ...a contradiction in terms is created, since if that is ineffable which cannot be spoken, then that is not ineffable which can be called ineffable. This contradiction is to be passed over in silence rather than resolved verbally.
Quoted by Finke, 86.

> Language, [...] even as it attempts to recuperate presence, must simultaneously defer it [...]. The meaning and truth that allegory seeks to represent are, by the deferred nature of representation, present only as fragments.[77]

Later she concludes that:

> Allegory, as it tries to incarnate the absent signified that would authorize meaning and truth, testifies to their absence. The more language seeks to clarify (literally to illuminate or free from darkness or gloom) meaning, the more it reveals the void, the darkness of its own reflexivity.[78]

Indeed, much has been written on the inadequacy of language to represent thought (most notably by Jaques Derrida[79]), and there is perhaps no better example of this phenomenon than in the slippery medium of allegory. While not wishing to over-simplify the argument, I would suggest that a certain beauty exists in allegory's inability to clarify itself. The artfulness of language lies in the manipulation of its imperfections as a communicative device, and satisfaction for the reader or the audience member comes not from any sort of direct identification with the author or playwright but from an imaginative self-fashioning of a suggested shape of the text. At risk of stating the obvious, I would simply add that the fragments of meaning presented by allegory and the shadowy, multi-layered existence it puts in front of us not only elucidates the difficulty of communicating truths, but even revels in it.

Carolynn Van Dyke, for instance, describes the individual personifications of early Christian and medieval allegory as "variant manifestations of a transcendent Reality."[80] With this idea in mind, then, it is possible to identify a cyclic and varying typology in an early Christian allegory such as the *Psychomachia* that shifts its allegorical planes-of-existence:

> quam super adsistens Patientia 'vicimus,' inquit,
> 'exultans Vitium solita virtute, [...].'
> haec effata secat medias inpune cohortes
> egregio comitata viro; nam proximus Iob
> haeserat invictae dura inter bella magistrae,
> fronte severus adhuc et multo funere anhelus,
> sed iam clausa truci subridens ulcera vultu,
> perque cicatricum numerum sudata recensens
> millia pugnarum, sua praemia, dedecus hostis.

> [Standing over her (Wrath), Long-Suffering cries:

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[77] Finke 88.

[78] Finke 88.

[79] Jaques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) 278-93.

[80] Carolynn Van Dyke, *The Fiction of Truth: Structures of Meaning in Narrative and Dramatic Allegory* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1985) 134.

'We have overcome a proud Vice with our wonted
         virtue [...].'
So saying, she makes her way unharmed through the
midst of the battalions, escorted by a noble man, for
Job had clung close to the side of his invincible mistress
throughout the hard battle, hitherto grave of look and
panting from the slaughter of many a foe, but now with
a smile on his stern face as he thought of his healed
sores and, by the number his scars, recounted his
thousands of hard-won fights, his own glory and his
foes' dishonour.][81]

Van Dyke goes on to explain that Job's presence at this point in the poem,

accompanying (and traditionally manifesting) Patientia, is an example of the "split-level

heuristic" of many early Christian allegories.[82] Becoming more than just symbolic by

engaging in the action, Job's presence shows that the personifications are more than one-to-

one metaphors. As personified *universals*, the virtues, for instance, are able to manifest

themselves allegorically in an infinite number of forms -- historically, psychologically,

typologically, etc. -- depending on the poet's intention. Job *is* a traditional personification

of Patientia, and both are only individual facets of the transcendent virtue, which

remains, by nature, ultimately ineffable in its infinite wholeness.

Van Dyke then steers our attention in a new direction, asserting that the "coherent

but unchartable structure"[83] of an allegory such as the *Psychomachia* requires a different

approach:

To read an allegory properly is neither to extract a moral nor to construct
a geometry of its referents but to follow what Roland Barthes calls 'the
very movement of reading.'[84]

As exciting as this method of 'reading' allegory may be, though, it does disarm the

practice and even purpose of literary criticism. More than this, if it bows to the ineffable,

transcendent plane on which Prudentius' personifications are meant to refer, it does not

take into account the nature of the poem, as it exists. The poet's mind is not a transcendent

entity. Nor is that of his audience. Nor, in fact, are his personifications. While the

'realities' behind his personifications could theoretically exist in an infinite number of

forms, Prudentius' mind -- like ours -- is only capable of grasping and of elucidating a finite

number of them.

[81] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 154-6 and 162-8.
[82] Van Dyke 63.
[83] Van Dyke 63.

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The *Psychomachia*, therefore, is no more "unchartable" than any other allegory, which -- by its very nature -- remains a human attempt to *chart* a supposed transcendental reality; essentially, to impose order on chaos. The purpose and pleasure of 'reading' an allegory, then, is in the identification of this imposed order and how its levels function on the narrative. Van Dyke's argument does warn us against the dangers of searching for a straight-forward 'split-level heuristic' within the complexity of early Christian and medieval allegory, but it denies the fact that the construction of an open-ended 'geometry' is not only possible, but the actual *intent* of the mode.

Observe again, for instance, Prudentius' description of the biblical story of Abraham:

> haec ad figuram praenotata est linea,
> quam nostra recto vita resculpat pede:
> vigilandum in armis pectorum fidelium,
> omnemque nostri portionem corporis,
> quae capta foedae serviat libidini,
> domi coactis liberandam viribus;
>
> [This picture has been drawn beforehand
> to be *a model* for our life *to trace out again
> with true measure*, showing that we must
> watch in the armour of faithful hearts, and
> that every part of our body which is in cap-
> tivity and enslaved to foul desire must be set
> free by gathering our forces at home;][85]

We may observe from this example of Prudentian didacticism that early Christian and medieval[86] allegorists often encourage the 'tracing -out' of their multi-faceted allegorical narratives. It is, indeed, the purpose of allegory. To:

> understand the nature of the synthesis -- the common denominator, the
> residual incongruities, the shiftings of balance -- by following the signs
> that constitute and develop the relationship[87]

is, of course, the "reader's task" in reading an allegory, but it must and does lead to a general identification of the poet's allegorical landscape, even if its complexity might create occasional confusion.

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[84] Van Dyke 55.

[85] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 50-5 (my emphasis in the English translation).

[86] To give a similar, brief example from the morality drama, a full millennium later, observe Deus' admonition in *The Castle of Perseverance*:
All men *example here-at may take*
To mayntein þe goode and mendyn here mys.
þus enyth oure gamys. (ll. 3642-5, my emphasis).

[87] Van Dyke 42.

Through the creation of signs and language or through the creation of mental images and allegory, we are able to come to grips with the abstract parts of ourselves and of the universe. The morality plays, like their allegorical ancestors, excel in their representation of this knowledge. The multi-faceted allegory which they employ becomes a vivid, colourful, and highly malleable medium in which to examine the particulars of the late-medieval Christian mind and with which to communicate this examination to an audience through drama.

This argument presupposes a modicum of psychological insight within the morality plays. How and to what extent does this insight manifest itself through medieval allegory? It is far too easy to simplify the duality of medieval Christian thought, misinterpreting its artistic subtlety. Many scholars have rightly expounded upon the polar opposition of Christian morality within the English morality drama,[88] while others have convincingly argued for other methods of expression.[89] To understand the differing camps, it is important to identify the ways in which this cosmic moral opposition is expressed within the moralities.

Spivack is correct in identifying an overarching two-fold metaphor in the late-medieval English morality plays and Tudor moral drama.[90] The allegorised Christian moral conflict, or *psychomachia*, seems to be the driving force behind a theme of many of the earlier moralities, while the "moral *sequence*"[91] provides a thematic structure. At the conclusion of *Wisdom*, for instance, Anima speaks these lines:

> The tru son of Ryghtusnes,
>   Wyche þat ys Owr Lowrde Jhesu,
> Xall sprynge in hem þat drede hys meknes.
>   Nowe ye mut euery soule renewe
> In grace, and vycys to eschew,
>   Ande so to ende wyth perfeccyon.[92]

The process of achieving grace is outlined -- "son of Ryghtusnes [...] Xall sprynge in hem [...] And so to ende wyth perfeccyon" -- while the elements of the psychomachia, the "vycys to

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[88] Happé, "A Guide," 312-343. He notes, just to include a couple examples, A. P. Rossiter's definition of "Gothic drama," produced through a mixture of the comic and the grotesque (314), and O. B. Hardison's identification of the similarities between medieval religious ritual and the drama (319), both of which demonstrate a desire to elucidate some of the spiritual aspects behind the drama's creation.

[89] Happé, "A Guide," 325-43.

[90] Spivack 101.

[91] Spivack 101.

[92] *Wisdom, The Macro Plays* (EETS, OS 262), ed. Mark Eccles (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969) ll. 1156-61.

eschew," remain necessary to that process. The Augustinian notion of the intervention of divine grace[93] through "wisdom," or the knowledge of Christ, is the homiletic moral of the play, but the battle between vice and virtue is the test which Anima must constantly endure in order to maintain that grace.

In this light, the psychomachia is quite essential to the morality plays. Its literary origin can be traced to Prudentius' fourth-century epic poem, but to what extent the moralities are themselves indebted to it has remained a topic of debate since it was first suggested by Creizenach in 1903.[94] By looking at the nature of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, we might better understand how the morality playwrights later employed the idea.

Examining the recent critical debates concerning the importance of the *Psychomachia* to the English morality drama, we may see that many critics are all too eager to dismiss the poem entirely. Miyajima suggests, for example, that:

> nothing is more surprising than to compare Prudentius' text and the texts of the moralities. Apart from a general and superficial resemblance between them, the spirit and content of Prudentius' poem are quite different.[95]

John Hermann, however, states, "it served as the model for the personification allegory of war, influencing [...] literature throughout the Middle Ages."[96] Later he discusses the *Vita Oswaldi*, noting that it "illustrates a prevalent tendency, nurtured in large part by the *Psychomachia* itself, to see in historical events the working out of the abstract pattern of the war between the virtues and vices."[97] Even more recently, in fact, King says of *The Castle of Perseverance* that "The battle between vices and virtues draws directly on Prudentius' *Psychomachia*."[98]

The poem was indeed popular in the medieval pulpit. Spivack attests to over three hundred manuscripts showing evidence of its influence, citing several as examples.[99] Regarding literature of the period, he points specifically to the twelfth-century Latin poem, *Anticlaudianus*, and to Bishop Grosseteste's poem of the same century, *Chasteau*

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[93] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Hendry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), especially Book X, 180-1.
[94] Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, vol. 2, 154.
[95] Miyajima 141.
[96] Hermann 8.
[97] Hermann 19.
[98] King 245.
[99] Spivack 81-4.

d'Amour,[100] which quite possibly influenced *The Castle of Perseverance*.[101] Both poems deal with an allegorical battle between virtues and vices. Prudentius' poem also seems to have contributed to much of the artwork from the period as well, most obviously in the form of individually illuminated manuscripts. Adolf Katzenellenbogen notes that:

> Today, apart from a few minor fragments, sixteen illustrated manuscripts are in existence and these were produced in scriptoria often at great distances from one another. The oldest belong to the 9th century, while the latest is dated 1298.[102]

Based on the proliferation of these illuminated manuscripts alone -- spanning five centuries and appearing at many different localities[103] -- one may gain some notion of the apparent importance of Prudentius' work troughout mid- and late-medieval Europe.

The literary descendants of the *Psychomachia* are so numerous and pervasive throughout medieval Europe that to trace a direct line to the moralities would prove quite difficult, if not impossible. The allegorical portrayal of the *bellum intestinum* had become, in fact, a literary mode of its own -- if not the norm -- in preaching and writing of the medieval period, and its presence in the Ecclesiastical schools of Anglo-Saxon England was well established.[104] Any direct relationship between Prudentius' poem and these writings remains primarily speculative, but a few of the more important examples of at

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[100] Spivack 82.

[101] King 244.

[102] Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art*, 2nd ed. (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 3.

[103] Katzenellenbogen lists the surviving manuscripts (based on an original study by Richard Stettiner, *Die illustrierten Prudentius-Handschriften*, Berlin, 1895) as:

P[1] (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. lat. 8318) late 10th century, from the neighbourhood of Tours.

Le[1] (Leyden, University Library, Cod. Voss. lat. oct. 15) first half of the 11th century, Angoulême or Limoges.

C (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 23) first half of the 11th century, Malmesbury Abbey.

Lo[1] (London, British Museum, Add. MS. 24199) first half of the 11th century, Bury St. Edmunds?

Lo[2] (London, British Museum, Cotton MS. Cleopatra C. viii) first half of the 11th century, English.

Le[2] (Leyden, University Library, Cod. Burmanni Q3) second half of the 9th century, St. Amand.

B[1] (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS. 974) second half of the 9th century, St. Amand.

V (Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. 563) early 11th century, St. Amand.

P[2] (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. lat. 8085) late 9th century, French.

Be (Berne, Stadtbibliothek, MS. 264) late 9th century, South German.

B[2] (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS. 977) late 10th century, Abbey of St. Laurent, Liége.

Ly (Lyons, Bibliothèque du Palais des Arts, MS. 22) second half of the 11th century, French.

B[3] (Brussels, Biblothèque Royale, MS. 975) middle of the 11th century, Abbey of St. Laurent, Liége?

G (St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS. 135) first half of the 11th century, St. Gall.

Lo[3] (London, British Museum, Cotton MS. Titus D xvi) circa 1100, St. Albans.

P[4] (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. lat. 15158) 1298, St. Victor, Paris.

Footnote no. 2, 3.

[104] See H. Gneuss, "A Preliminary List of Manuscripts Written or Owned in England up to 1100," *Anglo-Saxon England*, vol. 9 (1981), 1-60, nos. 38, 70, 191, 246, 285, 324, 537, and 852.

least partial influence should be examined in order to establish a context for the moralities.

The poem inevitably makes its way into the literature of the British Isles through the ecclesiastical circles, tempering some of the writings of the early Anglo-Latin poet, Bishop Aldhelm. Writing in the late seventh century in and around his bishopric of Wessex,[105] Aldhelm chooses to enact a psychomachia in the concluding lines of his poem *Carmen de Virginitate*:

> it remains for this poem to present the battles ensuing
> from the Vices, which will deny the realm of heaven to
> the Virtues and the virgins of Christ, and will close the
> flowering threshold of the brilliant gate, unless, driven far
> off by God's power, they collapse and flee into dark shadows,
> while Christ presses hard upon them.
> Behold, the troops gather in companies for battle [...].[106]

He then goes on to describe the individual encounters of matched Vice and Virtue, heavily laden with exempla from scripture. Departing from Prudentius, Aldhelm places emphasis on Virginity's position in the psychomachia (justifiably, given the subject of the poem):

> Therefore may Virginity, which tramples the sins of
> debauchery, (and) whom the evil scar of vice never
> disfigures, be eager to contend against the battle-troops,
> and may the virgin with armed force strive to defeat those
> eight leaders to whom the savage battle-lines adhere.[107]

However, the nature of the action and description seem to indicate an acquaintanceship with Prudentius' poem. In his introduction, for example, James L. Rosier points out a couple of direct linguistic relationships between the two poems:

> Aldhelm, *CdV* 2865: Quem Deus a nostri detrudat
> *pectoris antro*
> Prudentius, *Psych*. 6: Mens armata queat nostri de
> *pectoris antro*;

and,

> Aldhelm, *CdV* 2882: Et regnatoris stipant *sublime*
> *tribunal*
> Prudentius, *Psyco*. 736: conscendunt apicem; mox et
> *sublime tribunal*.[108]

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[105] Information concerning Aldhelm's life and writings can be found in the introduction by James L. Rosier in Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate, Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer Ltd., 1985) 97-101.

[106] Aldhelm 157.

[107] Aldhelm 157.

[108] Rosier in Aldhelm 100.

We seem to have a suggestion here that Aldhelm has indeed borrowed from the

Psychomachia. But Rosier adds that "On the other hand, one is bound to wonder why, if

Aldhelm knew it, he did not make more use of the Prudentius's brilliant characterization

of the various vices and virtues."[109] He avoids coming to a conclusion in his introduction,

leaving the matter for future analysis,[110] but the Prudentian spirit does seem to be hinted

at.

Hermann points out that the "highly artificial, scholastic quality"[111] of

Aldhelm's *conflictus vitiorum et virtutum* is a result of the poet's association with the

Cassianic order. He asserts that "monastic tradition had codified spiritual combat,

rendering it less a dramatic individual confrontation with a rich variety of dangers than a

predictable stage in the soul's growth."[112] Or, to put it another way, rendering it less of a

picturesque Prudentian battle-poem and more of an Aldhelmian doctrinal expatiation such

as often occurs at the end of *Carmen de Virginitate*:

> Haec igitur octo uitia licent diuersos ortus ac dissimiles efficientias
> habeant, sex, tamen priora id est gastrimargia, fornicatio, filargyria,
> ira, tristitia, acedia quadam inter se cognatione et ut ita dixerim
> concatenatione conexa sunt, ita ut prioris exuberantia sequenti efficiatur
> exordium [...].
>
> [These eight vices allow for diverse origins and have dissimilar effects;
> nevertheless, six come first, i.e., gluttony, lust, greed, anger, dejection,
> and sloth. By a certain relationship (and as I have said, a concatenation)
> they are connected in such a way that from the superabundance of the former
> comes the beginning of the one that follows...][113]

Narrative embellishment has given way to a more abstract, almost static allegory in

Aldhelm's treatment, as the need to educate his brethren in the order's theologies of

spiritual growth guides his work.[114]

We have, then, an early Anglo-Saxon work of seventh-century England

reconstructing the Prudentian psychomachia in quite a different spirit and style from its

predecessor.[115] And, given the fact that "the *Carmen de Virginitate* was widely read and

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[109] Rosier in Aldhelm 100.

[110] Rosier in Aldhelm 100. He states that "the answer may eventually lie in a more thorough analysis of Aldhelm's treatment of his sources," which has yet to be produced.

[111] Hermann 22.

[112] Hermann 29-30.

[113] Quoted from and translated by Hermann, footnote no. 20, p. 23.

[114] Hermann 23.

[115] Hermann suggests that Aldhelm need not have been directly aquainted with the *Psychomachia* at all, relying primarily on other contemporary treatments of vice and virtue (such as Cassian's *Consolationes*), 28.

studied as a curriculum text during the early Middle Ages, both in England and on the Continent,"[116] we have at least a suggestion of the psychomachia's possible permeation to the English drama.

Hermann also discusses one other early text that might attest to the *Psychomachia's* influence in Anglo-Saxon England: the anonymous *Solomon and Saturn*. He offers the following passage (from Solomon's speech to Saturn concerning the twelve individual "letters" or characters of the Pater Noster) and a corresponding similar passage from the *Psychomachia* (concerning Faith and Discord/Heresy):

> | T. hine teswað   and hine on ða tungan sticað,
> wræsteð him ðæt woddor   and him ða wongan brieceð.

> [T injures him and sticks him in the tongue, twists his throat
> and breaks his jaws.][117]

> \- -

> non tulit ulterius capti blasphemia monstri Virtutum
> regina Fides, sed verba loquentis inpedit et vocis claudit
> spiramina pilo, pollutam rigida transfigens cuspide
> linguam.

> [No further did Faith, the Virtues' queen, bear with the out-
> rageous prisoner's blasphemies, but stopped her speech and
> blocked the passage of her voice with a javelin, driving its
> hard point through the foul tongue.][118]

In the first passage, we see that the letter T assaults the "grim friend"[119] in order to silence him by stabbing his tongue. This parallels Faith's tongue-goring episode with Discord in the second passage.

Hermann then draws attention to a second parallel:

> Ðonne · · S. cymeð,   engla geræswa,
> wuldores stæf,   wraðne gegripeð
> feond be ðam fotum,   læteð foreweard hleor
> on strange stan,   stregdað toðas
> geond helle heap.   Hydeð hine æghwylc
> æfter sceades sciman;   sceaða bið gebisigod,
> Satanes ðegn   swiðe gestilled.

> [The S comes, leader of angels, written character of glory;
> he grips the hostile enemy by the feet, smashes his cheek
> forward against the hard stone, strews his teeth throughout

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[116] Rosier in Aldhelm 100-1. He refers to the list in R. Ehwald's *Aldhelmi Opera*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi XV (Berlin, 1919) 349.

[117] Quoted from and translated by Hermann, 33.

[118] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 715-18.

[119] Hermann 33.

the hellish throng. Each of the fiends hides himself
throughout the shadowy gloom; the warrior is afflicted,
Satan's thane is silenced.][120]

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addit Sobrietas vulnus latale iacenti, coniciens silicem
rupis de parte molarem. ...casus agit saxum, medii
spiramen ut oris frangeret, et recavo misceret labra palato.
dentibus introrsum resolutis lingua resectam dilaniata
gulam frustis cum sanguinis inplet.

[Soberness gives her the death-blow as she lies, hurling at
her a great stone from the rock. ...chance drives the stone
to smash the breath-passage in the midst of the face and
beat the lips into the arched mouth. The teeth within are
loosened, the gullet cut, and the mangled tongue fills it
with bloody fragments.][121]

Aside from different characterisation, the former passage mirrors the latter from the

Psychomachia almost exactly in its use of stones and of scattering teeth in an effort to

silence vice.[122] Later the "fiends", hiding themselves at the destruction of their leader

(in the first passage), find their exact Prudentian parallel in the behavior of Luxuria's

followers following her defeat[123]: "caede ducis dispersa fugit trepidante pauore /

nugatrix acies," [At the slaughter of its leader her company of triflers scatters and runs in a

flutter of fear].[124] What is ultimately evident is that the author of *Saturn and Solomon* is

variously indebted to the *Psychomachia* in his particular treatment of the spiritual

warfare of the Pater Noster.

Continuing onward to the Middle English literature, we may see that the

Psychomachia makes its way both directly and indirectly into many major poems,

treatises, and sermons. Spivack points to the twelfth-century *Chasteau d'Amour* by Robert

Grosseteste (1175-1253), bishop of Lincoln and Anglo-Norman poet:

That version of the Psychomachia which appears in the *Hamartigenia*
as a siege laid by the forces of evil to the fortress of the soul repeats itself
in the twelfth-century *Chasteau d'Amour* of Bishop Grosseteste.[125]

Any direct reliance of Grosseteste's moral romance on Prudentius' *Harmatigenia* (or

The Origin of Sin) is not at all apparent, although they do share a common overriding

[120] Quoted from and translated by Hermann, 34.

[121] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 417-24.

[122] Hermann 35.

[123] Hermann 35.

[124] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 432-3.

[125] Spivack 82.

conceit. The *Hamartigenia* is ultimately "concerned with the refutation of false doctrine"[126] -- specifically that which insists that there are "duo numina" [two Godheads][127] -- and its "psychomachia" (if it can be said to have one) is but a brief adornment:

> his aegras animas morborum pestibus urget praedo
> potens, tacitis quem viribus interfusum corda bibunt
> hominum; serit ille medullitus omnes nequitias spargitque
> suos per membra ministros. namque illic numerosa
> cohors sub principe tali militat horrendique animas
> circumsidet armis, Ira Superstitio, Maeror, Discordia,
> Luctus, Sanguinis atra Sitis, Vini Sitis et Sitis Auri, Livor
> Adulterium, Dolus, Obtrectatio, Furtum.

> [With these plagues of sin the powerful robber besets
> our sickened souls. With his stealthy forces he infiltrates
> into men's hearts and they draw him in. He sows all
> manner of wickedness in their inmost parts, and scatters
> his agents through their frames. For there a large force
> serves under this wicked commander and invests men's
> souls with dreadful weapons -- Anger, Superstition,
> Sickness-of-Heart, Strife, Affliction, foul Thirst-for-Blood,
> Thirst-for-Wine, Thirst for Gold, Malice, Adultery, Craft,
> Slander, Theft.][128]

Later Prudentius explains that the "exercitus" [host] is:

> angeulus hic portae in capite [...], hic contiet omnem saxorem
> seriem constructaque limina firmat. quem qui rite suis
> per propugnacula muris noverit insertum, seque ac sua
> moenia vallo praecingat triplici celsa stans eminus arce,
> fretus amore petrae castis et pervigil armis, [...].

> [the keystone at the head of the gateway; this it is that
> holds together the whole course of blocks and makes the
> structure of the entrance firm. If a man knows that this
> stone is duly set in the defence of his walls and girds him-
> self and his stronghold with a threefold rampart, while
> he stands at a distance on his lofty citadel in reliance
> on the love of the stone, watching and keeping his
> armour clean,....][129]

It is apparent that knowledge of the position of this "host"/stone is quintessential to the maintenance of the soul's "stronghold" and its defence against the onslaught of the "robber" and his heterogeneous assortment of vices. This image of the soul being sheltered within a fortress is not carried throughout the *Hamartigenia*, and it seems to be a passing

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[126] Thomson in Prudentius x.

[127] Prudentius, *Hamartigenia, Prudentius: In Two Volumes*, trans. H. J. Thomson, l. 69.

[128] Prudentius, *Hamartigenia*, ll. 389-97.

[129] Prudentius, *Hamartigenia*, ll. 490-5.

allegorical embellishment to Prudentius' argument against heresy, rather than the basis

of his work.

In the *Chasteau d'Amour* (entitled *Carmen de Creatione Mundi* in the original

Norman French manuscript[130]) the allegory of the fortress is extended to the full and is

further endowed with a proper "psychomachia":

> Ke vencuz est e mate
> Par la seinte humilite.
> Charite confunt envie
> E abstinence glucunie.
> E lecherie rest mate
> Par sa seinte chastete.
> E avace ki mut blesce
> Est vencue par largesce.
> E pacience reveint ire
> Ki sei maimes tut detire.
> E esperitale leesce
> Confunt la male tristesce.
> La fontaigne insurt de grace
> Ki tut le chastel embrace.[131]

A thirteenth-century English version of the *Chasteau d'Amour* provides an elaborated

translation:

> For gret meknes in hir hert venquist aye al pride
> And her gret charity envye myȝt not abyde
> Hir discrete abstinens fordid al glotonye
> And hir clene meydenhede suffred no lecherie
> Wikkid covetyse in hir hert myȝt never dwell
> For wilful povert in hir hert keped the castil
> Pacience in hir hert ever was so prest
> That synne of wrathe ther in myȝt never have rest
> Ther was so mekil in hir hert of comfort gastly
> That ther myȝt never synne of slewth dwell ther by
> The fair welle in the castil that filles ay the dykes
> Is grace in goddes moder that synful man aye likes
> [...].[132]

Grosseteste's *Chasteau d'Amour* does have a psychomachia, then, but neither the

Psychomachia nor the *Hamartigenia* can be logically attributed as a proper "source" for

the poem. It is true that it does share the theme of "a siege laid by the forces of evil to the

fortress of the soul" with the *Hamartigenia*, but it can hardly be said to "repeat"

(Spivack) the Latin work. The inclusion of the conventional troupe of battling vices and

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[130] From the introduction by Matthew Cooke in Robert Grosseteste's *Carmina Anglo-Normannica*, ed. Cooke (London: J. R. Smith, for the Caxton Society, 1852) viii.

[131] Grosseteste, *Carmen de Creatione Mundi*, *Carmina Anglo-Normannica*, ll. 733-46.

[132] Grosseteste, *Chasteau d'Amour*, trans. anon. (13th c.), *Carmina de Anglo-Normannica*, ll. 625-36. This text is from the manuscript of the British Library Egerton Collection no. 927. For the sake of translation, I will use it for future references to the *Chasteau d'Amour*, but please note that it is in no way an exact translation of Grosseteste's original poem and, in fact, takes quite a number of liberties with its source. I have substituted the z of Cooke's edition with

virtues, however, does indicate the continual indebtedness of the medieval moralist to the spirit of Prudentius' original *Psychomachia*, despite a vast difference in vehicle and character.[133] The battle rages on, now as a conventional device within the literature of the Christian writer.

John Lydgate's narrative poem *The Assembly of Gods*, probably composed between 1420 and 1422,[134] relies heavily on Prudentius' writings, as Triggs points out:

> the *Hamartigenia* and *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, the
> Christian hymn writer, a little earlier than Fulgentius, may
> be consulted for the origin of that part which contains the
> battle of the vices and virtues.[135]

The middle section of the three-part poem contains an extensive psychomachia. Pluto sends Cerberus to summon Vice to make war with Virtue (ll. 603-16), whereby Vice enters the field:

> Armyd was Vyce all in cure boyle,
>   Hard as any horn, blakker fer than soot.
> An vngoodly soort folowyd hym parde,
>   Of vnhappy capteyns of myschyef croppe & roote.[136]

Lydgate pays particular attention to the rank and file of the opposing camps, including massive lists of lesser soldiers and commons (ll. 636-62 and 637-714), presented as allegorical *types* rather than abstractions (boasters, braggers, bribers, etc.). Leading these "pety capyteyns" (l. 635) we find the conventional seven vices, now conceived as men riding the conventional beasts with which they had become associated[137]:

> Pryde was the furst þat next hym roode, God woote,
>   On a roryng lyon; next whom came Enuy,
> Syttyng on a wolfe -- he had a scornfull ey.
>
> Wrethe bestrode a wylde bore, and next hem gan ryde.
>   In hys hand he bare a blody nakyd swerde.
> Next whom rood Glotony, with hys fat berde,
>   Syttyng on a bere, with hys gret bely.
> And next hym on a goot folowyd Lechery.
>
> Slowthe was so slepy he came all behynde
>   On a dull asse, a full wery pase.
> These were the capyteyns that Vyce cowde fynde

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the original з.

[133] Grosseteste's *Chasteau d'Amour* will be discussed in full in the following chapter on *The Castle of Perseverance*.

[134] From Oscar Lovell Triggs' introduction to John Lydgate's *The Assembly of Gods, or The Accord of Reason and Sensuality in the Fear of Death* (EETS, ES 69), ed. O. L. Triggs (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1896) xiv.

[135] Triggs in Lydgate xl.

[136] Lydgate ll. 617-20.

[137] Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages*, trans. Armand Colin, 5th ed. (Princeton, NJ and Guildford, Surrey: Princeton University Press, 1986) 30-1.

B[e]st to set hys felde and folow on the chase.[138]

Later we see Virtue take the field on a car, led by "foure dowty knyghtys,"--
namely Righteousness, Prudence, Strength, and Temperance (ll. 792-8) -- and followed by
the mounted seven virtues and a host of minor captains (ll. 799-827). The field itself is
named "Macrocosme" (l. 932), the character Conscience is the "juge" of the battle and
controller of the field (l. 936), and the "Lord" of Macrocosm (and, hence, the object of the
battle) is the character "Frewyll" (ll. 995-6). After much ado with the sending of
ambassadors to Freewill and the dubbing of new knights (ll. 974-1015), the battle proper
takes place, in which Virtue's troops are encumbered by weeds growing in the field, sown
earlier by Sensuality (l. 1023). Finally, after all looks bleak, Virtue is reinforced by
"Good Perseuerance" (l. 33), and is able to win the battle:

> Agayn Vyce he roode *with* hys gret shaft
> And hym ou*er*threw for all hys sotyll craft.[139]

In the aftermath, Freewill is taken to a number of significant allegorical figures,
primarily dealing with the act of Extreme Unction (from Conscience to Humility to
Confession to Contrition to Penance and so on), and Vice is carried off to Dispair (ll. 1135-
55). Finally the lady Predestination gives Virtue the "palme of vyctory" (l. 1173).

The psychomachia at the heart of Lydgate's *Assembly of Gods* seems to concern
itself with a proper allegorical path towards moral salvation. With its listings,
rankings, and enumeration it follows a single allegorical narrative throughout -- heavily
allegorized and full of motion, but lacking the vigorous depth of Prudentius' version. It
provides a long and twisting didactic thread, linking the first and last parts of his poem,
that concerns itself more with explaining action-and-consequence rather than illustrating
a colourful allegorical fabric.

I would not go as far as Triggs, who condemns the poem outright: "Of the artistic
merits of such a treatise little can be said."[140] He, moreover, goes on to condemn all of the
religious poetry of the period:

> The poem is simply one of the many moral poems which were so popular
> during the Middle Ages throughout Europe and which were calculated to
> gratify the almost universal taste for poetry of a serious and didactic nature.

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[138] Lydgate ll. 621-34.
[139] Lydgate ll. 1133-4.
[140] Triggs in Lydgate xli.

> We can now consider these works hardly other than monuments of the bad
> taste that accompanies a low literary culture.[141]

He is ultimately misguided in his anachronistic opinion that Lydgate's moral didacticism -- together with that of his predecessors and contemporaries -- is an indication that "during the Middle Ages the secret of art was wanting."[142] Lydgate's poetic purpose -- like Prudentius' -- is both didactic and allegorical, but unlike it is ultimately narrative. Medieval narrative romance has informed Lydgate's structure, and, while its didactic allegory is consequentially episodic, its component parts form a linear allegory. It is not as multi-faceted as the *Psychomachia*, but its allegory is united and self-contained. In this way, didacticism is more a vehicle than an end -- a fact that Triggs overlooks.

Turning back to the *Psychomachia*, however, it becomes clear that Prudentius uses his moral allegory differently from the way in which it will be used in the late Middle Ages. Prudentius set a very popular medieval convention into intense motion. The pervasiveness of the psychomachia over such a vast amount of time, space, and media results in its expansion, development, and ultimate transformation in western literature. But, as I have tried to demonstrate, it continues to be an extremely popular literary mode well into the fifteenth century: it has not disappeared. In this way, the rich allegorical medium and the occasional fully blown psychomachia of the late-medieval English morality drama is indeed indebted to Prudentius' epic.

To reconcile the poem organically to the texts of the morality plays, however, proves nearly impossible. The profusion of the themes surrounding the battle between vice and virtue in so many different forms throughout the medieval period had obviously altered the original form by the time it reached the drama of late-medieval England. But perhaps to attempt such reconciliation would be to miss a more important issue.

I do not intend to argue that the morality plays were "from first to last, dramatizations of the homiletic allegory of the Psychomachia,"[143] nor will I suggest that the psychomachia is the *primary* theme of the moralities. But I would suggest that an understanding of the psychomachia is necessary to realising the nature of physical

[141] Triggs in Lydgate xli.
[142] Triggs in Lydgate xlii.
[143] Spivack 73

violence in much of the late-medieval drama. Disregarding any direct influence the poem might or might not have had on the plays, I wish to view it as a touchstone, as a vivid medium for understanding both a convention of the late-medieval sermon and of the moralities themselves. The poem was without question an archetype for the general medieval Christian model of the conflict of virtues and vices,[144] and -- while eschewing direct textual comparison -- it proves quite revelatory to examine the themes of some of the English morality plays in light of the *Psychomachia*.

What is it, then, about that spirit of the *bellum intestinum* as portrayed by Prudentius that carried it into the hands of the morality playwrights a full millennium later? What, precisely, is the *psychomachia*, and how did it display itself in the late-medieval English drama? Prudentius' poem itself offers many suggestions.

At the conclusion of the first stanza of the body of the poem, the following advice is given:

> vincendi praesens ratio est, si comminus ipsas
> Virtutum facies et conluctantia contra
> viribus infestis liceat portenta notare.
>
> [The way of victory is before our eyes if we may mark
> at close quarters the very features of the Virtues, and
> the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle.][145]

This statement is central to the poem as a whole, and it gives homiletic meaning to the allegory that follows it.[146] The reader is then plunged into the blood-drenched battleground of the soul as Fides and Fidem Veterum Cultura Deorum (Worship-of-the-Old-Gods) prepare to exchange blows. Without a doubt, the first thing a modern reader notices about the poem is its constant use of graphic violence. Hermann suggests that this use of violence is a result of a "violent literary appropriation" of the Virgilian epic by the Christian allegorist who employs a "strategy of turning a warlike classical epic against itself [...] the violence of the previous pagan form is turned within."[147] While this is a perfectly beautiful explanation, perhaps a secondary motive is at work as well.

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[144] Thomson in Prudentius xiii.
[145] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 18-20.
[146] Both Spivack and Hermann quote the lines (pp. 81 and 10, respectively) as the poem's "single important sentence" (Spivack).
[147] Hermann 17 and 36.

Beyond the blatant violence expressed in describing the individual battles between the vices and virtues, detail of all kinds runs throughout the poem. Observe the lengthy description of Superbia:

> forte per effusas inflata Superbia turmas
> effreni volitabat equo, quem pelle leonis
> texerat et validos villis oneraverat armos,
> quo se fulta iubis iactantius illa ferinis
> inferret tumido despectans agmina fastu.
> turritum tortis caput adcumularat in altum
> crinibus, extructos augeret ut addita cirros
> congeries celsumque apicem frons ardua ferret.
> carbasea ex umeris summo collecta coibat
> palla sinu teretem nectens a pectore nodum.
> a cervice fluens tenui velamine limbus
> concipit infestas textis turgentibus auras.

> [It chanced that Pride was galloping about, all puffed
> up, through the widespread squadrons, on a mettled
> steed which she had covered with a lion's skin,
> laying the weight of shaggy hair over its strong
> shoulders, so that being seated on the wild beast's
> mane she might make a more imposing figure as she
> looked down on the columns with swelling disdain.
> High on her head she had piled a tower of braided hair,
> laying on a mass to heighten her locks and make
> a lofty peak over her haughty brows. A cambric
> mantle hanging from her shoulders was gathered
> high on her breast and made a rounded knot on her
> bosom, and from her neck there flowed a filmy
> streamer that billowed as it caught the opposing
> breeze.][148]

He continues to describe the charger on which Pride is seated. Prudentius' lengthy description agrees with Pride's iconographic association with elaborate dress. Furthermore, as the instigating sin of Satan's fall, Pride was often portrayed as chief among the vices. Note, for example, the description by Chaucer's Parson:

> Of the roote of thise sevene synnes, thanne, is Pride
> the general roote of alle harmes. For of this roote
> spryngen certein braunches, as Ire, Envye, Accidie
> or Slewthe, Avarice or Coveitise (to commune under-
> stondynge), Glotonye, and Lecherye./ And everich of
> thise chief synnes hath his braunches and his twigges,
> as shal be declared in hire chapitres folwyng.[149]

Pride is logically the vice associated with decorated physical beauty and splendid dress. Observe Pride's threat to Meekeness in *The Castle of Perseverance*:

> SUPERBIA: As armys, Mekenes! I brynge þi bane,

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[148] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 178-89.
[149] Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Parson's Tale," *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987) X (I), ll. 388-9.

<center>Al wyth pride peynty and pyth.
What seyst þou, faytour? be myn fayr fane,
Wyth robys rounde rayed ful ryth,
Grete gounse, I schal þe gane.[150]</center>

As "Pride is the vice of kings,"[151] it is understandable why Prudentius would use his

introduction of Pride for a long passage of description.

Beyond this, however, the other vices and virtues receive similar descriptive

attention in the *Psychomachia*. Prudentius is, in fact, building his moral allegory from the

corporeal ground up. He is not building from scratch, of course, but he is diligently

perfecting a recipe that will later prove the staple of the medieval congregation's diet.

What will become cliché in late-medieval literature is at this point a revolutionary

notion for the fourth-century poet. He is essentially adapting a "genuine Roman tendency

to personify abstract ideas"[152] to a relatively new, and Christian end. It is for this reason

that Thomson suggests that Prudentius "embodied a reconciliation between the new faith

and the old culture,"[153] as the poet apparently struggled against the lingering paganism of

the fourth century.[154] The poem carefully and systematically dresses the abstractions of

its psychomachia so that its allegorical meaning will ring perfectly clear. The graphic

violence seems almost necessary in light of this idea, as detail becomes the chief vehicle

of breathing corporeal life into abstract elements of the Christian soul.

Spivack explains that Prudentius is developing prosopopoeia into "an independent

literary genre" around the Virgilian battle.[155] In defining the generic term

psychomachia, it becomes necessary to decide which elements of Prudentius' poem are

indeed unique in order that one might understand its importance to the later drama.

Many scholars have incorrectly rejected the importance of the *Psychomachia*

based on their judgment that Prudentius had only modest poetic abilities. C. S. Lewis, for

example, states that "it is possible to overrate the importance of the *Psychomachia*. If

Prudentius had not written it, another would."[156] Lewis, however, is reacting to his own

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[150] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2069-73.
[151] Mâle 304.
[152] Thomson in Prudentius xiii.
[153] Thomson in Prudentius ix.
[154] Thomson in Prudentius viii-ix.
[155] Spivack 78-9.
[156] Lewis 67.

<center>40</center>

judgment that Prudentius is a bad poet.[157] Prudentius does seem to struggle with the

almost absurd idea of battling virtues, and it is these scenes in particular where his poetry

falters. The notorious scene between Patientia and Ira is a point in case, as Patientia -- by

her own nature -- is unable to react aggressively to Ira's volley:

> inde quieta manet Patientia, fortis ad omnes
> telorum nimbos et non penetrabile durans.
> nec mota est iaculo monstri sine more furentis,
> opperiens propriis perituram viribus Iram.
>
> [So Long-Suffering abides undisturbed, bravely facing
> all the hail of weapons and keeping a front that none
> can pierce. Standing unmoved by the javelin while the
> monster that shot it rages in ungoverned frenzy, she
> waits for Wrath to perish by reason of her own violence.][158]

But Prudentius is quick to explain this apparent problem. In Patientia's victory speech he

writes:

> ipsa sibi est hostis vesania seque furendo
> interimit moriturque suis Ira ignea telis.
>
> [Fury is its own enemy; fiery Wrath in her frenzy
> slays herself and dies by her own weapons.][159]

The poem's homiletic intent to "mark at close quarters the very features" of the

psychomachia is reinforced throughout. Its elements form an allegorically visual sermon-

poem, and, despite the difficulties of such an enterprise, it never wavers in its instructive

aim.

Patientia, then, whom A. P. Rossiter deems "a kind of moral pachyderm,"[160] is

actually nothing more than one specific Christian virtue draped over a human frame. To

expect any more from her, just for the sake of annulling absurdity, would be to misinterpret

the metaphor. Despite the obvious time gap, it remains equally difficult for the modern

reader, as it presumably did for Prudentius' fourth-century audience, to identify with a

character such as Patientia. She does not behave in any sort of *human* way, and her

presence within the human situation of physical combat is difficult to accept. But the

Psychomachia is not in the least bit an effort at individual characterisations -- even in a

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[157] Lewis 69-70. His condemnation is more of Prudentius' storytelling abilities than his versification, as he suggests:
1) that the pitched battle is too "obvious", 2) that it does not have the realistic ups-and-downs of journey
narrative, and 3) that the fighting virtues are ridiculous ("embarrassing," 70).
[158] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 128-31.
[159] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 160-1.
[160] Rossiter 96.

fourth-century sense. Each vice and each virtue represents one or the other part of the two polar extremes within the character of Christian Man. They are absurd only in their unwavering extremity, and the allegorised moral conflict in which they take part *always* supersedes the literal action.

In response to Lewis' distaste for the poem, Spivack states that:

> It is unnecessary to exaggerate the literary merit of the *Psychomachia* in order to acknowledge the achievement of Prudentius. His modest performance as a poet does not diminish his importance as an innovator."[161]

To view it broadly, Prudentius took the Virgilian epic battle, filled its human roles with the conflicting mechanisms of the Christian soul, and set it into violent motion. Stripping away details such as style and diction, the germination of Prudentius' psychomachia can be seen to take shape on the late-medieval stage in its ultimate theme.

In examining the text of *Psychomachia*, many incidental similarities between the poem and the English morality plays come to light. In *The Castle of Perseverance*, for instance, Wrath's confrontation with Patience is reminiscent of the corresponding scene between Ira and Patientia in the epic poem. After demanding Humanum Genus' release, Wrath threatens:

> IRA: [...] I schal tappyn at þi tyre
> Wyth styffe stonys þat I haue here.
> I schal slynge at þe many a vyre
> And ben avengyd hastely here.[162]

The same vice in *Psychomachia* exhausts herself by "iaculorum nube" [showering javelins] at Patientia in a "telorum nimbos" [hail of weapons].[163] Both Ira figures rely on a frenzied deployment of hurled weapons.

When Lechery introduces herself in the beginning of *The Castle of Perseverance*, she states that "Wyth my sokelys of swettnesse I sytte and I slepe./ Many berdys I brynge to my byttyr bonde."[164] Peter Happé translates *sokelys* as "honeysuckle flowers."[165] Similarly, in the *Psychomachia*, Luxuria also subdues her adversaries with a flowery assault:

> violas lasciva iacit foliisque rosarum

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[161] Spivack 81.
[162] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2110-3.
[163] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 133-4 and 129.
[164] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 973-4.
[165] Happé, *Four Morality Plays*, 117 (footnote).

dimicat et calathos inimica per agmina fundit.
inde eblanditis Virutibus halitus inlex [...]."

[as if in sport she throws violets and fights with
rose-leaves, scattering baskets of flowers over her
adversaries. So the Virtues are won over by her
charms;....][166]

The anonymous author of *The Castle of Perseverance* extends the flowers-as-weapons

motif later in the play, as the virtues use roses to defend the castle from the onslaught of

the vices. Following his defeat, Envy complains:

> INVIDIA: Charyte, þat sowre swart,
>   Wyth fayre rosys myn hed gan breke.
>   I brede þe malaundyr.
>   Wyth worthi wordys and flourys swete
>   Charyte makyth me so meke [...].[167]

Soon after, his fellow vice Wrath also bemoans their defeat by the virtues:

> IRA: I, Wrethe, may syngyn weleawo.
>   Pacyens me ʒaf a sory dynt.
> I am al betyn blak and blo
>   Wyth a rose þat on rode was rent.[168]

King suggests that this use of roses as weapons is borrowed directly from the

Psychomachia.[169] The playwright has altered the metaphor, turning Luxuria's "nova

pugnandi" [strange warfare][170] into a symbolic representation of Christ's sacrifice ("a rose

þat on rode was rent").

Having stated this, however, it must be pointed out that the identification of

Christ-crucified as a rose on the tree was not uncommon during the medieval period. The

image of the bloodied figure, circled by thorns and hanging from a tree, easily links itself

to that of the blossoming rose. In the *York* "The Death of Christ" pageant, for instance,

Mary weeps for her son in a similarly flowery manner:

> MARIA: Allas! þat þis blossome so bright
>   Vntrewly is tugged to þis tree.[171]

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[166] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 326-8.
[167] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2210-4.
[168] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2217-20.
[169] King 242.
[170] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, l. 323.
[171] "The Death of Christ" (*York* XXXVI), *The York Plays*, ed. Richard Beadle (London: Edward Arnold, 1982) ll. 137-8.

There are many other incidental references to Christ as a rose or, at least, as a flower in medeival literature. John Audelay's "The Fairest Flower," for instance, begins by compairing Christ to a flower "fair and fresh of hew":

> There is a flowr sprung of a tree
> The roote therof is called Jessé,
> A flowr of price;
> Ther is non such in Paradise.
>
> This flowr is fair and fresh of hew;
> It fades never, but ever is new;
> The blisful branch this flowr on grew
> Was Mary mild, that bare Jesú,
> A flowr of grace;
> Agains al sorow it is solàce.[172]

Audelay continues to describe the flower's details:

> Angeles ther came out of here towr
> To looke upon this freshelé flowr,
> How fair He was in His colòur,
> And how swote in His savòur,
> And to behold
> How such a flowr might spring in gold.[173]

Despite the reoccurring image of Christ as a flower in medieval literature, however, the use of Christ's image as a rose *as* an allegorical weapon against the vices in *The Castle of Perseverance* seems to draw directly from *The Psychomachia*.

The flowers-as-weapons motif might have, of course, made its way to *The Castle of Perseverance* through various other forms of art. In her book about the life of Joan of Arc, Marina Warner discusses an early fourteenth century wedding casket, decorated with the "Château des Pucelles," depicting "a maiden's castle assaulted by knights; the defenders on the battlements were armed only with roses."[174] But the similarities between the flowery natures of the two Luxuriae, the shared theme of the psychomachia -- blended with a convention of flowery weapons -- draw an apparent link tighter between *The Castle of Perseverance* and the *Psychomachia*.

In light of similarities such as these, the notion that *The Castle of Perseverance* was influenced, at least partially, by the *Psychomachia* seems quite possible. For instance, there does seem to be a vague resemblance between the dénouement section of the

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[172] John Audelay, "The Fairest Flower" [c. 1430], *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse*, eds. Celia and Kenneth Sisam (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) ll. 1-10.
[173] Audelay ll. 29-34.
[174] Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*, 2nd ed. (London, Markham, ON, Auckland, etc.: Penguin Books, 1983) 42.

poem -- where Peace, Faith, and Concord oversee the building of the temple[175] -- and the Four Daughters of God section of *The Castle of Perseverance*.[176] However, the debate of Heaven appears in western medieval literature as early as the twelfth century and found its way into works such as the *Cursor Mundi* and Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman*,[177] and cannot, therefore, be relied upon for proof of direct influence. It originated in Psalm 74: 11: "Misericordia et Veritas obviaverunt sibi; Justitia et Pax osculatae sunt,"[178] but obviously the "debate" or "parliament" aspect originated elsewhere. Hope Traver suggests that this element originated in the tenth century *Midrash*, a Jewish rabbinical commentary, which was subsequently introduced to medieval Western literature by Hugo of St. Victor (1097-1141) and Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153).[179] She then outlines several occassions where the debate appears, including Robert Grosseteste's (1175-1253) *Chasteau d'Amour* and the late morality *Respublica* (1553).[180] It seems quite improbable, then, that the "debate" in *The Castle of Perseverance* is at all *directly* related to the final movement of the *Psychomachia*. The similarities between the two scenes, however, will be discussed later.

Despite the evolution of Prudentius' psychomachia over time, it remains evident that the essence of his poem found its way into most of the early morality plays -- at least as it developed through intervening works of literature. To suggest that "the psychomachia formula [...] is absent from the moralities"[181] is to misinterpret this obvious, although somewhat diffused influence.

Edgar Schell, however, acknowledges the importance of the moral sequence through a life's pilgrimage in the morality plays.[182] King agrees with him, suggesting, "the major thematic movement of the play (*The Castle of Perseverance*) depends on the presentation of Man's life as a journey."[183] This is certainly true for the fifteenth-century

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[175] Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, ll. 734-825.
[176] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3153-700.
[177] Spivack 69-70.
[178] Hope Traver, *The Four Daughters of God* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr, 1907) 5.
[179] Traver 7.
[180] Traver 144. I will discuss her argument further in the chapter on *The Castle of Perseverance*.
[181] Miyajima 142.
[182] Edgar T. Schell, "On the Imitations of Life's Pilgrimage in *The Castle of Perseverance*," *Medieval English Drama: Esays Critical and Contextual*, eds. Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972) 279-91.
[183] King 244.

morality of *Everyman*. But for the majority of the English morality plays the moral

sequence or life's journey is responsible for *structure* rather than theme. The psychomachia

-- the moral conflict -- is, in fact, a driving force behind this sequential structure rather

than its "supplementary metaphor."[184] The dramatic medium itself gives way to

sequentiality, as the presentation of action on a stage requires forward movement. Schell

makes a very important point when he states that in the *Psychomachia*:

> We are concerned with timeless, impersonal conflict, and timeless force.
> But with the entrance of Mankind we are thrust very quickly into time. The
> focus of the play narrows to the movements of a representative human soul
> between the poles of good and evil, toward the goals of heaven and hell; and
> thenceforth the central action imitated in the play by all the resources of
> drama is the development of the intelligible shape of Mankind's moral life.[185]

But this statement puts "the development [...] of Mankind's moral life" in the position of

cause rather than *effect*. It is true that on the corporeal stage the Mankind figure's inner

conflict is presented in a series of forward moving sequences, but this is an effect of the

development of the psychomachia metaphor and of the dramatic medium itself. It is

empowered in part by the homiletic desire to display the allegorised Christian moral

conflict -- the same desire that Prudentius displays within the timeless, cosmic soul of his

epic poem.

The theme of the Summons of Death is of primary importance to the structure of

both *Everyman* and the fragmentary *The Pride of Life*. Death plays an important role in

The Castle of Perseverance as well, but only after the psychomachia has been fought and

in accordance with the sequential structure of the play:

> MORS: Ow, now it is tyme hye
>   To castyn Mankynd to Dethys dynt.
> In all hys werkys he is vnslye;
>   Mekyl of hys lyf he hath myspent.[186]

The psychomachia exists in a peculiar way in *Everyman*, but it is thematically

overshadowed by the summons of Death. Death's arrival is the initiating action, and

Everyman's ensuing reactions construct the play's primary theme. The only surviving

printed manuscripts date from 1508-1537, and most scholars now agree that it is derived

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[184] Schell, "On the Imitations of Life's Pilgramage in *The Castle of Perseverance*," 280.
[185] Schell, "On the Imitation of Life's Pilgrimage in *The Castle of Perseverance*," 285.
[186] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2778-81.

almost entirely from a Dutch original entitled *Elckerlijc*.[187] The play obviously owes

little thematic debt to the *Psychomachia*, but the allegorical vehicle of its presentation

and the basic themes around which it revolves group it with other plays in the genre.

Everyman is summoned by Death to reckon his "accounts," and in his pilgrimage through

the formalities of death he is abandoned by Fellowship, Kindred, Cousin, Goods, and his

human faculties. Through Confession and with the help of his Good Deeds he is finally

able to enter Heaven, thus concluding the play's ultimate moral.

Spivack chooses to read as much into the play as possible, and in doing so he

makes an interesting connection:

> Its deeper feeling, as well as its dramatic center, resides in the fact that its
> hero hovers between contending forces of spiritual death and spiritual life,
> each side arrayed against the other through its cognate personifications.[188]

It is difficult, however, to impose the psychomachia framework over the structure of

Everyman. King notes that "Everyman's companions are not false vices, they are simply

irrelevant, existing on a superficial plane."[189] For example, observe the final exchange

between Everyman and Fellowship:

> [FELAWSHYP:] [...] And as now God spede the[e] in thy journaye,
>   For from the[e] I wyll departe as fast as I maye.
> EVERYMAN: Wheder a-waye, Felawshyp? Wyll thou forsake me?
> FELAWSHYP: Ye[a], by my faye! To God I be-take the[e].
> EVERYMAN: Farewell, good Felawshyp! For the[e] my herte is sore.
>   A-dewe forever! I shall se the[e] no more.
> FELAWSHYP: In fayth, Everyman, farewell now at the end[ynge]!
>   For you I wyll remembre that partynge is mournynge.[190]

While there is a conflict between the characters of Everyman's earthly life and his

spiritual life, Schell notes that "the Vices, if there are any [...], do not even meet the

Virtues, let alone engage them in ethical debate."[191] In this way, *Everyman* is unique in

the earlier moralities, as the elements of the psychomachia are implied rather than

actualised. King concludes that "As the protagonist's fall into sin has taken place before

the action begins, there is no conflict, no *psychomachia*, but simply an orderly progress

towards a predetermined end."[192] The usual sequence has been altered, as the play

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[187] King 255.
[188] Spivack 72.
[189] King 259.
[190] *Everyman* ll. 295-302.
[191] Schell, "On the Imitation of Life's Pilgrimage in *The Castle of Perseverance*," 279.
[192] King 256.

examines the fine points of Christian eschatology under a dramatic microscope. *Everyman* presents life-after-psychomachia, which is death.

The Pride of Life fragment is also unique in the morality genre. It is now considered to be the earliest surviving morality in the English language -- possibly composed as early as 1350 -- and is thought to be Anglo-Irish in origin.[193] Its subject is also a summons of Death, but its protagonist is personified Life himself. For this reason, the allegory seems somewhat skewed. King notes, "There is no developed *psychomachia*, as the potential for damnation is integral to the character of the protagonist from the outset rather than being externally imposed as a part of the action of vice figures [...] on him."[194] Again, Spivack takes the opposite stance. He states that "*Pride of Life*, in short, is essentially concerned to present the issue between vice and virtue in human soul, with Hell or Heaven the outcome,"[195] suggesting that the end gives proof of the means. But both of these suggestions are based on the idea that the King of Life is a universalised type.

The King of Life appears in all respects to be a universalised Mankind figure. He is arrogant and boastful, he has a wife and relations ("fader [...] moder [...] heme [uncle],")[196] he relies on human faculties (personified as Strength and Health), and he denies the reality of his own death. However, he ultimately challenges Death himself to physical combat. He is not summoned by Death, nor is he unexpectedly struck by Death's dart. He, as the King of Life, challenges Death to mortal combat -- to a fight to the death -- which Death cannot possibly lose because Death *is* death. The allegory becomes rather uneasy.

The remaining fragment, then, may most easily be viewed as a morality demonstrating the dangers of pride and the inevitability of Death. But the King of Life's nature, presence, and actions make the psychomachia irrelevant through an allegorical slant. He exists somewhere between an abstract representation of life itself and a universalised, identifiable protagonist. We are ultimately left wondering to what extent

[193] Norman Davis, introduction, *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments* (EETS, SS 1), (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970) xcvii-c. Davis gives a comprehensive account of modern theories concerning date and origin of the play.
[194] King 259.
[195] Spivack 72.
[196] *The Pride of Life* l. 83.

we are meant to see the King as *human*, how much we are meant to identify with him, and at what point we are to view him as a piece of pure allegory. No doubt the missing part of the play would have shed some light on his character, but he remains *both* the abstract embodiment of life (who opposes death) and, to an extent, as the wayward, sinful protagonist whom we will encounter again and again in the later moralites. As the former, the psychomochia is left irrelevant; and as the later, the allegorical battle with Death becomes a bit absurd. It is almost as if the play is conscious of the limitations of its own allegorical presentation, and it is consequentially ambiguous from this point of view.

It is evident from these two examples that a fully developed psychomachia is not absolutely vital to the morality play genre. The notion of an allegorised moral conflict for purposes of Christian instruction is, however, a prevalent feature of the majority of English morality plays, and Prudentius' *Psychomachia* remains a comprehensive and accessible example of this process for both modern and medieval scholarship. Perhaps by examining individual functional differences of the psychomachia of the morality plays and that of Prudentius' epic poem, their similarities might stand in greater relief.

One occasional example of the functional difference between Prudentius' poem and the moralities is what could be called the lament. In *The Pride of Life*, for instance, the King of Life enters -- following an introduction by the Prolocutor -- boasting of his power over Death and the loyalty of his knights Strength and Health. Despite the Queen's urging, the King refuses to amend his haughty and luxurious ways. The Queen sends the messenger (Nuncius) to fetch the Bishop (Episcopus) for a proper sermon. Upon his arrival, the Bishop begins with a lament, based on the theme of the Twelve Abuses of the Age:

> [EPISCOPUS.] þe worl is nou, so wo-lo-wo,
>   In suc bal ibound
> þat dred of God is al ago
>   And treut is go to ground.
>
> Med is mad a demisma[n],
>   Streyint betit þe lau;
> Geyl is mad a cepman
>   And truyt is don of dau.[197]

He continues this inverted psychomachia through the rest of his sermon, bemoaning corruption and villainy in the King of Life's realm.

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[197] *The Pride of Life* ll. 327-34.

To give another example, God makes a similar complaint in *Everyman*:

> [...] And nowe I se the people do clene for-sake Me.
> They use the seven deedly synnes dampnable,
> As pryde, coveytyse, wrath, and lechery
> Now in the worlde be made commendable;[198]

Likewise, the vices "New Gyse" and "Nowadays" in the play of *Mankind* demonstrate a lament for the corruption of modern society simply through their titles.[199]

While the *ubi sunt* motif is probably applicable to most genres, it stands out in the morality plays because it is a breach in the allegory. The timelessness and universality of Mankind's experience is disrupted by a reference to present reality -- whether it be the corruption of society, the Church, the court, or some other contemporary facet of the audience's experience. Many plays, such as *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Wisdom*, do not have a spoken lament for the corrupt present and retain a relatively strict temporal allegory. However, in many of the later moralities and moral interludes, it becomes a device to encourage, or at least point out the need for change.

In Sir David Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, for example, Diligence offers a form of the lament over the current state of affairs, but then he reassures his audience:

> DILIGENCE: [...] Quhairthrow misreull hes rung thir
> monie ȝeiris,
> That innocentis hes bene brocht on thair beiris
> Be fals repoteris of this natioun:
> Thocht ȝoung oppressouris at the elder leiris,
> Be now assurit of reformatioun.[200]

The action that ensues -- with the parliament of vices and societal estates -- demonstrates a new desire for societal reform rather than a lament for the old days of moral stability.

Moral allegory takes yet another form in John Bale's *King Johan*, as England complains to the King:

> ENGLANDE: Alas, yowre clargy hath done very sore amys
> In mysusyng me ageynst all ryght and justyce;
> And for my more greffe therto they other intyce.[201]

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[198] *Everyman* ll. 35-8.

[199] *Mankind* [1465-70], *The Macro Plays* (EETS, OS 262), ed. Mark Eccles (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986) 153 (list of players). Two of the three Ns have names directly related to the abuses of the modern age: namely "New Guise" and "Now-a-days".

[200] Lindsay ll. 25-9.

[201] John Bale, *King Johan* [1538], *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, ed. Peter Happé, vol. I (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985) ll. 27-9.

The Church itself now plays the part of the vice, and the allegory is limited to a specific time and country. However, just as in Lindsay's play, the same forceful assuredness in the future is reinforced:

> IMPERYALL MAJESTYE: [...] Thus, I trust we shall seclude
>   all maner of vyce,
> And after we have establyshed our kyngedome
> In peace of the Lorde and in hys godly fredome,
> We wyll confirme it with wholesom lawes and
>   decrees,
> To the full suppressynge of Antichristes vanytees.[202]

No longer is the soul of individual man in jeopardy but the soul of the realm of England. Both *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* and *King Johan* demonstrate a recognisable shift in the employment of the psychomachia allegory, and both were performed amid societal and religious upheaval in Scotland and England. Inner elements of the soul are slowly replaced by abstract representatives of the state (such as Imperyall Majesty and Johne the Common-weill) , allegorical political entities (such as Englande), and abstract strata of the church (such as Clergy). In this way, the malleability of the morality play conventions are demonstrated, while the themes behind the plays shift in accordance with the changing religious and political atmosphere of England or Scotland.

Before the intrusion of such political material, however, the early morality plays came towards the end of the arch of Roman Catholic dominance in England, while Prudentius' *Psychomachia* came prior to it. Religious and didactic, their employment of an allegorised moral conflict is the dramatic representation of a tried-and-true convention from the medieval sermon.[203]

It is as if the old virtuous warriors were called back into battle, dressed themselves in their old armour, and took the stage to act out once again the scene that was expected of them and from which they were expected to emerge triumphant. It is inconceivable that after centuries of use this convention would function entirely on its own, or even in the same form as Prudentius' poem. This is why Prudentius implored us to "mark at close quarters the very features of the Virtues, and the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle," while -- a thousand years later -- Mercy tells us:

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[202] Bale ll. 2641-5.

[203] W. A. Davenport, *Fifteenth-century English Drama: The Early Moral Plays and Their Literary Relations* (Cambridge/Totowa, NJ: D. S. Brewer/Rowman & Littlefield, 1982) 11-2.

> [...] I dyscomende þe vycyouse gyse; I prey haue me excusyde,
> I nede not to speke of yt, yowr reson wyll tell it yow.
> Take þat ys to be takyn and leue þat ys to be refusyde.[204]

The psychomachia has been expanded, reworked, diffused, and distributed to the point that there is no need to speak of it any more: it has, ultimately, been unconsciously assimilated. The vigour and ferocity of Prudentius' original battle are beginning to fade by the time the psychomachia reaches the moralities, and the stage is set for new and more devious methods to continue the struggle. The psychomachia, however, remains a dominant characteristic of the morality genre.

The spirit of the allegorised moral conflict initiated by Prudentius, then, is evident in many of the English morality plays. Spivack makes the observation that "It is probably a mistake [...] to ascribe to him the single, or even the major, role in the vast proliferation of the theme of the Holy War in allegorical literature and art."[205] If, however, we view the sequential development of the Mankind figure's moral life as the structure of many of the morality plays -- fueled by the psychomachia -- it is easy to place the drama within the greater scope of the medieval sermons, art, and literature. On the whole, the psychomachia manifests itself in the morality plays as a visual representation of the moral preoccupations of the medieval mind, of the battle waging within the Christian soul, and of the positive hope of its ultimate outcome. It exists as the human struggle to quell the evil desires and temptations within each of us, and the hope that this struggle is not fought in vain:

> HUMILITAS: [...] Þerefor, seuene systerys swote,
> Lete oure vertus reyne on rote.
> Þis day we wyl be mans bote
> Ageyns þese deuelys all.[206]

I will now endeavor to set out the function of physical and allegorical violence in the English morality plays, focusing in particular on *The Pride of Life*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, the hybrid Digby play of *Mary Magdalen*, and *Mankind*, as well as making reference to other early allegorical dramas and non-dramatic analogues. I will pay considerable attention to the use of character, examining how the morality dramatists

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[204] *Mankind* ll. 183-5.
[205] Spivack 81.
[206] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2056-9.

employ the rhetorical convention of prosopopoeia towards compelling dramatic conflict on the stage. I hope, finally, to demonstrate how dramatic allegory -- especially *psychomachia* -- serves a unique function in the morality plays, often in a marked and ingenious departure from its non-dramatic analogues and predecessors.

CHAPTER 2: On *The Castle of Perseverance*

Of all the English morality drama, and, indeed, the medieval drama as a whole, *The Castle of Perseverance* stands out as an exceptional monument to late-medieval dramatic spectacle. The play must have proved quite an experience to its original audiences, with its extensive preparatory earthworks, five concentrically arranged scaffolds around a *platea* and central tower, a cast of no fewer than thirty-five costumed characters, not to mention its over three hours playing-time around a "gigantic compendium of moral themes."[1] It is truly a colossal piece of drama, only seconded in scope (but not in length), perhaps, by the Digby *Mary Magdalen*.[2] In fact, the massive length and breadth of *The Castle of Perseverance* have led many critics, such as Eccles, to the belief that "the author dared beyond his strength in undertaking to present the whole life of man from birth to death and the judgment of the soul in heaven."[3] Later in his introduction to the play, however, Eccles notes that "yet the author had a strong sense of pattern: [...],"[4] touching on that aspect of the drama where its true strength lies.

I intend to examine *The Castle of Perseverance* from the standpoint of its most developed and pervasive element: its allegory. Many critics have investigated the dramatic possibilities of the play, anchoring different theories on elements such as staging, costume, and delivery,[5] and have often found themselves condemning points of the play based on modern standards of what constitutes 'good drama'. From this basis, I intend to proceed in reverse, as it were, so that rather than examining the way in which the play's dramatic performance informs its allegorical structure, I will examine its allegory in detail, attempting to derive from it a more definitive idea of some individual parts of its performance.

An understanding of the double- or even multi-layered function of allegorical violence and physicality in *The Castle of Perseverance* adds poignancy to the play's

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[1] Rossiter 96. He provides a brief analysis of probable staging for *The Castle of Perseverance*.

[2] *Mary Magdalen*, *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160* (EETS, OS 283), eds. Donald C. Baker and Louis B. Hall, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[3] Mark Eccles, introduction, *The Macro Plays* (EETS, OS 262), (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969) xxvi.

[4] Eccles xxvi.

[5] The most detailed study is probably Richard Southern's *The Medieval Theatre in the Round: A Study of the Staging of 'The Castle of Perseverance' and Related Matters*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1975). See also Catherine Belsey's "The Stage Plan of *The Castle of Perseverance*," *Theatre Notebook*, 28 (1974), 124-32; Merle Fifield, *The Castle in the Circle*, Ball State Monograph Number Six (Muncie, IN: Ball State University, 1967); and Steven I. Pederson, *The*

performance and, indeed, to its greater meaning for an audience. So, while keeping in mind Rossiter's cautionary statement that:

> In the Morality it is easy to stick on the allegorical plane, oblivious to the original effect, viz. of real people 'in modern dress' going through a complicated plot, the meaning of which was partly left for the audience to see,[6]

I do intend to demonstrate that *The Castle of Perseverance* is first and foremost a didactic moral *allegory*, and that its function as drama arises out of the inherent dramatic qualities of such an existence. Finally, by examining the role of allegorical violence within the play, I intend to demonstrate that the late-medieval Christian playwright did not merely decorate his drama with elements of the common literary allegory, but, rather, he naturally chose to spin his multi-faceted allegorical narrative into corporeal motion on the open stage.

In the latter half of this century, many scholars have attempted to impose a structure on the morality plays, and on *The Castle of Perseverance* in particular -- as if greater homogeneity could be extracted by inferring a vaguely common sequence. In examining *The Castle of Perseverance*, Rossiter states, for instance, that "the whole cycle-like show amounts to four Moralities in succession [...]. I shall call these 'sequences'."[7] He then goes on to define these sequences as 1) "a sequence on birth and youth, with Mankind's fall to vice and his (first) conversion," 2) "a battle of life allegory," 3) a second fall to vice and death, and 4) "the Contention of the Four Heavenly Virtues or Daughters of God."[8] Rossiter's attempt to find "four Moralities in succession" -- based on the identification of four different motifs that are analogues to many of those found in *The Castle of Perseverance* -- risks condemning the play in its entirety as disjunct and incoherent. But, as we shall see, this sort of conclusion arises from a critical misapplication.

Schell also constructs a pattern to describe the progress of the morality heroes through their allegorical landscapes in his *Strangers and Pilgrims: from <u>The Castle of Perseverance</u> to <u>King Lear</u>*. He notes that:

> At first they pursue folly to its dead end in frustration and despair, and then they turn to show how men may be recovered from their errors by

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Tournament Tradition and the Staging of 'The Castle of Perseverance' (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1987).

[6] Rossiter 86.

[7] Rossiter 97.

[8] Rossiter 97-8.

cultivating the virtues that correspond to and correct their follies.[9]

This imposed narrative comes naturally enough, but Schell qualifies it with a direct

comparison to St. Bernard of Clairvaux's *Parabola I*. Firstly, he extracts a tripartite

theological structure from St. Bernard's work from the lines:

> Primo enim est egens et insipiens:
> postea praeceps et temerarius in prosperis;
> diende, trepidus et pusillanimus in adversis,
>
> [First he is (in a state of) yearning for completion:
> after he is thoughtless in his prosperity;
> then, fear and trembling in his adversity,][10]

And then he applies this sequence, in comparison, to the text of *The Castle of*

Perseverance:

> [...] penitence, the sorrow and anxiety Mankind feels when Penance touches
> him with his lance, is understood universally to follow the thoughtless
> arrogance of sin, as it does in St. Bernard's formulation of the psychological
> rhythm of life's pilgrimage.[11]

While Schell does not hammer this comparison home, he does encounter the

consequences of basing a structural pattern on a narrative analogue when he encounters

allegorical formulae other than those of the pilgrimage. The four daughters of God (or

the Parliament of Heaven) sequence, for instance, finds no place in his assumed structure:

"The only dramatic point it develops is narrow, circumstantial, and never resolved."[12]

His argument is partially based on Jacob Bennett's contention that the Parliament of

Heaven episode was a later edition by a different author,[13] but Eccles notes that:

> Both the main part and the conclusion use the same stanza patterns of
> thirteen, nine, and four lines; and the thirteen-line stanzas of both, though
> Bennett thinks otherwise, show the same continuity for nine lines and then
> a well-defined pause, except for three or four stanzas in the main part and
> four in the conclusion. Both parts seem to me similar in metre, alliterative
> technique, and poetic style, and neither is always clear in syntax.[14]

And, more important to this particular study, and in contrast with Schell's statements,

Eccles holds the opinion that:

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[9] Schell, *Strangers and Pilgrims: From The Castle of Perseverance to King Lear* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983) 12.

[10] Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *Opera Genuina*, ed. Jean Mabillion (Paris, 1839) vol. 3, p. 446. Quoted from Schell, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 48 (my translation).

[11] Schell, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 48.

[12] Schell, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 41.

[13] Jacob Bennett, "*The Castle of Perseverance*: Redaction, Place, and Date," *Medieval Studies*, 24 (1962) 141-52. He bases his argument on seven criteria: stanza form, metre, alliterative technique, poetical style, grammar, syntax, and *dramatic effectiveness*.

[14] Eccles xviii.

As for dramatic effectiveness, the debate in heaven whether man should be saved or damned seemed dramatic to medieval writers, or they would not have imagined the scene so often [...]. The debate is not actionless, for the Four Daughters ascend the throne of God, secure a decision, and act upon it when they rescue Mankind from the Bad Angel who is bearing him to Hell.[15]

The Parliament of Heaven 'sequence' is indeed dramatically necessary, and its "dramatic point" is, in fact, the theological crux of the entire second half of the play. We are given some earlier indication of the eminent position Mercy will come to play, for instance, by Humanum Genus himself, after Penitence has struck him with his lance and caused the wayward protagonist's initial conversion to virtue. Humanum Genus addresses Mercy in her presently absent, but unmistakably personified form:

> Mone of mercy in me is met;
>   For werldys myrþ
> In wepynge wo my wele is wet.
>   Mercy, þou muste myn stat astore.[16]

Towards the end of Humanum Genus' life, when he is well into the third major sequence of Schell's ordering (*trepidus et pusillanimus in adversis*), the debate of the heavenly daughters -- and especially Mercy's advocacy -- become paramount to the play's dramatic integrity. Humanum Genus' final lines before his death plant the seed, if not of actual suspense, then at least of some sort of impending dramatic conflict:

> To helle I schal bothe fare and fle
>   *But God me graunte of hys grace.*
>   I deye certeynly.
> Now my lyfe I haue lore.
> Myn hert brekyth, I syhe sore.
> A word may I speke no more.
>   *I putte me in Goddys mercy.*[17]

Immediately after, Anima appears from under Humanum Genus' bed at the base of the castle[18] to carry the argument further:

> 'Mercy', þis was my last tale
>   Þat euere my body was abowth.
> But Mercy helpe me in þis vale,
>   Of dampnynge drynke sore I me doute.[19]

And further:

> I hope þat God wyl helpyn and be my hed
>   For 'mercy' was my laste speche;

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[15] Eccles xviii.

[16] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 1405-8.

[17] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3001-7 (my emphasis).

[18] See Appendix A.

[19] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3008-11.

<center>Þus made my body hys ende.[20]</center>

As these last three examples show, there is often a deliberate interplay in the morality plays between the word representing the abstract quality and the name of the personification representing it. Humanum Genus conflates the notion of mercy (the concept) with that of Mercy, the character representing it. As Amanda Piesse has noted in her article "Representing Spiritual Truth in *Mankind* and *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*," this interplay is often a cause for editorial contention:

> While the use of capital letters for names is largely a matter of editorial decision in works of this period, […] this does not nullify the notion of an interplay between the words Mercy and Mankind [in the play *Mankind*] as names, and between the words as notions. Rather, it seems that the editorial decision around when or when not to put 'naming' capital letters is one much complicated by this interplay.[21]

Of course, heard aloud in the dialogue, the difference between references to 'Mercy' and 'mercy' can only be gleaned from context, gesture, direct address, or some other physical indicator, and interplay between person and concept is necessarily heightened in performance. What is certain is that *both* uses of the word are implied by Humanum Genus' lines.

At this point we reach the second lacuna in the manuscript, which Schell suggests contained a typical debate between the body and the soul,[22] and it picks up again with Malus Angelus preparing to carry Anima off to Hell. But Bonus Angelus' despairing complaints feed the mounting necessity for a debate:

> Þou muste to peyne, be ryth resun,
> With Coveytyse, for he is chesun.
> Þou art trapped ful of tresun
>   But Mercy be þi socowre.
>
> […] Rytwysnesse wyl þat þou wende
> Forthe awey wyth þe fende.
> But Mercy wyl to þe sende,
>   Of þe can I no skylle.[23]

Finally, Anima himself makes one last moan:

> Alas, Mercy, þou art to longe!
> Of sadde sorwe now may I synge.

[20] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3026-8.

[21] Amanda Piesse, "Representing Spiritual Truth in *Mankind* and *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*," *Tudor Theatre: Allegory in the Theatre* (*Collection Théta*, vol. 5) ed. Peter Lang (Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance: Tours, Belgium, 2000) 136, note 3.

[22] Schell, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 40. This seems unlikely, however, given Humanum Genus' (the body's) last lines: "*A word may I speke no more. / I putte me in Goddys mercy.*" ll. 3006-7 (my emphasis).

[23] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3043-6 and 3056-9.

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>   Holy wryt it is ful wronge
>   But Mercy pase alle þynge.[24]

By suggesting the apparent flaw of "holy wryt," Anima is in effect offering a challenge to

the moral of the play. At this point a debate on the position of God's Mercy is inevitable.

In the preceding examples, the unmistakable references to the personified Mercy

(still as yet in tentative absentia) set up an obvious conflict in the audience's minds,

underlining the importance of the daughters' ensuing debate. This renders Schell's

statement that:

> Neither the peculiar emphasis on God's mercy developed during the course of
> the debate nor the fact that at its conclusion Mankind is saved from hell could
> have been predicted from the action of the play as it has developed,[25]

somewhat absurd, and his externally assembled sequences fail to encompass *The Castle of

Perseverance*. His attempt to use non-dramatic analogues to elucidate the dramatic

structure of the play proves precarious and insufficient.

Bevington also finds structure revealed through the play's analogues, identifying

what he calls "several distinguishable plots joined in sequence: the struggle between the

Virtues and Vices for Man's soul, the coming of Death to Mankind, the debate of body and

soul, and the parliament of heaven or the debate of the four daughters of God."[26] His

plotting is similar to Schell's, then, in that it imposes dramatic movement and structure

based on the position and success of a series of medieval tropes.

Fifield points out the limitations of such approaches, however, contending that:

> any narrative conflict portrayed in the frequently cited analogues results
> from a duality of body and soul or of Vice and Virtue, rather than from
> potential alternatives from human choices.[27]

She bases her analysis on the argument that sequences such as Rossiter's and analogue-

based approaches such as Bevington's arise from "a confusion of motif with rhetorical

function and [...] an inaccurate definition of the dramatic conflict."[28] In other words, she

makes a distinction between the traditional motifs gleaned from sources and analogues and

the rhetorical elements specifically employed to propagate action and dramatic conflict

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[24] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3060-3.

[25] Schell, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 41.

[26] David Bevington, *Medieval Drama* (Boston, London, Atlanta, etc.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975) 796.

[27] Merle Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will: The Five-action Structure of the English Morality Play*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New Series no. 5 (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1974) 6.

[28] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 8.

in the plays. This is quite an insightful critique, calling many of the previous critical approaches to the morality genre into question and giving attention to the morality plays' existence as *dramatic* works. But the alternative structure Fifield offers for the five moralities (she lists them as *The Pride of Life*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Mankind*, *Wisdom*, and the Digby *Mary Magdalen*) does not itself stand up to careful scrutiny.

She founds her study on the postion of certain rhetorical ingredients -- namely intrigue, action, and catastrophe -- which serve as building blocks for each "act". She offers this definition for *intrigue*:

> The protagonists and the antagonists formulate offensive and defensive plans to achieve their resolutions. Each plan which is enacted is an *intrigue*.[29]

She follows on to define *action* as "the conclusion of an intrigue and the explanation of the following intrigue," *catastrophe* simply as "the climax of proceeding events," and she differentiates all of these from *motif* by defining it as "a traditional subject which may or may not include intrigue, depending upon the materials associated with the motif."[30] Fifield delineates blocks of dramatic movement in the morality plays ("acts") by imposing her *intrigue-action-catastrophe* structure onto analogous or semi-analogous pieces of narrative within each play. Each block represents an act, and -- as will be demonstrated -- extra narrative material is trimmed away or, where needed, imaginatively added to make her recipe come out right.

The shortcomings of Fifield's argument, however, become apparent as she extrapolates her "five-action structure" during the course of her brief work *The Rhetoric of Free Will*. Even the section headings of her work are problematic. In the second chapter, for instance -- which delineates the "first action" of the morality play -- is divided into two distinct sections: "Typical" and "Atypical". Examples of "Typical" first-action morality plays are listed as *The Pride of Life*, *Mankind*, and *Everyman*. The reason for these distinctions, Fifield explains, is because these plays, in their opening scenes, tend to "introduce the protagonists and the antagonists, they define the cause of the dramatic conflict, and they explain the first intrigue."[31] After introducing the primary players, the

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[29] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 8.
[30] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, iii.
[31] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 14.

first "intrigue" is enacted, in which the Mankind figure is physically placed or intellectually wooed into a presently stable yet increasingly precarious position of good: Mankind accepts Mercy's sermoning; Everyman is set on his way towards a Christian death. Fifield includes *The Pride of Life* in this group because she suggests that the King of Life is essentially heedless anyway and remains presently unthreatened by any antagonist, so that the play's first intrigue "expresses the degree of the protagonist's sin, rather than his intent to maintain a virtuous life."[32] Protagonists are designated and are set out on their natural way.

Fifield describes *The Castle of Perseverance* as an "atypical" first-action morality because its opening scenes do not fit the standard: "A morality written to formula would end with the restoration of Humanum Genus to the castle."[33] This raises the immediate question: can the narrative direction and scene-structure of three very different plays constitute a "formula" for the genre? In other words, can three plays -- out of a group only totalling five -- be called "typical"? She designates the Digby *Mary Magdalen* as "atypical" as well, because its opening scenes have "materials extraneous to the morality sequence."[34] Two of Fifield's five morality plays do not fit the pattern for the first-action.

The impossibility of successfully identifying five unique acts that correspond in all five, very different plays is apparent enough. The play of *Everyman*, for instance, sees its protagonist in preparation for death throughout its relatively brief nine hundred and twenty-one lines. *The Castle of Perseverance*, with its over three thousand, six hundred lines -- spanning everything from birth to Judgment -- can hardly be said to function on the same structural level. In other words, those movements within the narratives which Fifield points to as delineating simultaneous actions are nothing more than glimmers of vaguely common motifs, ultimately occasional and only coincidentally paralleled. And, while agreeing that non-dramatic analogue-based studies

> emphasize the [temporal] continuity of particular subjects, often in isolation
> from each other and from the totality of the plays in which the subjects recur,
> their critical technique precludes the rhetorical organization of the whole;[35]

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[32] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 13.

[33] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 16.

[34] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 15. Presumably, she is referring to Tiberius Caeser's (the "Inperator's") opening rant, who proves to be an adversary of Christ, rather than that of the protagonist, Mary. A typical morality "formula" apparently has no room for sub- or parallel plots.

[35] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 24.

I would suggest that Fifield is guilty of a similarly misguided emphasis. Her argument imposes analogous actions and sequences of actions onto five quite different dramatic narratives. The structure of each of the morality plays is just as "isolated" from the other four structures as the individual homiletic motifs are from the subjects they ultimately become on the morality stage. But there is yet a baby in the bath water.

It is important to investigate the non-dramatic analogous material and how that material informs the individual dramatic structures of the morality plays. However, it is equally important -- as Fifield makes clear -- not to fall victim to "a confusion of motif with rhetorical function"[36] when comparing the analogous material, as many of the critics previously discussed have done. It proves difficult, if not impossible, to conclude a single, formulaic structure with regard to five plays of variously differing lengths, audiences, places, and dates of conception. Instead, I would suggest that the structures of each of the morality plays must be dealt with individually, and study should be based neither solely on a comparison of apparently similar action sequences within the texts nor solely on the non-dramatic analogous material. Only by positing some of the plenteous non-dramatic material against the allegorical fabric of the text -- and then, by extension, examining the way in which the play's allegory informs its individual dramatic structure -- can a grounded understanding of a dramatic work such as *The Castle of Perseverance* be advanced.

Choosing to approach *The Castle of Perseverance* in this way, I should first expound some of the other more popular and often more seductive pathways through which the text can and has been examined. The *staging* of the play is of paramount importance -- as it is, indeed, for all early English drama. The ascendancy of the proscenium stage during the seventeenth century transformed the very face of English drama,[37] leaving the inclusive and naturally dramatic presentation of the early drama in pre-Renaissance obscurity. A knowledge of what this meant to our modern understanding of 'drama' is important, and Margreta de Grazia offers the suggestion that "Cartesian or modern knowledge requires [...] the enframing or enclosing of what is to be known -- a

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[36] Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will*, 8.

[37] Margreta de Grazia, "World Pictures, Modern Periods, and the Early Stage," *A New History of Early English Drama*, eds. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) 18. She states that by 1660 "the proscenium stage had replaced the platform stage."

cordoning off of the object from the subject."[38] The manuscript of *The Castle of Perseverance* uniquely exists as an extensive piece of pre-Shakespearean English drama that comes to us with a detailed stage plan intact. This gives us a rare opportunity to examine the nuts-and-bolts of stage design of a pre-proscenium drama -- before that time when *"scene* as locale turns into *scene* as backdrop."[39]

The stage plan in the manuscript of *The Castle of Perseverance* gives us several important details concerning the play's earliest staging which figure preeminently in the play's allegorical groundwork. We are told the relative position of the central tower (the "castle") with regard to the five surrounding, geographically ordinal scaffolds; the position of certain properties, such as Covetousness' "cupbord" and Humanum Genus' bed; and details of some of the costuming and special effects.[40] It is difficult, given the necessary lack of scale in the diagram, to assume too much concerning the exact intended position of each set piece, the audience, and the subscribed "dyche" or "þe watyr abowte þe place." Some elements of the ongoing critical debate on the diagram should be mentioned, however -- especially when they occasionally develop or disarm allegorical relationships in the playing.

Of particular relevance here is an identification and definition of "place" (*placea, platea,*[41] or *locus*) and the relative position of the audience with regard to it. The most comprehensive (although highly speculative) study of the staging of *The Castle of Perseverance* is Richard Southern's *The Medieval Theatre in the Round: A Study of the Staging of 'The Castle of Perseverance' and Related Matters.* Southern bases his arrangement of the play's properties based on references to the "place" (or occasionally the "green") in the play and in the stage plan: "I think it will appear that the *place* was in more senses than one the basis of a system of presentation in the medieval theatre."[42] Meg Twycross supports this theory, and clarifies the term further, saying:

The central *place* acts as a No Man's Land into which the characters descend

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[38] de Grazia 19.

[39] de Grazia 20.

[40] For convenience, I have reproduced, by adaptation, the stage plan from the manuscript of *The Castle of Perseverance* in Appendix A, and all references to the plan may be correlated with it.

[41] Southern suggests that *placea* is a corruption (42). The OED offers the same explanation.

[42] Southern 26.

to converse, fight or otherwise interact.[43]

Southern creates his vision of the intended set of *The Castle of Perseverance* from references to the "place" or similar inferences:

1. MUNDUS: Þorwe þis propyr pleyn place [l. 160];
2. MUNDUS: 3e, syrys semly, all same syttyth on syde [l. 163];
3. BELYAL: Gadyr 3ou togedyr, 3e boyis, on þis grene! [l. 227];
4. CARO: Þerfor on hylle Syttyth all stylle [ll. 271-2];
5. INVIDIA: I clymbe fro þis crofte Wyth Mankynde to syttyn on
   lofte [ll. 1144-5];
6. DETRACCIO: And all 3ene maydnys on 3one playn [l. 1764];
7. MUNDUS: Sche schal dey upon þis grene [l. 1892];
8. BELYAL: Upon 3one grene grese [l. 1907];
9. BELYAL: To 3one feld lete us fle [l. 1914];
10. PACIENCIA: I schal þe cacche fro þis crofte [l. 2144];
11. SOLICITUDO: Wyth Coueytyse goth on þis grene [l. 2632];
12. GARCIO: I go glad upon þis grounde [l. 2910].[44]

From references such as these, Southern recreates the set and properties of the stage plan, with the castle that "stondyth in þe myddys of þe place," circled by the "place" itself -- referred to intermittently as "þis grene", "þis crofte", "3one playn", "3one feld", and "þis grounde".

We have, then, an area of ground encompassing the castle, primarily denoted as the "place", in which the players are meant to interact when they are not on the scaffolds. This is further supported by four references from the stage plan:

1. that previously mentioned calling for the castle
   to be in the midst of the "place"
2. "Þis is þe watyr abowte þe place"
3. "lete nowth ouyrmany stytelerys be withinne þe plase"
4. "Þe iiij dowterys [...] schul pleye in þe place altogedyr tyl
   þey brynge up þe sowle."

Finally, three of the Latin stage directions in the text make reference to the *placeam*: *Tunc descendit in placeam pariter* (l. 490), *Tunc uerberabit eos in placeam* (l. 1822), and *Tunc descendent in placeam* (l. 1968).

Southern's reconstruction posits the audience *within* the "place", surrounded by the five scaffolds, which are, in turn, surrounded by the ditch filled with water.[45] It is this primary criterion of Southern's arrangement that has caused much critical dissent

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[43] Meg Twycross, "The Theatricality of Medieval English Plays," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 58.

[44] Miyajima provides a similar, but erroneous list of Southern's references, 38-9.

[45] Southern 22-3.

since its publication, chiefly because of the sheer size of the construction required for a

single performance. Miyajima, for example, asserts that:

> all this notion proposed by Southern implying a whole army of sappers,
> going from town to town and digging each time these substantial water
> channels some 550 feet long and upwards of 10 feet wide and 4 feet deep
> is surely unacceptable.[46]

Happé also criticizes Southern's proposal, stating, "we cannot finally concede that

Southern's reconstruction is more than a conjecture since it is open to a number of

objections."[47] His primary objection, similar to Miyajima's, contends that:

> If the play were on tour the construction of the ditch and mound would
> give rise to practical problems, not the least of which is the sheer size of
> the earth-moving operation at each site.[48]

As the previous examples have demonstrated, much dissension is created around

Southern's proposed staging of the play based on the size and scope of preparations

entailed by a circumferential moat. But what are the allegorical ramifications? The

practical benefit of Southern's positioning of the moat is that the audience could be

charged admission when entering the "place", either when crossing a bridge or when

passing through a gate if "strongly barryd al abowt."[49] However, there is no evidence in

the text itself that would suggest money was collected from the audience -- the earliest

text to do so is generally agreed to be *Mankind*, about a half-a-century later.[50] Southern's

proposal, then, is merely imaginative speculation: plausible, but not provable based on

the surviving texts.

With regards to the play's allegory, Happé has expressed the most conspicuous

problem with placing the ditch outside of the action of the play:

> The main drawback of Southern's concept is that the ditch can play no
> part in the allegorical and dramatic effects of the action.[51]

The moat could act as a defence for the castle itself, both physically and allegorically, but

only if it is located *inside* the scaffolds (and, consequently, around the actual "place" of

acting).

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[46] Miyajima 41.

[47] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 26.

[48] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 26. *The Castle of Perseverance* as a touring production will be discussed later.

[49] Southern 22-6.

[50] Eccles xlii.

[51] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 27.

One scene in particular suggests the physical presence of the moat around the castle. It seems to be employed by the character Sloth during the second battle sequence (ll. 2235-409). In a verbal volley towards Business, Sloth intends to aid the other vices in their attack:

> ACCIDIA: Ware, war, I delue wyth a spade.
>   Men calle me þe lord Syr Slowe.
>   Gostly grace I spylle and schade;
>   Fro þe watyr of grace þis dyche I fowe.
>   3e schulyn com ryth inowe
>   Be þis dyche drye, be bankys brede.[52]

After a warning to the audience ("A, good men, be war now all [...]," l. 2339), Business explains Sloth's actions more specifically:

> [...] he makyth þis dyke drye
>   To puttyn mankynde to dystresse.
>   He makyth dedly synne a redy weye
>   Into þe Castel of Goodnesse.[53]

She then thwarts Sloth's efforts with her prayer beads (l. 2358).

A subsequent, but less pertinent reference to the presence of the moat (or to a body of water) occurs later when Garcio is delivering his lines over the near-dead body of Humanum Genus:

> I go glad upon þis grounde
>   To putte Mankynde out of hys þryfte.
> I trowe he stynkyth þis ilke stounde.
>   Into a lake I schal hym lyfte.[54]

Catherine Belsey, however, points out that this likely refers to the lake of Hell or oblivion, rather than any allegorically inappropriate castle moat.[55]

As far as the former example goes, Steven Pederson offers a convincing argument that -- while not necessarily precluding the existence of an allegorically (and theatrically) useful moat around the castle -- does preclude the necessity of its presence during the battle sequences.

Before Sloth carries on with his spade, Chastity also makes reference to the "water of grace":

> CASTITAS: I, Chastyte, haue power in þis place
>   Þe, Lechery, to bynd and bete.

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[52] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2326-31.
[53] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2352-.5
[54] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2910-3.
[55] Belsey 126.

<div style="text-align:center">

Maydyn Marye, *well of grace,*
Schal qwenche þat fowle hete.
Mater et Virgo, extingue carnales concupiscentias![56]

</div>

Shortly after, we find that her opponent, Lechery, has been duly drenched:

<div style="text-align:center">

LUXURIA: Out on Chastyte, be þe rode!
Sche hathe me dayschyd and so drenchyd.
3yt haue sche þe curs of God
For al my fere þe qwene hath qwenchyd.[57]

</div>

While Chastity's "well of grace" and Sloth's "watyr of grace" could refer to a physical moat, it is almost possible, in light of the dialogue, that Chastity has dumped water on Lechery, as if from a bucket.[58] It should be pointed out that Sloth does make reference to "þis dyche" (l. 2329) and "þis dyche drye" (l. 2331), which, taken literally, would seem to suggest the presence of some sort of theatrical furrow near the castle. But Pederson suggest that:

> if Lechery has just been drenched with a 'well of grace,' Sir Sloth could quickly cover up the remains of the water which has spilled to the ground, for he refers to the 'watyr of grace' which he tries to clear away, or divert. Sloth being symbolic of 'spiritual dryness,' realizes that even one drop of grace could thwart his enterprise.[59]

Pederson may have missed an important piece of iconography sometimes associated with the sin of *acedia*, however, which hinges on its association with water. In his work *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature*, Sigfried Wenzel points to references by Ovid, Bromyard, and Farinator -- each of whom associate sloth with slow or stagnating water.[60] It is apparent from examples such as these that Sloth's association with the "watyr of grace" in the play is most likely associated with a larger iconographic tradition and is not an isolated metaphor within the play. But does this mean that Sloth is actively removing water from the moat, or is he digging up the "watyr of grace" that Pederson believes has been cast down on him by Lechery?

Pederson insists that because evil characters are allowed within that area which would be barred by the proposed moat, its allegorical position would be called into question. Covetousness, for example, must take money from his cupboard "be þe beddys

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[56] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2300-4, (my emphasis).

[57] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2387-90.

[58] Pederson 85.

[59] Pederson 85.

[60] Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960) 105. He quotes Bromyard's *Summa praedicantium*, A.VIII, art. 5, where *acedia* is equated

feet" -- beneath the castle (and, consequently, inside any protective moat) -- to give to Humanum Genus. In fact, no part of the play ever makes reference to crossing a bridge or wading a moat of any kind. Beyond this, the stage plan offers an alternative to a water-filled ditch -- "or ellys þat it be strongly barryd al abowt" -- that defeats the purpose of an allegorically-charged moat.

This leads Pederson to the conclusion that:

> A moat would fulfill no didactic purpose, for it would necessarily need to surround both an area protected and free from sin, and an area synonymous with sin.[61]

It must be concluded that the presence of a moat directly around the castle is unlikely, not only because the text itself ignores and practically precludes the notion, but also because any allegorical significance it might render to the set is ultimately denied by the text.

With regard to staging, Southern proposes an analogous relationship with the only other medieval English drama to survive with a stage plan intact: the Cornish cycle commonly called the *Ordinalia*.[62] While the surviving manuscript was copied in the fifteenth century, the cycle itself has been dated a century earlier.[63] The cycle was intended for three days of performance, with Old Testament material played the first day, the Passion on the second, and the resurrection and its aftermath on the third. From the stage plan accompanying the *Origo Mundi* (the first play in the cycle),[64] an impression is given of the arrangement of the first day's performance. Eight *sedes* are arranged in a circle, with Heaven in the upper part of the diagram and Hell to the left.

While virtually all of the *sedes* required in the play are indicated on the stage plan, it remains a very minimalistic rendering. On the whole, in fact, the stage plans accompanying the *Ordinalia* tell very little about the actual design of the sets, and all that can be safely gleaned is that the *sedes* were arranged in a particular order and in the round.

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with "slow water which can be crossed by serpents;" Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*, I, 5-6; and Farinator's *Lumen animae*, tit. XIV.D, F, and L -- see notes 30 and 32, p. 235.

[61] Pederson 95.

[62] Southern xiii. More recent information concerning the Cornish *Ordinalia* can be found in Brian O. Murdoch's "The Cornish Medieval Drama," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theare*, 211-39; Janet A. Baker's *The Cornish Ordinalia: a Critical Study* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980); and Robert Longsworth's *The Cornish Ordinalia: Religion and Dramaturgy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

[63] Murdoch 211.

[64] Reproduced by Richard Beadle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 218; and Lois Potter, ed. *The Revels History of Drama in English*, vol. 1 (London and New York: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1983) plate 4.

Many scholars (including Southern) have suggested that the original *Ordinalia* was intended for performance in the Cornish "rounds" or *plan-an-guary*,[65] based on an early reference to the rounds. Richard Carew in his *Survey of Cornwall* (1602):

> The *gwary* miracle, in English, a miracle play, is a kind of interlude, compiled in Cornish out of some scripture history, with that grossness which accompanied the Roman *vestus comedia*. For representing it, they raise an earthen ampitheatre in some open field, having the diameter of his enclosed plain some forty or fifty foot.[66]

We have no way of testing Carew's account, however, because the two "rounds" that survive in Cornwall -- one at Parranporth and the other at St. Just in Penwith[67] -- were originally constructed several centuries before the appearance of the *Ordinalia*, and, according to Meg Twycross

> there is no direct evidence that these were used for plays rather than other games, and their diameters are three times the size of the forty to fifty feet described by Carew.[68]

Southern positions the ditch in his reconstruction of the stage set of *The Castle of Perseverance* based on the circular ditch surrounding the round at Parranporth.[69] But the evidence connecting the fourteenth-century *Ordinalia* with the existing Cornish rounds is, for the most part, tenuous and second-hand. This is not to say that the cycle was not performed in one of the rounds at some time.[70] But links between the cycle and the rounds remain conjecture based on secondary evidence. Beyond this, for Southern to reconstruct *The Castle of Perseverance* stage plan based on ancient gaming rounds in Cornwall is to stretch probability.

Where, then, was the ditch? The stage plan clearly places it *inside* the scaffolds, and, as was discussed earlier, the preparation and sheer size of a ditch surrounding the entire set of scaffolds is impractical. It has also been demonstrated that a ditch surrounding the inner 'place' and the castle (as a moat) need not be allegorically applicable nor is it specifically called for by the text. From the stage plan we are told:

> Þis is þe watyr abowte þe place, if any dyche may be mad þer

[65] Including A. C. Cawley, "The Staging of Medieval Drama," in *The Revels History of Drama in English*, vol. 1, 16.

[66] Richard Carew, *The Survey of Cornwall* (1602), ed. F. E. Halliday (London: Adams & Dart, 1969) 144.

[67] Murdoch 58.

[68] Twycross 58.

[69] Murdoch points out that the other round (at St. Just) -- which Southern does not use in his comparison -- has no ditch, 214.

[70] As a matter of fact, Paula Neuss has noted that the Bristol University Drama Department staged a successful performance in the Parran round in 1969 in her article "On the Staging of *The Creacion of the World*," *Medieval English Drama: A Casebook*. Ed. Peter Happé (London: Macmillan, 1984) 191.

it schal be played, or ellys þat it be strongely barryd al abowt,

and any further elucidation must remain speculative.

It stands to reason, based on the secondary evidence, that it was either a specially

prepared ditch filled with water, or a general barrier (when the ditch wasn't an option),

that circled the 'place' of playing but not the scaffolds themselves. Part of its purpose

must have been, as indicated by the stage plan, to bar something from entry: "ellys þat it

be strongely barryd al abowt." But we have no evidence suggesting that it barred unpaying

spectators as Southern has suggested,[71] especially since there is no contemporary precedent

for such a commercial production. Whereas Happé seems to suggest that it serves as a

defence against the evil characters gaining access to the castle,[72] there is no direct

evidence -- either in the stage plan or in the text itself -- that upholds this notion. More

than this, the fact that the evil characters frequently enter the area beneath the castle,

without mention of any impediment, seems to deny this notion even further. We can only

conclude that the "dyche" (or a strong barrier) was most likely intended to prevent

audience members from gaining access to the area within the scaffolds -- the "place"

where the action frequently occurs.

The most frequently cited example showing the audience in this position is the

roughly contemporaneous "Martyrdom of St. Apollonia" by Jean Fouquet, from *The Hours of*

Etienne Chevalier (c. 1460).[73] While continental in origin, its obvious arrangement of

ordinal scaffolds with a central acting place has marked it as "a possible visual

parallel"[74] to *The Castle of Perseverance*. It clearly shows audience members sitting on

scaffolds between those used by the actors themselves in order to better view the action of

the play without disturbing it. While it is precarious to conclude that the audience of *The*

Castle of Perseverance would have been on raised scaffolds (or on a raised hill, as

Southern suggests),[75] it should be noted that raising the audience above the area of

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[71] Southern 22-6.

[72] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 27.

[73] From the *Musée Condé*, Chantilly, reprinted in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 57; also in Harris, 116; Pederson, figure 2; and Southern, 91 (although he still posits the audence *within* the 'place' in his own diagram, figure 21).

[74] Twycross 58.

[75] Southern 54. He backs up his proposition with Flesh's request to the audience in ll. 271-2: "Þerfor on hylle / Syttyth all stylle." Eccles points out, however, that this "may be only a rhyme-tag, and when there was no ditch there would be no hill," xxiii.

playing does give it a visual advantage and is supported by the presentation in Fouquet's painting.

Finally, two of the directions in the stage plan make reference to individuals (besides the actors themselves) in association with the "place":

1. [...] þe castel of perseueraunse þat stondyth
   In þe myddys of þe place, but *lete no men sytte þer,*
   for lettynge of syt, for þer schal be þe best of all.

2. [...] lete nowth ouyrmany stytelerys be wythinne þe plase.[76]

The first of these two examples leads Southern to surmise that:

> The inference is very important, and, I think, inescapable -- that members of the audience could and did sit in *other* parts of the place, but it had to be seen that they left the centre clear.[77]

But, again, this seems to be mere conjecture. The inference is reasonable, but hardly "inescapable". All that can be wholly deduced from the direction is that no people were to be seated within the midst of the place so that visibility could remain unobstructed -- the centre being reserved for that highly cryptic "best of all." It does not directly imply that audience members would be seated within other parts of the place, although it does not prevent the idea.

As far as the reference to "styelerys" in the second example goes, Southern suggests that they acted as crowd-control personnel: maintaining order, freeing lanes through the audience for the actors, and leading the audience from one scaffold to the next, when necessary.[78] This would certainly explain their presence within the "place".

Based on his detailed study of medieval tournament personnel,[79] however, Pederson proposes a different intention for the "stytelerys":

> I contend, then, that the stytelerys in *The Castle of Perseverance* were part of the support cast (extras) who, along with the major cast of characters, played a part in the performance of this play.[80]

Once again, the text itself does not qualify the presence of such "extras" participating in the action, but the presence of marshalling men is heavily precedented in records of

[76] Appendix A (my emphasis).
[77] Southern 23.
[78] Southern 81-4.
[79] Pederson 47-59
[80] Pederson 56.

medieval games, tournaments, and the *pas d'armes*.[81] As Pederson points out, the OED defines "stightle" as a verb meaning "To dispose, arrange, set in order; to prepare, make ready; to control, rule, govern; to direct [...]." He also draws attention to a second possible derivative in the OED: "stickler" (earlier form "stightler"), which is defined as:

> A moderator or umpire at a tournament, a wrestling or fencing match, etc., appointed to see fair play, and to part combatants when they have fought enough. Hence one who intervenes as mediator between combatants or disputants.[82]

So it would seem that Southern's proposal for the "stytelerys" is based on a mis-identification of their proper function, at least as defined in the OED. They need not be crowd-control officers at all -- especially since the text makes no reference to the presence of an audience within the acting place. With all of the characters' comings and goings, and with the numerous ascents and descents to and from the scaffolds, there is never a reference to audience members within the "place".[83]

The stytelerys could have easily functioned in a similar, theatrically-based position as the marshal, the king of arms, or the herald of the medieval tournament and *pas d'armes*.[84] Their involvement in the production may have involved the marshalling of the actors themselves, so that they become speechless characters within the framework of the play. While there is no direct textual evidence of their participation in the unfolding of the plot, it is possible that "they insured the rules of chivalry were observed, and mediated during the mock siege if necessary."[85] This idea is not precluded by the stage plan, the text itself, or the definitions of "stightle" or of "stickler" in the OED; and it finds precedent in the medieval tournament tradition.

Pederson's ultimate decision, however, that "*The Castle of Perseverance* was performed in what was essentially a list"[86] cannot be upheld without question. As he admits, "solid evidence is, in all probability, non-existent,"[87] and the stage plan clearly

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[81] Pederson 47-59.

[82] OED, as cited by Pederson (51-2).

[83] In Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres*, for example, B commands: "Geve rome there, syrs, for God avowe! / Thei wold cum in if thei might for you." *The Plays of Henry Medwall*, ed. Alan H. Nelson (Cambridge/Totowa, NJ: D. S. Brewer/Rowman & Littlefield, 1980) part 1, ll. 193-4.

[84] All of which are discussed by Pederson, 47-8.

[85] Pederson 57.

[86] Pederson 51.

[87] Pederson 57.

indicates a purpose-built theatre rather than the specific employment of an existing tournament ground. The reference in the Banns to the touring production being played "At . . . on þe grene" (l. 134) gives us some indication of a more likely playing-ground.

To conclude, the stage plan and the textual evidence indicate that the set of *The Castle of Perseverance* included five concentrically arranged scaffolds around a water-filled ditch or barricade surrounding the castle of the virtues in the midst of the "place". It further indicates that the audience sat or stood outside of the ditch or barricade -- either on scaffolds, a hill, or on the ground. Any further conjecture cannot be supported by the text itself and, therefore, exists beyond the play's allegorical framework and beyond the examination at hand. What must constantly be remembered, however, is the ever-present involvement of the audience within the allegorical action of the play. This is true of most of the early English drama[88] before the rise of proscenium presentation during the sixteenth century (as noted earlier). The audience need not be within the "place" itself to take an active part in the play's allegory, and -- as we shall see -- the characters rarely allow the audience to drift off into that present-day position of obscure spectator. However, the presence of the audience as an active member in the drama must be maintained for a full understanding of its allegory. This will become increasingly significant during our examination of the text itself.

The existing manuscript of *The Castle of Perseverance*, dated about 1425,[89] survives as part of the Macro Plays (also including *Wisdom* and *Mankind*) and remains the oldest complete morality play written in English in modern possession. The date has been determined in lieu of the character Superbia's suggestion that Humanum Genus wear

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[88] Just to give a very few pertinent examples:
--New Guise tricks the audience into paying to bring Titivillus, thus aiding Mankind's fall:
        Now gostly to owr purpos, worschypfull souerence,
        We intende to gather mony, yf yt plesse yowr neclygence,
        For a man wyth a hede þat ys of grett omnipotens. (*Mankind*, ll. 459-61)
-- Frequently the audience is asked to adjudicate a debate, as in Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres*:
        [...] what so ever I shall speke in this audience,
        Eyther of myn owne meritis or of hys insolence,
        Yet fyrst unto you all, syrs, I make this request:
        That it wolde lyke you to construe it to the best. (part 2, ll. 588-91)
-- The mystery cycles, because of their highly public presentation, constantly draw the audience into the story. The most effective probably being Jesus' moving address to the audience in the York "Crucifixion" (late 14th cent.):
        Al men that walkis by waye or strete,
        Takes tente ye schalle no travayle tyne,
        By-holdes myn heede, myn handis, and my feete,
        And fully feele nowe, or ye fyne,
        Yf any mournyng may be meete
        Or myscheve mesured unto myn.
From "The Crucifixion" (*York* XXXV), *The York Plays*, ed. Richard Beadle (London: Edward Arnold, 1982) ll. 253-8.
[89] Eccles viii.

"longe *crakows*"[90] on his shoes, a fashion of pointed shoes popular between 1382 and

1425.[91] Of course, the original date of the play's composition can hardly be determined

precisely from such a reference. Eccles assumes a date of 1400-1425, which would place it

at least forty years earlier than *Mankind*, the next oldest morality play.[92] The dialect

indicates East Midlands (Furnivall suggests Norfolk), although there is a reference to the

gallows of Canwick (l. 2421), near Lincoln.[93]

Regardless of the manuscript's exact origin, however, the Banns of the play

clearly imply that *The Castle of Perseverance* was meant to travel:

> PRIMUS VEXILLATOR: [...] we purpose us to playe
> Þis day seueneyt before ȝou in syth
> At . . . on þe grene in ryal aray,

and:

> SECUNDUS VEXILLATOR: [...] ȝe manly men of . . ., þer
> Crist saue ȝou all!
> He maynten ȝoure myrthys and kepe ȝou fro greve
> Þat born was of Mary myld in an ox stall.
> Now mery be all . . . and wel mot ȝe cheve,
> All oure feythful frendys, þer fayre mote ȝe fall![94]

So, far from being any sort of experimental or once-off production, given the

massive amounts of preparatory work involved in staging[95] coupled with the fact that the

play was toured (or at least was *meant* to be toured), the play was probably more of a

dramatic, theological showpiece than a modern reader might first suppose.

Despite the somewhat sporadic survival of early morality manuscripts as a whole

(as compared to the mystery cycles), it does appear that the morality play form enjoyed a

"continuous and lively existence" during the century or so before Shakespeare, and was

indeed "the most popular form of the professional drama"[96] of its day. This is best

attested by the copiousness of the moral interlude during the fifteenth century, briefly

discussed in the opening chapter, and broadly defined by Holman and Harmon as:

A kind of drama, developed in the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-

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[90] *The Castle of Perseverance* l. 1059 (my emphasis).

[91] Eccles xi.

[92] Eccles xxxviii.

[93] Detailed information about the manuscript and its probable origin can be found in Eccles' introduction, x-xi.

[94] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 132-4 and 145-9. The ". . ." in lines 134, 145, and 148 indicate a conscious blank left in the manuscript for the insertion of the appropriate town name.

[95] Twycross 64, and Harris 161.

[96] Spivack 61.

century England, that played an important part in the secularization of the drama [...]. Some *interludes* [...] appear to have developed from the *morality play*, [...].[97]

Correcting this last understatement, the moral interlude is the obvious direct descendent of the medieval morality play, at least with regard to its form, tendency towards allegorical presentation, and didacticism; and the moral interlude's overwhelming popularity during the Tudor period[98] reinforces the certainty of the previous persuasiveness of the morality form. Indeed, David Bevington points out that the morality plays "proved to be more adaptable to new ideologies and social conditions," and "could reach large audiences and were able to disseminate ideas that might otherwise have been restricted to a learned few," and hence "became remarkably numerous"[99] in the late-medieval period.

It is my suggestion, then, given my earlier notion that the morality plays came late during the arch of Roman Catholic establishment and dominance in England, combined with Tydeman's statement that medieval drama "was a form of theatre designed to confirm the devout in their beliefs and intended as an occasional augmentation of the functions of the divine office"[100] as well as proof of the general persuasiveness of the morality form in general, that the original audiences of *The Castle of Perseverance* would have been accustomed to and would even have expected both its subject matter and its remarkable form of dramatic allegorical presentation.

G. R. Owst has done much to reaffirm the copious influence of medieval homiletic material and mendicant preaching on the literature of the late-medieval period, and the drama that survives is no exception. In his two seminal works, *Preaching in Medieval England* and *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, he presents an extensive and

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[97] Holman and Harmon 250. Harris attempts to summarize this development, 169.

[98] To point out a few, from Spivack's bibliography, (of which he pointedly lists all under the title "morality plays"): *Albion Knight* (1537-65), *All for Money*(1559-77), *Appius and Virginia* (1559-67), *Common Conditions* (1576), *Conflict of Conscience* (1575), *Enough is as Good as a Feast* (1560-9), *Free Will* (1560-1), *Good Order* (1500-33), *Hickscorner*(1513-6), *Impatient Poverty* (1547-58), *King John* (1530-6), *Liberality and Prodigality* (1567-8), *Like Will to Like* (1562-8), *The Longer Thou Livest, the More Fool Thou Art* (1560-8), *Play of Love* (1530-3), *Lusty Juventus* (1547-53), *Magnificence* (1513-6), *Marriage Between Wit and Wisdom* (c. 1579), *Marriage of Wit and Science* (1568-70), *Minds* (1575-?), *Mundus et Infans* (1500-20), *Nature* (1490-1501), *Nature of the Four Elements* (1517-8), *New Custom* (1559-73), *Nice Wanton* (1547-53), *Play of the Weather* (1530-3), *Respublica* (1553), *Satire of the Three Estates* (1535-40), *Somebody or Others*, or *The Spoiling of Lady Verity* (c. 1550), *Temperance and Humility* (c. 1530), *Three Ladies of London* (1581), *Three Laws* (1530-6), *Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1589), *Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576), *Wealth and Health* (1553-7), *Wit and Science* (1536-46), and *Youth* (1513-29); 484-93.

[99] Bevington 791, 794, and 795.

[100] Tydeman 8.

illuminating collection of examples from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, demonstrating the relationship between primary medieval homiletic motifs and their literary developments. He states that:

> In the Middle Ages, [...] writers of popular allegoric verse and drama went to no exalted sources, to no elegant *trouvère* or hoary commentator for their apparatus and ideas. [...] They drew then naturally, [...] from the very phrases of popular homiletic discussion circulating around them, whence came [...] much else that is characteristic of their repertory.[101]

The astute dramatisation of perseverance (or a similar virtuous attribute) as a castle, defended by virtues and barraged by vices, is developed in much of the homiletic material of the medieval period before its dramatic employment in *The Castle of Perseverance*. According to Owst, a castle taking on human characteristics originates in scripture, from a medieval allegorical exegesis of a passage in Luke (10: 38):[102]

> Factum est autem, dum irent, ipse intrauit in quoddam castellum: & mulier quaedam Martha nomine, excepit illum in domum suam [...].[103]

This passage, where Jesus *intrauit in quoddam castellum*, led many medieval theologians to personify the *castellum* as the Virgin, in whom Jesus would find virtuous security. In the fourteenth century we find John Mirk explaining this idea -- commenting on St. Anselm's previous observations[104] -- in his sermon "In Die Assumpcionis":

> Then, for holy chyrch makyþ melody þys day of þys holy lady, and rdyþ and syngyþ bysyly of hur worschip, mony han meruayl qwhy þe gospell of þys day makyth no mencyon of hur, but only of too sustyrs, Martha and Mari, [...].
> But þey þat wyll rede þat Seynt Ancelme sayþe þerof, þay schull se well þat þys gospell partaynyth all to our lady and to þe lyfyng of hur. Scho was þe castell þat Ihesu entred into; for ryght as a castell hath dyuerse propyrtyes þat longyth to a castell þat schall be byge and strong, ryght so had our lady dyuerse uertues þat made hur abolle befor all woymen forto receyue Cryst.[105]

Owst points out several other medieval examples of a similar allegorical exegesis.[106]

But of particular relevance here are those uses of the castle as a symbol of one of Mankind's faculties (such as perseverance), or, more often, as a symbol of non-specific

[101] Gerald Robert Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966) 85.
[102] Owst 80-4.
[103] *Biblia Sacra: Vvlgatae Editionis*, ed. P. Michael Hetzenaver (Rome: Sumptibus Librariae Academicae Wagnerianae, 1906) 962.
[104] Anselm, "Homilia IX," *Patralogiæ Latinæ*, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. clviii (Paris: 1863) col. 644.
[105] John Mirk, "In Die Assumpcionis Beate Marie Sermo Breuis," *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies* (EETS, ES 96), part 1, ed. Theodor Erbe, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1905) 228.
[106] Owst 77-8. He points to works by Abbot Serlo of Savigny (12th c.), Grosseteste (13th c.), and various anonymous contemporaries.

Mankind himself. The 'setting' of the psychomachia (Mankind) has not yet made his actual corporeal appearance within the allegory of the earlier homiletic material, and his position as the Prudentian battlefield is firstly substituted by a castle or fortress over which the vices and virtues contend:

> This use of the *figure* of the 'Castle of Mansoul' in English preaching can actually be traced back to a sermon of the so-called *Lambeth Homilies* compiled approximately at the end of the twelfth century.[107]

Richard Morris hints at an even earlier date for the particular homily in question, suggesting that it and its fellow homilies represent "a compilation from older documents of the eleventh century."[108] So, early on in the medieval period the "castle of Mansoul" makes its apperance in the sermon material:

> wite þe wel ȝet þe an sunne wule amerran al þa godness. *and*
> þe almesse. *and* þa dedbote þe þu dest of þam oðer. A lutel ater
> bitteret muchel swete. And þah an castel beo wel bemoned mid
> monne *and* mid wepne. *and* þer beo analpi holh þat an mon mei
> crepan in. Nis hit al unnet. hwet itacnet þe castel þe mon seolf.
> hwet þah men þe beoð in þe castel *and* in ȝemeþ. Þet beoð þes
> monnes eȝan. *and* his fet. *and* his hondan. *and* his muþ. *and* his
> nesa. *and* his earen. her beoð þa limen þet suneGet uwilene mon.
> Þu scodeldest heo biweten al swa clenliche swa crist ha þa bitahte on
> þas fulhtes beðe. Noþeles oðerwile þu sugegest mid summe of þisse
> limen ofter þenne þu scoldest. hit nis na wunder þa mon sungegie
> oðer while unwaldes. ah hit is muchele muchele mare wunder
> ȝif he nule nefre swiken. Al swa ic er cweð hwet tacneð þa wepne
> þine elmisse þe þu dest. þet is þu gast to chirche bluþeliche *and*
> fedest wreche men *and* herebureȝest *and* scrudest elles al þet þu
> maht don to gode. *and* þa ȝet þu hersumest þere sunne þet is þet
> holh þet ic er cweð hwa creopeð þer-in; þe awariede deofel. forðon
> þenne þe sunne bið idon. Seodðan bicumet he. *and* wunet þer-on
> abute þu hit bete.

> [Know well that one sin will mar all the goodness and the alms, and
> the amends that thou dost for the other. A little poison enven-
> ometh much sweetness; and though a castle be well garrisoned
> with men and with weapons, yet if there be a single hole whereby
> a man may creep in, is it not all in vain? What betokeneth the
> castle but man himself? What are the men who are in the castle
> and defend it but man's eyes, feet, and hands, mouth, nose, and
> ears? These are the limbs that a man sometimes sinneth with.
> Thou shouldst keep them as purely as Christ gave them unto
> thee in the bath of baptism. Natheless sometimes thou sinnest
> with these limbs more often that thou shouldest. It is no wonder
> if a man sin occasionally through weakness, but it is much more
> wonder if he will never cease. As I have before stated, What mean
> the weapons? -- thy alms that thou dost, that is, that thou goest
> gladly to church, and feedest, and lodgest, and clothest poor men,
> and every other good that it may be in thy power to do. And more-

[107] Owst 80.

[108] From Richard Morris' introduction to *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises (Sawles Ward, and Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd: Ureisuns of Ure Louerd and of Ure Lefdi, &c.) of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (EETS, OS 29), (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1868) xi.

over when thou art obedient to sin, that betokens the hole (breach) that I previously spoke of. Who creepeth therein? The accursed devil. Because when sin is committed he comes thereafter and dwells ever therein, except thou repent of it.][109]

We have, then, a very early example of a castle representing Mankind himself, besieged by the devil, weakened by sin, defended by his "men" the senses, and armed with his "alms". What must be remembered is that Mankind still does not take an active part in the narrative. The different parts of his corporeal self (his senses, in this case) are able to allow or disallow the successful siege of Mankind (the castle), depending on the necessary outcome of the homilist's narrative.

In other words, a small degree of free will exists here, where it did not in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*. In the confines of Prudentius' poem, Mankind's free will never comes into direct question, as he is the static battlefield on which the vices and virtues wrangle. As a castle, Mankind is still static in our twelfth-century homily, but parts of his bodily presence such as his eyes, mouth, hands, feet, and so on are given active charge over his defence. These are defences that Mankind, even in his static castle state, is able to manipulate and is warned by the homilist to keep in check.

The castle representing "Mansoul" appears in various tracts and in various ways in the following centuries,[110] and it lies outside of the scope of this thesis to discuss them all. Rather than attempting to trace a direct line of influence and development on the castle allegory to *The Castle of Perseverance*, we will examine a few pertinent examples of how the image was employed by other medieval writers in order to shed light on its particular position in the play.

In the thirteenth century, for instance, we find a rather bizarre treatment of the castle/soul image in the text of the *Ancrene Riwle*. In this case, we are told that the castle represents the anchoress' house, yet the metaphor's emphasis is altered through further elaboration:

> & nis heo to muche cang oðer to folherdi þat halt hire heaued
> baldeliche uorð vt. ipen open kernel ðeo hwile & me mit
> quarreaus wið vten asaileð þene castel. sikerliche vre vo þe
> weorreur of helle he scheot ase ich wene mo cwarreaus to one
> ancre þen to seo-uene & seouenti lefdies iþe worlde. þe kerneaus

[109] "Homily II: *Hic Dicendum est de Quadragesima*" ("Quadragesima Sunday") in *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, trans. Richard Morris, 22-3.
[110] Owst 79-81.

of þe castle. beoþ hire huses þurles. ne aboutie heo nout vt et
ham. leste heo þes deofles quarreaus habbe amid-den þen eien
er heo lest wene. vor he asaileð efre. holde hire eien inne. vor
beo heo erest ablend? heo is eð fallen. ablinde þe heorte. heo
is eð ouercumen. & I brouht sone mid sunne to grunde.[111]

[Is she not too foolish and too foolhardy, who boldly puts out her
head on the open battlements when the castle is being assailed
with bolts from without? I believe that our enemy the warrior
of hell shoots more bolts against one anchoress than against
seventy-seven ladies living in the world. The battlements of
the castle are the windows of her house. Let her not lean out
from them lest the devil's bolts strike her between the eyes when
she least expects it. For he never ceases his attack. Let her keep
her eyes at home, for, once blinded, she is easily overthrown.
Blind the heart, and it is easily overcome, and soon brought low
with sin.][112]

While the battlements are being assailed with bolts, it is actually the anchoress

herself whom the "weorreur of helle" is attempting to conquer. The martial imagery used

in the passage is pitched against the person of the anchoress, and it is the fortress of her

heart which stands to be "ouercumen." In this way, the author of the *Ancrene Riwle* shifts

the allegorical emphasis from the windows of the anchoress' house to her eyes, working an

image of the "castle of Mansoul" into his treatise on the sins of the senses.

Another more contemporary example of this sort of allegorical treatment exists in

a late fourteenth-century translation of the *Somme des Vices et des Vertus* (or *Somme Le*

Roi), originally compiled by the thirteenth-century Dominican, Lorens d'Orléans.[113] *The*

Book of Vices and Virtues exists as an anonymous midlands translation from about 1375,[114]

and is "thus a parallel text to Dan Michel's *Ayenbite of Inwit*, Caxton's *Royal Book*, and

other less familiar translations of the same French source."[115] The work spills out a

conventional psychomachia, pitting Christian Man and Woman (rather than the virtues)

against the vices and dressing it with St. Paul's treatise on the armour of faith (Eph. 6:

10-17):

Þe first batail þat þe cristen man and womman haþ is aȝens dedly
synne. In þis bataile is no man ouercome but he wole. For who-
so wole not assente to synne, he ouercomeþ þe bataile, þat is a riȝt
liȝt to ouercome to a bolde herte, [...]. [...] helpe of oure lord, þat

[111] Mabel Day, ed., *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle: edited from Cotton MS. Nero A. XIV* (EETS, OS 225),
(London: Oxford University Press, 1952) 26-7.

[112] Translated by M. B. Salu, *The Ancrene Riwle* (London: Burns & Oates, 1955) 26. While this translation is from a
different manuscript (MS. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 402), the passage at hand is the same in both.

[113] W. Nelson Francis, introduction, *The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth-Century English Translation of the
Somme Le Roi of Lorens D'Orléans* (EETS, OS 217), (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) ix.

[114] Francis, introduction, *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, lxviii.

[115] Francis, introduction, *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, ix.

ʒeueþ hym, whan his wille is, þe armures of penaunce, bi what
þing he may ouercome his aduersarie; þat is þe armure þat þe apostle
saynt Poule comaundeþ to take in þis bataile. For a naked man may
not moche stande in stede in a bataile.[116]

Once again unlike the Prudentian model, Mankind himself must take an active

role in the battle. And later in the book's treatment of the castle allegory, Mankind's

heart is represented by the castle, his mouth is the castle's gate which is in turn

maintained by the virtue Sobrietas. While elucidating the many virtues of Soberness, the

author of *The Book of Vices and Virtues* creates the following allegorical tableau:

þe þridde good þat sobernesse doþ is þat it kepeþ þe ʒate of þe
castel of þe herte, þat þe deuel assaileþ as ofte as he may, but
sobernesse defendeþ þe ʒate, þat is þe mouþ, & whan þe ʒate of
þe mouþ is opene, al þe host of synne goþ yn lyʒtliche, and for
nouʒt fiʒteþ he þan aʒens oþer synnes þat wiþ-halt not his tonge.[117]

As in the passage from the *Ancrene Riwle*, the author here shifts the impetus of defensive

activity from the allegorical representative (Soberness in the latter, the windows of the

house in the former) to the protagonist himself (or to particular physical faculties: eyes or

mouth respectively). Like the senses mentioned previously in "Homily II", physical

characteristics of Mankind take on defensive responsibility, while the virtues involved

are rendered powerless through the inevitability of free will. This is not the open,

pitched battle of Prudentius' *Psychomachia* or Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*,[118] where vices

and virtues wrangle over an unseen Mankind's soul. Mankind now inhabits a *locus* within

the battlefield, and his vulnerability to either camp is controlled both more and less by

the employment of his physical faculties.

The intent of offering the preceding examples is two-fold: firstly to demonstrate

the existence of a pervasive tradition -- that of the allegorical treatment of the castle-of-

Mansoul in medieval literature, and secondly to glean an arising dichotomy out of many

late-medieval treatments that stems from the emergence of free will. Within practical

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[116] *The Book of Vices and Virtues* 171.

[117] *The Book of Vices and Virtues* 276.

[118] Tertullian, *De Spectaculis, Tertullian: Apology and De Spectaculis*, trans. T. R. Glover and Minuncius Felix, 6th ed.
(Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press/William Heinemann, Ltd., 1984) XXIX. He states:
Vis et pugilatus et luctatus? praesto sunt, non parva et multa. Aspice impudicitiam deiectam a
castitate, perfidiam caesam a fide, saevitiam a misericordia contusam, petulantiam a modestia
adumbratam, et tales sunt apud nos agones, in quibus ipsi coronamur. Vis autem et sanguinis aliquid?
Habes Christi.
[Would you have fightings and wrestlings? Here they are -- things of no small account and
plenty of them. See impurity overthrown by chastity, perfidy slain by faith, cruelty crushed
by pity, impudence thrown into the shade by modesty; and such are the constests among us,
and in them we are crowned. Have you a
mind for blood? You have the blood of Christ.]

interpretations (inevitable in the allegorical drama because of its corporeal existence), many writers in the late-medieval period struggle with the notion of ultimate responsibility within a moral allegory such as a psychomachia. The author of *The Castle of Perseverance* is no exception. How much active moral weight should the virtues bear in a psychomachia where Mankind himself is present? Is the ultimate intent of writing to warn or to merely explain through allegorical adornment?

In works such as *The Castle of Perseverance* where so many allegorical traditions are employed and blended (the psychomachia, the parliament of Heaven, the castle of Mansoul, and the *danse macabre*, to name but a few), dramatic possibilities are multiplied. Despite the lengthy and copious existence of many of the play's themes, dramatic conflict and refreshed interest arise from the difficulty of blending these allegories in a way with which the audience may identify. I would argue, in fact, that the overriding conflict of the second half of the play (primarily that of the four daughters of God) is ultimately a product of the difficulty of this allegorical blending. While the outcomes of many of the individual allegorical motifs may have been a forgone conclusion to a fifteenth-century audience, the combination of these motifs opened many moral and theological gaps -- highly suitable for dramatic exploration and exploitation. In short, it is the allegory of *The Castle of Perseverance* that powers the play's dramatic conflict through new and multi-faceted combinations. The truth of Happé's (understated) observation cannot be refuted:

> Although our author's use of the idea of the castle links him with his theological and literary predecessors, his choice of perseverance, and his realization of the dramatic possibilities of the castle are clearly important and successful.[119]

Mankind's presence in the allegory (and on the stage) requires that he take an active part in the outcome, and the abstractions -- the vices and virtues -- may no longer be held fully responsible for the psychomachia's conclusion. This sole fact instigates the primary dramatic argument of morality plays such as *The Castle of Perseverance*.

Following the play's Banns (presumably written by a separate author[120]), the manuscript opens with the World's boastful introduction to the audience (ll. 157-95).

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[119] Happé, notes, *Four Morality Plays*, 620.

[120] According to Eccles (siding, in this case, with Bennett's original assertion) in his introduction, xvii-xviii. He points primarily to elements of style:

Similar rants by Belial (ll. 196-234) and by Flesh (ll. 235-74) follow in succession -- each in three stanzas -- enumerating each of the tyrants' powers, dominions, and followers. These opening stanzas immediately disclose the author's meticulous balancing -- both allegorically and stylistically -- that will be developed throughout the work. We learn that these "kyngys thre" represent Mankind's spiritual enemies, and that each is served by three of the play's other evil characters: World by Lust-Liking, Folly, and Garcio;[121] Belial by Pride, Wrath, and Envy; and Flesh by Gluttony, Lechery, and Sloth.

Next Humanum Genus (Mankind) appears (presumably from beneath the Castle[122]) and delivers his humble opening speech "nakyd of lym and lende" (l. 279). The primary elements of Humanum Genus' entire opening speech (ll. 275-339) serve to emphasize his innocence, his vulnerability, and (despite the necessary exposition-laden delivery) his overwhelming confusion. After his explanation that "þis nyth I was of my modyr born" (l. 276), his frailty and confusion is pitifully expounded:

> Fro my modyr I walke, I wende,
>   Ful faynt and febyl I fare ʒou beforn.
> [...] I not wedyr to gon ne to lend
>   To helpe myself mydday nyn morn.
>   For schame I stonde and schende.
>   I was born þis nyth in blody ble
>   And nakyd I am, as ʒe may se.
>   A, Lord God in trinite,
>   Whow Mankende is vnthende!
>
> Whereto I was to þis werld browth
>   I ne wot, but to woo and wepynge
> I am born and haue ryth nowth
>   To helpe myself in no doynge.[123]

He then tells us that two angels have been assigned to him:

> Swyche to hath euery man on lyue
> To rewlyn hum and hys wyttys fyue.[124]

The metre is rougher than in the rest of the play, and the long lines move less swiftly. The stanzas are linked by repeating one or more words from the last lines of each in the first line of the following stanza, a device only used occasionally thereafter (as in 375, 504, 712, 1178).

[121] Although World does not mention these servants directly in his opening speech, they are grouped with him in the list of players, and they appear and speak from his scaffold soon after as his servants, and likely appear with him here.

[122] Southern 153. This is the most reasonable position for Humanum Genus' entrance. He must be in the "place" at any rate, because Lust-Liking and Folly are instructed to "descend into the place" ("descendit in placeam") before they meet him in l. 526.

[123] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 276-91.

[124] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 310-1.

The two Angels' capacity to "rewlyn" Humanum Genus and the full extent of their tutelage over him, however, have yet to be demonstrated. Humanum Genus follows with a prayer to Jesus, acknowledging his (and his sympathetic audience's) intention that he do good:

> But syn þese aungelys be to me falle,
> Lord Jhesu, to ʒou I bydde a bone
> Þat I may folwe, be strete and stalle,
> Þe aungyl þat cam fro heuene trone.[125]

He indicates here at least a knowledge of what he *should* do, but he quickly lapses back into his previous confusion in the lines that follow -- "A, Lord Jhesu, wedyr may I goo?" (l. 323) -- and finishes with his original tone of vulnerability.

The Good and Bad Angels then address Humanum Genus, the first advising him to serve Jesus (ll. 327-39) and the second to draw to the World's service (ll. 340-8). A debate follows between the two (ll. 327-92), and Humanum Genus finally decides to go with Bad Angel to the World (l. 393 and following). Good Angel is left within the "place" to address the audience with a dumbfounded woe that echoes Humanum Genus's opening confusion:

> I not wedyr to gone.
> Mankynde hath forsakyn me.
> Alas, man, for loue of the![126]

At this point in the play, Good and Bad Angel seem to represent Humanum Genus' thought -- his dichotomous mental capacity. They exist allegorically as external projections of his internal capacity for good and evil. As such, they cannot take an active part *physically* in a psychomachia. They are not archetypal embodiments of (in medieval theology) extra-human conceptual entities bred from sources of ultimate 'Good' and 'Evil'. In other words, they do not represent universal abstractions like the vices and virtues. Their existence begins and ends within Humanum Genus' mind, so their physical existence within the play is not allowed to disturb the *physical* presence of Humanum Genus or of any of the other allegorical or quasi-historical (Belial, for example) characters in the allegory. Their instructions to Humanum Genus represent his own process

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[125] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 314-7.
[126] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 451-3.

of self-discovery and learning, and they themselves represent choice through reason rather than temptation or coercion.[127]

Having stated that, they do represent the extremes of Humanum Genus' polar morality, laying the groundwork for dramatic conflict simply through their diametric opposition. The scene follows to show World boasting again from his scaffold, calling on his servants Lust-Liking and Folly to fetch him a suitable minion (ll. 456-81). Lust-Liking and Folly descend *in placeam*, offering descriptions of themselves and their powers as they go (ll. 482-525). Bad Angel then presents Humanum Genus to the two vices, bragging of his victory in gaining Humanum Genus' resolve:

> I haue gylyd hym ful qweyntly,
>   For syn he was born I haue hym blent.
> He schal be serwaunt good and try,
>   Among ʒou his wil is lent,
>   To þe Werld he wyl hym take.
> For syn he cowde wyt, I vndirstonde,
> I haue hym tysyd in euery londe.
> Hys Goode Aungle, be strete and stronde,
>   I haue don hym forsake.[128]

Despite Bad Angel's boast to have "gylyd" Humanum Genus, he states that "To þe Werld *he* wyl hym take," acknowledging that it is Humanum Genus' own ultimate decision that will initiate the play's subsequent action.

The party then continues to World's scaffold where Humanum Genus promises to forsake God in exchange for wealth and merriment (ll. 574-609). Upon invitation, Humanum Genus ascends to World and is welcomed (ll. 610-30), then is dressed "In robys ryve / Wyth rych aray" (ll. 625-6) by Lust-Liking and Folly.[129]

To give him time for a costume change, the audience is suddenly and dramatically introduced to new character, entering from the "place":[130]

> I wyl þat ʒe wetyn, all þo þat ben here,
> For I am knowyn fer and nere,
> I am þe Werldys messengere,

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[127] This is even more so the case, of course, in the other famous employment of Good and Bad Angel: in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* the two are never directly addressed by Faustus, nor do they address one another. They simply represent the protagonist's thoughts. My purpose here is to address the way in which they differ from the other characters in the play's allegory.

[128] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 530-8.

[129] Southern conjectures that this costume change could take place in the back of the scaffold behind a drawn curtain, 164.

[130] The exact location of Backbiter's entrance cannot be determined from the text. Southern posits that he enters from a "pavilion" -- a kind of tented tiring-room -- which he imagines erected on the outside of the all-encompassing ditch, accessible via a bridge (164). Once again, while this notion is not entirely implausible, it remains conjectural.

My name is Bacbytere.[131]

Backbiter (Detraccio) serves here as a distraction from the costume change, as he tells us:

> For whanne Mankynd is cloþyd clere,
> Þanne schal I techyn hym þe wey
> To þe dedly synnys seuene.[132]

His bombastic entrance lasts for four stanzas (ll. 647-98), and -- while he does appear to wander about the place[133] -- he finishes in relatively the same place, saying:

> Here I schal abydyn wyth my pese
> Þe wronge to do hym for to chese,[134]

so that we do not yet see him function as "Werldys messenger". The author has introduced the audience to Backbiter here in order to draw attention away from the costume change occurring on (or in) World's scaffold, and Backbiter's position in the play's overall allegorical structure has yet to be defined.

The next scene follows to show Humanum Genus lavishly adorned in "bryth besauntys" (l. 701). Lust-liking and Folly present him to World (ll. 699-724), and World congratulates them and tells Humanum Genus to go to his treasurer, Sir Covetous (ll. 725-76). Backbiter again pipes up from his position in the "place", answering the charge that he bring Humanum Genus to Covetous:

> Bakbytynge and Detracion
> Schal goo wyth þe fro toun to toun.
> Haue don, Mankynde, and cum doun.
> I am þyne owyn page.[135]

As Humanum Genus descends from World's scaffold and travels with Backbiter over to the far side of the circle (to Covetous' scaffold in the northeast), Good Angel draws the audience's attention back to his position in the midst of the "place". Once again, the play employs the useful technique of distraction in order to allow characters to prepare themselves (in this case, to move across the place) for the following scene. Good Angel and Bad Angel are given one stanza each (ll. 789-814), allowing us more insight into their symbolic relationship to Humanum Genus and to the other characters.

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[131] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 656-9.

[132] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 692-4.

[133] "I walke and wende;" "I am lyth of lopys þorwe euery londe;" "Bakbytere is wyde spronge;" "To lepyn ouyr londys leye / Þorwe all þe world, fer and ner;" *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 660, 673, 681, and 687-8. Southern suggests this travelling technique is employed to make sure a character's speech is heard by all members of the audience (165).

[134] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 695-6.

[135] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 777-80.

Good Angel begins with that familiar tone of confusion and despair, lamenting his inability to save Humanum Genus:

> Alas, Jhesu, jentyl justyce,
>   Whedyr may mans Good Aungyl wende?
> Now schal careful Coueytyse
>   Mankende trewly al schende.[136]

He then turns to address the audience directly:

> Worldly wyttys, ȝe are not wyse,
>   ȝour louely lyfe amys ȝe spende
>   And þat schal ȝe sore smert.
> Parkys, ponndys, and many pens
> Þei semyn to ȝou swetter þanne sens,
>   But Goddys seruyse nyn hys commaundementys
>   Stondyth ȝou not at hert.[137]

Good Angel is unable to dissuade Humanum Genus from his current course, nor is he able to physically interact with Humanum Genus, as many of the other characters are. He may only comment on the action of the play, either in his previously assigned capacity towards the allegorically represented Humanum Genus himself, or -- being symbolically appropriate -- to the 'mankind' represented by the audience. Late-medieval dramatic convention exhibits frequent contact between actor and spectator -- whether ranting tirade, humble pathos, or pedantic sermonizing -- and the close and circumferential position of the audience in a theatre-in-the-round adds poignant immediacy to this sort of contact. Good Angel is given the role of *khoros* and interpreter, to remind the audience of its own relationship to the allegorical narrative it is observing and to drive home the particular moral at hand. And his appropriateness for the role is uncontested, as this is precisely the same relationship he holds with the representative Mankind. He is the moral reminder. He is Humanum Genus' more sober and morally positive nature, opposed in person (but, by symbolic impossibility, not in *deed*) by Bad Angel. His brief sermon to the audience and Bad Angel's retort reinforce the allegorical bond between Humanum Genus and the audience, but the two angels remain passive commentators.

Backbiter's position within the allegorical fabric is quite different, as he makes known in the following scene. After escorting Humanum Genus to the northeast scaffold, he boasts up to Covetous of his accomplishment:

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[136] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 789-92.
[137] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 795-801.

> I, Bakbyter, þine owyn knaue,
>   Haue browt Mankynde vnto þine hall.[138]

While not one of the seven deadly sins presented later in the play, he is a vice, an abstraction personified, and a universal concept external to Humanum Genus in his singular representation. As such, he is able to take and to lead Humanum Genus along his previously chosen ("A, Lord Jhesu, wedyr may I goo?" l. 323) path towards sin. We have seen Humanum Genus, after siding with his Bad Angel's counsel while in youthful ignorance, established with a sinful inclination of his own choosing, led by Lust-Liking and Folly to the world and its riches. Now backbiting and detraction lead him on towards covetousness and towards sinning proper.

In our investigation of the allegorical position of Covetous, it is helpful to turn to the recent and enlightening work of Milla Riggio in her article "The Allegory of Feudal Acquisition in *The Castle of Perseverance*."[139] She notes the emphasis placed on Covetous in the play, stating that "sin is dramatized almost entirely in the language of acquisition and associated persistently with the practices of feudal patronage."[140] Covetous is not presented alongside the ranks of his six vicious fellows, and is given his own scaffold in the northeast of the stage plan. We have already noted the opening establishment of the "kyngys thre" (l. 267): the World, Belial, and Flesh. Now we are introduced to Covetous, established as World's "tresorer" (ll. 181 and 764), who holds a certain higher position than the other vices in the play's allegory.

In the opening chapter, we noted how Pride -- as the instigator of Satan's fall -- was typically portrayed as chief among the vices. Chaucer's Parson describes Pride as "the general roote of alle harmes,"[141] and *The Pride of Life* fragment focuses its entire narrative on the vice. And, as we shall see, the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* also apportions a special position for Pride in its tropological psychomachia. In *The Castle of Perseverance*, however, Pride has been subsumed into the ranks of the other deadly sins, while Covetous moves into the foreground. Belial does tell us that "Pryde is my prince" (l. 209), but he remains one of "þe Deuelys chyldryn þre" (l. 894) and an equal minion.

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[138] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 817-8.

[139] Milla B. Riggio. "The Allegory of Feudal Acquisition in *The Castle of Perseverance*," *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1981) 187-208.

[140] Riggio 191.

Covetous, however, will be the only sin to successfully win Humanum Genus from the Castle later in the play. Riggio has demonstrated how the play is filled with language typically associated with feudal patronage and legal provisions concerning wealth and inheritance: particularly "sesyd" (l. 182), "entayle" (l. 2697), and the recurring use of "feffe" (or *enfeoff*, which has to do with the "endowment of property"[142] (ll. 730, 740, 755, 820, and 885, for example). It is Covetous who will enfeoff Humanum Genus with World's goods and estates, thus preparing him for the investment of the other deadly sins:

> Here I feffe þe in myn heuene
> Wyth gold and syluyr lyth as leuene.
> Þe dedly synnys, all seuene,
>   I schal do comyn in hy.[143]

Covetous does hold a special position amongst the evil characters in the play's allegory. He remains subservient to his king the World (World later beats him for allowing Humanum Genus to escape in l. 1863), but he remains highlighted from the other traditional vices of the psychomachia.

Perhaps it is helpful at this point to glance briefly at the arrangement of medieval households with the regard to the proper management of money. If we look at *The Black Book*, for instance -- compiled during the reign of Edward IV (1461-1483) but "which both made use of earlier material and also provided a model for the many later books of this sort"[144] -- we find proportion and moderation praised as virtues of a proper household: "'it is to be diligently considered that he [the magnificent king] be not superabundant or excessive in great undertakings, because such is called boorish use [...].'"[145] Likewise, the *Household of Ordinance of 1478* also upholds moderation over prodigality and meanness:

> 'We, ne willing that our said household be guyded by prodigalite,
> whiche neyther accordeth with honneur, honeste, ne good maner,
> ne on that other partie, that it be guyded by auarice whiche is the
> werse extremite, and a vice moore odiouse and detestable, We haue
> taken ferme purpose [...] in costes and expenses to be grounded and

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[141] Chaucer, "The Parson's Tale," X (I), l. 388.

[142] Riggio 192.

[143] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 889-92.

[144] John Scattergood, "Skelton's *Magnyfycence* and the Tudor Royal Household," *Medieval English Theatre*, 15 (1993) 25.

[145] *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478*, ed. A. R. Myers (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959) 86; quoted from Scattergood, 26.

establisshed vpon the forsaid vertue called liberalite.'[146]

In is discussion of Skelton's *Magnyfycence* and its relationship to medieval

household books such as those quoted above, John Scattergood concludes:

> For a lord to display his *magnificence*, his princely liberality, it was
> necessary for him to have a household which was organized on a proper
> financial basis. Those responsible for running the household had to make
> certain that the expenditure did not outstrip income, that a balance was
> preserved.[147]

If we view the behaviour of Covetous in *The Castle of Perseverance* with these ideas in

mind -- especially as the treasurer of World's medieval "household" -- his upraised

position in the play's allegory seems to indicate a heightened reproach of World's evil

kingship. The desired kingly virtue of measure with regard to the finances of his

household is contrasted by Covetous' penchant for both meanness and for spending largely.

World, for instance, bestows Humanum Genus with an excess of worldly wealth:

> I feffe þe in all my wonys wyde
>   In dale of dros tyl þou be deth.
> I make þe lord of mekyl pryde,
>   Syr, at þyn owyn mowthis mette.
>   I fynde in þe no tresun.
>   In all þis worlde, be se and sonde,
>   Parkys, placys, lawnde and londe,
>   Here I ȝyfe þe wyth myn honde,
>   Syr, an opyn sesun.
>
> Go to my tresorer, Syr Couetouse.
>   Loke þou tell hym as I seye.
> Bydde hym make þe maystyr in hys house
>   Wyth penys and powndys for to pleye.[148]

Later, when Humanum Genus is "wele in age" (l. 2701), Covetous' instructions to him are

solely based on the two negative qualities of meanness and excessive prodigality that

were shunned in the household books. Humanum Genus is given the sizable sum of "a

thousend marke" (l. 2725), but is repeatedly told to covet more:

> Al þis good take þe to,
>   Clyffe and cost, toure and toun.
> Þus hast þou gotyn in synful slo
>   Of þyn neygborys be extorcyoun.
> 'More and more' sey ȝyt, haue do,
>   Tyl þou be ded and drepyn dounn;
>   [...] ' more and more' sey ȝyt, I rede,
>   To more þanne inow þou hast nede.[149]

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[146] *The Household of Edward IV*, 212; quoted from Scattergood, 26-7.
[147] Scattergood 34.
[148] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 755-67.
[149] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2754-62.

He is also, however, instructed to be miserly with his wealth, especially with regard to the poor and to the Church:

> Lene no man hereof, for no karke,
> Þou he schulde hange be þe þrote,
> Monke nor frere, prest no clerke,
> Ne helpe þerwyth chyrche no cote,
> Tyl deth þi body delue.
> Þou he schuld sterue in a caue,
> Lete no pore man þerof haue.[150]

Earlier, he is told specifically to "Pay not þi sewauntys here serwyse" (l. 844). In other words, Humanum Genus is instructed to see the World and his treasurer Covetous as an example of how he should conduct his own household, with both meanness and large spending -- in direct contrast to the medieval ideals of moderation and balance espoused in the household books. It lies outside the scope of this investigation to examine all of the links between the extensive presentation of Covetous in the play and its possible relationship to medieval thought concerning the moral and financial arrangement of a proper household, but Covetous' primary position in the allegory does seem to reflect a concern with these ideas and their colouring of both the World as a king, Covetous as his treasurer, and, later, to Humanum Genus himself as the head of a household.

If we look further at the investiture scene, we find Covetous investing Humanum Genus not only with material wealth, but also with the "seuene and no lesse / Of þe dedly synnys" (ll. 904-5), in a passage of carefully balanced symmetry. After Covetous calls to the other vices (ll. 893-6), Pride, Wrath, and Envy each take their leave from Belial's scaffold as he commends them -- all in single, thirteen-line stanzas (ll. 906-57). Gluttony, Lechery, and Sloth follow suit from Flesh's scaffold (ll. 958-1009).

We learn that Lechery, who has employed a castle image to describe her intent ("In mans kyth I cast me a castel to kepe" l. 971), is meant to be played as a woman, for Flesh calls her his "dowtyr so dere" (l. 999). And through Flesh's final admonition to them, the position of the three primary evil characters is further described. Humanum Genus' choice to go to the World and to concern himself with earthly things has allowed his Flesh -- as an extension of his earthly, sinful self -- and Belial -- as the super-allegorical and historical Devil -- to further his sinfulness:

> Þe Werld, þe Flesch, and þe Devyl are knowe
> Grete lordys, as we wel owe,
> And þorwe Mankynd we settyn and sowe
> Þe dedly synnys seuene.[151]

In other words, Humanum Genus does not *go* to the scaffolds of Flesh and Belial, but his decision to travel to the World and to Covetous has allowed them to invest Humanum Genus with their sins in equal measure.[152]

Each of the sins addresses Humanum Genus and instructs him towards their particular nature, and each is welcomed by Humanum Genus up to Covetous' scaffold (ll. 1045-237). In a processional and almost ceremonial cadence, rhyming couplets are exchanged between Humanum Genus and each sin as he accepts them upon the scaffold. Humanum Genus finishes by announcing his full "curssydnesse" (l. 1239) to the audience.

Once again Good Angel makes a lament:

> So mekyl þe werse, weleawoo,
> Þat euere good aungyl was ordeynyd þe.[153]

And, again, he emphasizes his helplessness at Humanum Genus' ability to choose:

> Weleaway, wedyr may I goo?
> Man doth me bleykyn blody ble.
> Hys swete sowle he wyl now slo.
> [...] 3e se wel all sothly in syth
> I am abowte boþe day and nyth
> To brynge hys sowle into blis bryth,
> And hymself wyl it brynge to pyne.[154]

Bad Angel responds with a boastful retort (ll. 1273-85) that re-emphasizes the angels' capacity to rule Humanum Genus:

> No, Good Aungyl, þou art not in sesun,
> Fewe men in þe feyth þey fynde.
> For þou *hast schewyd a ballyd resun*, [...].[155]

It is to Humanum Genus' reasoning that their powers are limited, and up to this point, Good Angel's argument has failed to convince. Good Angel is left again in the centre of the place to lament Humanum Genus' sinfulness. But an ace card has yet to be played. Two

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[150] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2730-6.

[151] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 1006-9.

[152] Of relevance here is Edger Schell's article "On the Imitation of Life's Pilgrimage in *The Castle of Perseverance*" where he draws an analogy with Deguilleville's *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (c. 1330) (280). While I have previously discussed some of the problems with Schell's proposed sequence for the play, I will agree that the stage set "realizes in theatrical terms the moral landscapes of the narrative pilgrimages" (284).

[153] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 1260-1.

[154] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 1269-72.

[155] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 1273-5.

new characters enter the place and offer to "Brewe" Good Angel a "bote of bale" (l. 1310).

Confession and Penitence then take the reins of the action, determined to aid Good Angel

by setting Humanum Genus straight. To do this, they will employ an important and

highly symbolic physical action on the person of Humanum Genus.

Schell is uncomfortable with this turn of events, suggesting that it is an unmerited

deus ex machina:

> This first of the play's peripeteias is in some measure dramatically
> incoherent, for Mankind's repentance does not grow out of the developing
> line of the action; it is rather imposed upon him by characters who in
> effect descend from the machine.[156]

However, the play as a whole ultimately gives credence to the appearance and

employment of these two characters, as the insistence of Humanum Genus' free will is only

superseded by the certainty of God's grace. In Good Angel's despair, he utters the all-

important invocation: "Mercy, God, þat man were amendyd!" (l. 1297). The identification

is certainly not merely rhetorical, and Good Angel's cry here will be echoed by Humanum

Genus himself later, when God will intercede to save him for a second time. In other

words, the play's argument revolves around that very *deus ex machina*: the availability

of God's mercy. For this reason, Penitence is able to affect Humanum Genus *physically* --

breaking the continuing allegorical distance between Humanum Genus and the abstract

personifications -- with his "poynt of penaunce" (l. 1377) delivering "a drop of mercy

welle" (l. 1380).

Humanum Genus acknowledges his sinfulness, and descends to Confession in order to

amend himself. Confession hears his confession, absolves him "wyth goode entent" (l.

1507), and sends him to *The Castle of Perseverance* where he will be protected by the

virtues (ll. 1403-1571). The two Angels each have a stanza of argument (ll. 1572-97), but

this time Humanum Genus follows Good Angel's advice based on his contrition-born

understanding of holy scripture:

> Good Aungyl, I wyl do as þou wylt,
> In londe whyl my lyfe may leste,
> For I fynde wel in holy wryt
> Þou counseylyste euer for þe beste.[157]

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[156] Schell, "On the Imitation of Life's Pilgrimage in *The Castle of Perseverance*," 288.
[157] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 1598-1601.

After a lacuna in the text (at line 1601, presumably containing subsequent speeches by Meekness and Patience), Charity extols her qualities to Humanum Genus and asks him to "haue an eye" (l. 1602) towards her. The other virtues each follow suit, in thirteen-line stanzas, and Humanum Genus answers them (ll. 1602-92). The virtues celebrate by singing a hymn flanked by Humility's speeches (ll. 1693-1714).

Bad Angel then calls on Backbiter to organize the evil characters, so that Humanum Genus' negative moral capacity is already working against his newfound virtuousness. We see here, again, through the character of Bad Angel, the play's intent to subsume the classic psychomachia into a disputation on the morally diametric self, based on free will. Just as earlier Good Angel was able to inadvertently initiate Confession and Penitence's intercession, here Bad Angel is able to stir dissent in the externalized world of the vices. The reason they are unable to act upon Humanum Genus himself *physically* in the play, is because Good Angel and Bad Angel *are* Humanum Genus. They continually solicit the external abstractions represented by the other characters in order to affect Humanum Genus himself, and he remains their pliable centre.

This sort of presentation renders a classic psychomachia irrelevant, and the battle between the vices and virtues that follows is simply traditionally adorning pageantry. Each of the three evil Kings -- encouraged by an amused Backbiter -- beat their servants for allowing Humanum Genus to escape (ll. 1778-1876). Then Belial is the first to lead an attack upon the Castle (l. 1899 and following). His three vices -- Pride, Wrath, and Envy -- each attack the Castle with weapons,[158] but each is driven back by a barrage of allegorically-charged roses, thrown down from the battlements by the virtues (ll. 2069-2225). The only accompanying stage direction -- *"Tunc pugnabunt diu"* (or "They shall fight for a long time," l. 2198) -- gives little indication of the exact stage-business of the battle.

After a petition from Bad Angel, Flesh leads the second advance (ll. 2226 and following).[159] His minion Gluttony attacks with a burning faggot to "makyn a smeke" (l. 2248), Lechery with "cursyd colys" (l. 2291) to burn Humanum Genus' loins, and Sloth with

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[158] Except Pride, who attacks with "Grete gounse" (l. 2073) and a "bolde baner" (l. 2080). Wrath attacks with "many a vyre" (l. 2112), similar to Ira's *telorum nimbos* in the *Psychomachia* (l. 129). Envy uses a "bowe" (l. 2159).
[159] Southern suggest that Flesh is riding a horse (197), based on his earlier line "Whanne I syt in my sadyl" (l. 1940).

a spade (discussed earlier). They are likewise repelled by Abstinence, Charity, and Business. Finally, Bad Angel makes a last plea to World for aid (ll. 2410-3), and World instructs Covetous to "Wyrke on þe best wyse" (l. 2424) in order to win Humanum Genus from the Castle. Covetous proceeds by reason, suggesting that Humanum Genus should live well in his old age (ll. 2427-39), and this sort of reasoning leaves Charity in a panic:

> A, God helpe! I am dysmayed,
>   I curse þe, Coveytyse, as I can;
> For certys, treytour, þou hast betrayed
> Nerhand now iche erthely man.[160]

She highlights the primary role assigned to Covetous by paraphrasing scripture:

> For iwys he is, in al wyse,
>   Rote of sorwe and synne.[161]

Covetous berates Charity for interrupting him, and he and Humanum Genus enter into a debate over the proper way to lead old age (ll. 2466-2530). Covetous eventually wins out through a crafty reason: "If þou be pore and nedy in elde / Þou schalt oftyn euyl fare" (ll. 2529-30). Humanum Genus acknowledges his sound reasoning: "Coueytyse, þou seyst a good skyl" (l. 2531) and descends to him (l. 2557).

Good Angel then pleads the virtues to help Humanum Genus, but, as "God hath ʒouyn hym a fre wylle" (l. 2560), the virtues are unable to intervene. Humanum Genus' decision is made, and despite Good Angel's solicitation to the virtues, their ability to disrupt the narrative is prevented in this instance by their allegorical nature: "Resun wyl exusyn us alle" (l. 2570). They are stationary within the protection of the Castle throughout the play as externalized abstractions of universal goodness. They are able to repel the physical assault on the Castle through the pageantry of the psychomachia, but the presence of Humanum Genus and his two Angels within that psychomachia render their defences merely symbolic. Humanum Genus' (and the attentive audience's) only real defence is reason.

At this point, Covetous begins to teach Humanum Genus the ways to be a proper miser. He gives Humanum Genus "a thousend merke" (l. 2726), presumably taken from the "cupbord" indicated to be by the bed's feet (under the Castle) in the stage plan. The exact position of the two must be left in some doubt, for two stanzas earlier Covetous says:

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[160] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2440-3.

> Go we now knowe my castel cage.
> In þis bowre I scal þe blys;
> [...] Mor mucke þanne is þyne iwys
> Take þou in þis trost terage,[162]

While "my castel cage" and "þis trost terage" seem to indicate that Covetous and

Humanum Genus have traveled to Covetous' scaffold, the position of the cupboard on the

stage plan suggests that they remain in the place beneath the castle. While the first

option seems to be more in keeping with the allegorical trappings of the play's set, the

second option seems the more dramatic. By remaining in the centre of the place, the focus

is narrowed on the two figures, and the subtlety and pathos involved with Humanum

Genus' death in the following scene is made more personal. If the action is focused on the

centre of the place from this point, the powerful appearance of God on the east scaffold in

the final scene will be heightened with the final re-opening of the larger scaffold ring.

After he is once again invested by Covetous, Humanum Genus ends the scene in a

state of damnation:

> If I myth alwey dwellyn in properyte,
> Lord God, þane wel were me.
> I wolde, þe medys, forsake þe
> And neuere to comyn in heuene.[163]

It is thus a very inopportune time for Humanum Genus (and therefore all the more

opportune for the narrative of a morality play) for Death to make his appearance. It is

almost as if Death relishes the idea of catching Humanum Genus at his worst, as if he has

been waiting for the moment:

> MORS: Ow, now it is tyme hye
> To castyn Mankynd to Dethys dynt.
> In all hys werkys he is vnslye;
> Mekyl of hys lyf he hath myspent.[164]

While his appearance here has often been linked to the fourteenth-century French *danse*

macabre,[165] Chambers is correct in noting that "Here the end of man is in the *Judicium*,"[166]

rather than a traditional symbolic representation of Death's dance. His appearance here

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[161] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2464-5. She paraphrases I Tim. 6: 10: "For the love of money is the root of all evils."
[162] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2703-7.
[163] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2774-7.
[164] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2778-81.
[165] Happé, introduction, *Four Morality Plays*, 34.
[166] E. K. Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945) 53.

is reminiscent of Death's appearance in "The Death of Herod" from the *Ludus Coventriae*

play cycle, who arrives suddenly and with a tone of vindictiveness:

> MORS: Ow! I herde a page make preysyng of pride!
> All prynces he passyth, he wenyth, of powsté, [167]

and later:

> I am Deth, Goddys masangere.
> Allmyghty God hath sent me here
> Ʒon lordeyn to sle, withowtyn dwere,
> For his wykkyd werkynge.[168]

More than just the active force behind Herod's bodily death -- or Humanum Genus' in the

previous example from *The Castle of Perseverance* -- Death is presented as God's

vindicating "masangere," striking down the protagonist specifically for "hys wykkyd

werkynge." Death in *The Castle of Perseverance* warns the audience not only to expect his

coming with certainty, but to fear it:

> Whanne I com iche man dred forþi,
> But Ʒyt is þer no geyn-went,
> Hey hyl, holte, nyn hethe.
> Ʒe schul me drede euerychone;
> Whanne I come Ʒe schul grone; [...].[169]

This notion is reinforced by his comment that Death "schal þe schapyn a shenful schappe"

(l. 2839) out of Humanum Genus' body.

This is not the same Death who appears to Everyman, whose primary concern is to

convey the certainty of his coming (rather than the horror of it):

> DETHE: The[e] avayleth not to crye, wepe, and praye;
> But hast the[e] lyghtly that thou were gone that journaye,
> And preve they frendes yf thou can;
> For, wete thou well, the tyde abydeth no man,
> And in the worlde eche lyvynge creature
> For Adams synne must dye of nature.[170]

The Castle of Perseverance heightens the drama involved with Death's appearance by

emphasising the apparent enthusiasm with which he enacts the properties of his office.

He appears suddenly, strikingly, and, not only when Humanum Genus is most unprepared

for death, but when he is most deserving of moral punishment.

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[167] "The Death of Herod" (*Ludus Coventriae* XX), *The N-Town Play (Cotton MS Vespasian D 8)* (EETS, SS 11), vol. 1, ed. Stephen Spector (Oxford, New York, Toronto, etc: Oxford University Press, 1991) ll. 168-9.
[168] "The Death of Herod" ll. 177-80.
[169] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2784-8.
[170] *Everyman* ll. 140-5

Humanum Genus cries to World for help, "for olde aqweyntawns" (l. 2865), but World refuses, and reveals to Humanum Genus his evil intentions towards him (ll. 2869-81). World then calls on his "boy" to carry out an errand for him (ll. 2895-907) that will form the keystone of Riggio's argument in her article "The Allegory of Feudal Acquisition in *The Castle of Perseverance*." After World instructs his boy to go to the dying Humanum Genus in order to "brewe Mankynd a byttyr bende" (ll. 2897) by claiming his inheritable goods, his boy (who calls himself "I Wot Neuere Whoo", l. 2968) departs from the scaffold dutifully:

> I go glad upon þis grounde
> To putte Mankynde out of hys þryfte.[171]

We learn that the boy's sole purpose in the play is specifically to strip Humanum Genus of his earthly goods so that Humanum Genus' family will be unable to inherit them.

Two apparent disruptions in the allegorical structure arise from the scene. Why is the notion of inheritance inserted into the play and examined at such length? And why does the author seemingly abrade Humanum Genus' allegorically universal status by giving us details of his family ("[...] myne chyldyr and to myn wyfe," l. 2976)?

With regard to the first question, Riggio suggests, "By showing Mundus as playing tricks with the idea of entailed property the play reflects the social preoccupation with this question."[172] She further notes that:

> Especially in the East Midlands where *The Castle of Perseverance* was probably composed, the sudden new mobility of small land owners in the early fifteenth century (c. 1410-1440) created a virtual crisis of inheritance, temporarily altering the patterns of hereditary land descent.[173]

Riggio points out that this scene demonstrates that the play is somewhat preoccupied with the idea of money and inheritance as a chief motivation behind sin, and that this is a result of financial and social trends in the East Midlands in the early fifteenth century. This would certainly explain the play's emphasis on covetousness. Also, it is difficult to explain the presence of the disinheritance scene without this idea in mind.

Furthermore, Humanum Genus here tells us that he has a family ("myne chyldyr and [...] myn wyfe"), which -- on the surface -- has the effect of localizing his previously

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[171] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2910-1.

[172] Riggio 205.

[173] Riggio 204. She cites Cicely Howell's "Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands 1280-1700," in J. Goody, J. Thirsk, and E. P. Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 112-55.

universal status. It moves towards fleshing out his formerly abstract existence by situating him amongst familial types. It makes him a "husband" and a "father" -- limiting the broad role of "Humanum Genus" into roles of self that are delineated by the existence and position of other "selves". However, this is a modern view of the allegory, and could not have been a problem for a late-medieval audience (nor would it really be a problem for a modern audience).

From the outset, Humanum Genus is masculine, and (obviously) a Christian. References to his changing age throughout the play ("I gynne to waxyn hory and olde," l. 2482, etc.), also particularize the supposedly ubiquitous Humanum Genus in each scene. These elements are easily taken for granted in the play -- so too, then, would be Humanum Genus as husband and father. Just as Everyman's Kindred, Cousin, and Fellowship create his position as an Everyman with a family, and just as the Mankind of *Mankind* is presented with agricultural leanings, the localisation of Humanum Genus in *The Castle of Perseverance* as a family man would not disrupt his universal status in the minds' of the intended audience. He is typical, rather than all-inclusive, and -- especially in his position as a physically present actor -- this is physical necessity of allegorical drama.

I think it would be difficult to claim that this apparent particularisation of Humanum Genus represents some sort of move towards an individualistic, "realistic" representation of character. The very tenets of biblical typology render historical narratives and characters in allegorical terms,[174] and the writers of the mystery cycles, for example, do not hesitate to update and "particularise" biblical characters in order to strengthen their typological significance to the audience.

In the earliest morality play, *The Pride of Life*, we are told of the King of Life's parents and his uncle (ll. 83-4), despite his apparently ubiquitous status as "King of Life / And lorde of londe and lede" (ll. 253-4). In other words Humanum Genus' presentation in *The Castle of Perseverance* as a family man only strengthens his universally representative status as a Mankind figure, extending it to include universal father and universal husband. Again, he is presented as a type rather than as an amalgamation.

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[174] See A. C. Spearing's discussion of medieval typology in *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 146-9.

To return to Riggio's argument, her apparent condemnation of the play seems to be overly pressed. She states that "One of the most interesting aspects of the disinheritance scene is the subtle way it negates the significance of social bonds."[175] She also says that:

> The play treats social corruption as the given norm of society -- its only possible condition. From this perspective earthly wealth cannot be industriously gotton or well used. Humanum Genus can save his soul only by loosing his property and consequently disinheriting his family.[176]

This view is misapplied, however, because the disinheritance of Humanum Genus' family has *nothing* to do with his soul's salvation. The significance of social bonds is not "negated", rather they are introduced in the death scene and then flouted by World in order to intensify the pity and pathos felt by the audience towards the dying Humanum Genus. Riggio's decision that the play "does not open the door to social reform"[177] is beyond the point, based on extraneous criteria and an incorrect assumption of the intended audience for whom the play was written. The preeminent position given to the vice Covetous and the disinheritance scene *do* suggest a certain preoccupation with contemporary economic abuses, but Humanum Genus' judgment (and the meat of the play's argument) take place *after* his death and after any notions of social reform cease to be relevant. In other words, the play is not about society; it is about individual salvation. Her final remark that the play "more simply reaffirms the orthodox Christian hierarchy"[178] is not only correct but entirely the point. We feel sad because Humanum Genus' family is denied his goods upon his death because it is *not* necessary or relevant to anything that follows in the play's narrative. It is simply a cruel and pity-inspiring final insult to the helpless and dying Humanum Genus:

> Tesauriʒat et ignorat cui congregabit ea.
> Tresor, tresor, it hathe no tak;
>   It is oþer mens, olde and newe.
> Ow, ow, my good gothe al to wrak!
>   Sore may Mankynd rew.[179]

Here we reach the point that will define the final movement of the play's action. As noted previously, Humanum Genus utters his final dying words:

> To helle I schal bothe fare and fle

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[175] Riggio 205.
[176] Riggio 207.
[177] Riggio 208.
[178] Riggio 208.
[179] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 2986-9.

> But God me graunte of hys grace.
> I deye certeynly.
> Now my lyfe I haue lore.
> Myn hert brekyth, I syhe sore.
> A word may I speke no more.
> I putte me in Goddys mercy.[180]

Anima appears from "vndyr þe bed" and immediately picks up the argument:

> ANIMA: 'Mercy', þis was my last tale
> Þat euere my body was abowth.
> But Mercy helpe me in þis vale,
> Of dampnynge drynke sor I me doute.[181]

Anima follows on to berate his body's former wickedness, which suggests the remnants of a
debate between the body and soul, although it is here, by necessity, one sided:

> Body, þou dedyst brew a byttyr bale
> To þi lustys whanne gannyst loute
> Þi sely sowle schal ben akale[.][182]

The real "debate" here takes place between the two angels. Anima questions Good
Angel, saying "Now, swet Aungel, what is þi red? / Þe ryth red þou me reche" (ll. 3021-2),
and Good Angel's response is lost in the lacuna at line 3029.[183] Again, the angels act as
proponents of reason -- as *khoros* for the audience -- for Bad Angel concludes that by
"Wyttnesse of all þat ben abowte" (l. 3030) Humanum Genus must go to Hell because of his
alliance with Covetous. Good Angel is forced to agree with Bad Angel's argument through
reason:

> BONUS ANGELUS: Зe, alas, and welawo!
> Aзeyns Coueytyse can I not telle.
> Resun wyl I fro þe goo,
> For, wrechyd sowle, þou muste to helle.[184]

He points further to "ryth resun" in the following lines, but hints at the hope for
intervention:

> Þou muste to peyne, by ryth resun,
> Wyth Coveytyse, for he is chesun.
> Þou art trappyd ful of tresun
> But Mercy be þi socowre.[185]

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[180] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3001-7.

[181] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3008-11.

[182] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3012-4.

[183] Eccles suggests that this lacuna, based on stanzaic structure, would have contained around two hundred lines of text (*The Castle of Perseverance*, l. 3029, endnote).

[184] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3034-7.

[185] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3043-6.

As noted previously in this chapter, statements such as these necessitate the debate between the four daughters of God that follows in which Mercy will play a preeminent role. The suggestion in the Banns that "And oure lofly Ladi if sche wyl for hym mell / Be mercy and be menys in purgatory he is" (l. 124-5) -- hinting that the Virgin Mary is to intercede on Humanum Genus' behalf -- is not as dramatically coherent as the debate between the four daughters which is presented.[186] The daughters flesh out the arguments concerning the fate of Humanum Genus' soul, and they slip the narrative into a familiar *débat* or *éstrif*[187] based on biblical precedent and the logical positioning of variant prosopopoeia.

In her work *The Four Daughters of God*, Hope Traver has demonstrated the pervasive existence of the allegorical trope stemming from its use in Psalm 74: 11.[188] She discusses its appearance in several tracts during the medieval period, the most important being that of Hugo of St. Victor (1097-1141), which is further elaborated by Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153).[189] She notes:

> This sermon of Bernard's is of peculiar importance because of its extra-
> ordinary influence on mediæval literary history. It became immensely
> popular, and translations or redactions appeared in every country. Of
> these, two, by Grosseteste and Bonaventura respectively, deserve special
> study, since they introduced modifications of Bernard's story which deter-
> mined the development of the allegory [...].[190]

Bonaventura's *Speculum Vitae Christi*[191] -- in which the version of the debate of the four daughters of God appears that had ultimate influence on the English drama (rather than the version found in Grosseteste's *Chasteau d'Amour*)[192] -- contains several parallels to the version in *The Castle of Perseverance*, as well as to the allegory's other appearance in the late-medieval English drama in "The Parliament of Heaven" play of

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[186] Eccles comments that it is "more dramatic than a scene with a single intercessor would have been," xviii.

[187] Rossiter, 82. He defines the terms as "a formal contest in words between two persons who are opposed like the two counsels in a law-case or the contestants who held open debate or logical disputation in ancient universities and schools."

[188] Traver 5 (and following).

[189] Traver 7. Hugo of St. Victor's use of the allegory can be found in the *Patrologia Latina*, clxxvii, ed. Migne (Paris, 1844-64) 623-5; and St. Bernard's in *Patrologia Latina*, clxxxiii, 385-90.

[190] Traver 17.

[191] The saint's authorship of the work is not certain. See Isa Ragusa's introduction to *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Ital. 115)*, trans. Isa Ragusa (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961) xxi and footnote.

[192] Traver 125-40.

the *Ludus Coventriae* cycle.[193] Of importance here, however, is the way in which the allegory in *The Castle of Perseverance* differs from that in Bonaventura's *Speculum Vitae Christi* and from "The Parliament of Heaven" play.

Traver sums it up simply:

> [...] the *Castell*, being a morality play, does not use the allegory to introduce the incarnation. Accordingly, it was impossible for its author to preface the allegory by the prayers of the prophets and angels. Again, inasmuch as he is dealing with a period after the death of Christ, he cannot close the allegory with the annunciation.[194]

In fact, the argument in *The Castle of Perseverance* will turn the details of the Creation and the original debate surrounding the Incarnation back on themselves in the manner of legal precedent.

After the sisters have been called before God's throne in the *Speculum Vitae Christi*, Mercy opens the argument:

> When they had been called, Mercy began to speak: 'The rational being needs divine mercy, for it has become vile and wretched. The time for mercy has come; indeed it is already past.'[195]

Truth confronts her sister with details of the Old Testament, and the debate ensues:

> But Truth spoke contrarily: 'It is proper that the admonition you delivered be fulfilled, that Adam perish completely, with all who were in him, when, trespassing against your commandment, he tasted the forbidden apple.' Mercy said, 'Lord, why did you then create Mercy? Truth knows that I shall perish if you will never again be merciful.' Truth replied in opposition, 'If the transgressor escapes the punishment you foretold, your Truth will perish and not abide in eternity.'[196]

To solve the debate, the Son agrees to become incarnate and to die out of pure charity in order to remedy original sin and to "make death good."[197] This way, all humankind is punished (as sinners) through earthly death, but mercy is shown in the final judgment.

In "The Parliament of Heaven" from the *Ludus Coventriae* cycle, Truth makes a similar argument concerning original sin and the fate of mankind:

> VERITAS: Lord, I am þi dowtere Trewth.

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[193] "The Parliament of Heaven; The Salutation and Conception" (*Ludus Coventriae* XI), *The N-Town Play (Cotton MS Vespasian D 8* (EETS, SS 11), vol. 1, ed. Stephen Spector (Oxford, New York, Toronto, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1991) 111-23.

[194] Traver 139-40.

[195] *Meditations on the Life of Christ* 6-7.

[196] *Meditations on the Life of Christ* 7.

[197] *Meditations on the Life of Christ* 8.

þu wylt se I be not lore.
Thyn vnkynde creaturys to save were rewthe;
The offens of man hath gevyd þe sore.
Whan Adam had synnyd þu sydest þore
þat he xulde dye and go to helle.
And now to blysse hym to resstore --
Twey contraryes mow not togedyr dwelle![198]

Thus the difficulty of the argument is espoused: if Adam's punishment of death is not upheld, God's Truth and Righteousness may not abide in eternity, and yet, if Adam is not saved, Mercy cannot abide, and the dissent created will banish Peace. This proves a good argument, in light of the contending personifications presented.

The Son (Filius) announces the solution, similar to that espoused in the *Speculum Vitae Christi*:

If Adam had not deyd, peryschyd had Ryghtwysnes,
And also Trewth had be lost þerby.
Trewth and Ryght wolde chastyse foly.
ȝiff another deth come not, Mercy xulde perysch;
þan Pes were exyled fynyaly.
So tweyn dethis must be, ȝow fowre to cherysch.[199]

He then goes on to volunteer, as one "withowte synne" (l. 155) and "of þat charyté" (l. 158), to be made incarnate and to die for Mankind's redemption.

To return to *The Castle of Perseverance*, Anima has just been carried off to Hell[200] by Bad Angel who ends the scene with a flippant yet final remark: "Haue a good day! I goo to helle" (l. 3128). Mercy appears within the "place" in her white mantle, and she responds to Humanum Genus' dying words and Anima's previous lament:

MISERICORDIA: A mone I herd of mercy meve
And to me, Mercy, gan crye and call;
But if it haue mercy, sore it schal me greve,
For elle it schal to hell fall.[201]

Mercy's lines here betray her doubt over the fate of Humanum Genus and hint towards the debate that will follow. However, she immediately makes reference to the Incarnation and Resurrection and notes that -- historically speaking -- the daughters have *already* been united in agreement:

Rythwysnes, my systyr cheve,
þys ȝe herde; so dyde we all.
For we were mad frendys leve

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[198] "The Parliament of Heaven" ll. 57-64.
[199] "The Parliament of Heaven" ll. 139-44.
[200] Presumably a hellmouth located on or under Belial's scaffold.
[201] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3129-32.

Whanne þe Jevys proferyd Criste eysyl and gall
On þe Good Fryday.[202]

The question raised by the following debate, then, concerns the manner in which

the represented Mankind has asked for God's mercy in light of his sinful life, rather than

the outcome of the general mankind's salvation. Justice (Righteousness) picks up her

argument:

> JUSTICIA: Systyr, ȝe sey me a good skyl,
>   Þat mercy pasyt mannys mysdede.
> But take mercy whoso wyl
>   He muste it aske wyth love and drede;
> And eueryman þat wyl fulfyll
>   Þe dedly synnys and folw mysdede,
> To graunte hem mercy me þynkyth it no skyl;[203]

and the debate begins in full. Truth supports Justice's argument in two stanzas (ll. 3177-

202), and Peace finally suggests that they go to God's scaffold for judgment (ll. 3216-28).

After they have greeted God and he has welcomed them, Truth proceeds with her

argument (ll. 3229-313). Mercy follows for five stanzas, and reiterates the details of

Adam's fall and the subsequent need for the Incarnation:

> Si pro peccato vetus Adam non cecidisset,
> Mater pro nato mumquam grauidata fuisset.
>
> Ne had Adam synnyd here-before
>   And þi hestys in paradys had offent,
> Neuere of þi modyr þou schuldyst a be bore,
>   Fro heuene to erthe to haue be sent.
> But thyrti wyntyr [...].
>
> Lord, þou þat man hathe don more mysse þanne good,
>   If he dey in very contricioun,
> Lord, þe lest drope of þi blod
>   For hys synne makyth stysfaccioun.
> As þou deydyst, Lord, on þe rode,
>   Graunt me my peticioun![204]

We have, then, the employment of the "historical" argument concerning Adam's

fall and the need for the Incarnation (including the death and Resurrection) -- the

argument which originally fuels the debate between the sisters in the *Speculum Vitae*

Christi, "The Parliament of Heaven" play, and in many other examples of the allegory --

cited here as historical precedent for the preeminence of Mercy in this particular case. In

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[202] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3133-7.
[203] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3151-7.
[204] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3339-71.

other words, Riggio's statement that "the debate in Heaven is resolved not by means of litigious process but through reconciliation"[205] is not entirely the truth. Precedent has been established through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Saviour, and Righteousness and Truth are forced to argue the facts of this particular case against this precedent. Righteousness focuses her address on Humanum Genus' final words:

> Ouyrlate he callyd Confescion;
> Ouyrlyt was hys contricioun;
> He made neuere satisfaccioun.
> Dampne hym to helle belyve![206]

But, again, Mercy relies on precedent to counter Righteousness' and Truth's claims:

> Of Mankynde aske þou neuere wreche
> Be day ner by nyth,
> For God hymself hath ben hys leche,
> Or hys mercyful myth.[207]

Truth responds with a stanza condemning Humanum Genus' neglect of the poor and needy (ll. 3470-82), and Peace responds with six stanzas concerning the need for reconciliation in Heaven (ll. 3483-560). Then God the Father (Pater) finally settles the dispute, translating the allegorical mixture of his virtuous attributes for the audience while granting preeminence to Mercy:

> To make my blysse perfyth
> I menge wyth my most myth
> All pes, sum treuthe, and sum ryth,
> And most of my mercy.[208]

At this point, the Father commands the sisters to go and rescue Humanum Genus' soul from Hell, and they descend once again into the place, crossing over to the hellmouth (ll. 3574-85). After Peace and Justice have berated Bad Angel for his wickedness, they take Anima back across the place and up to God's scaffolded throne (ll. 3586-93).

Once Anima has been presented, God -- "*sedens in judicio*" (l. 3597) -- judges Humanum Genus' soul as being worthy of Paradise through God's own "synne quenchand" (l. 3603) mercy. He ends the stanza with a finer point on his position by quoting Deuteronomy (32: 39):

> Ego occidam et viuificabo, percuciam et sanabo, et nemo est qui
> de manu mea possit eruere.

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[205] Riggio 202.
[206] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3427-30.
[207] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3459-62.
[208] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3570-3.

[I shall kill, and I shall make alive, I shall wound and I shall
heal and there is no one who can tear himself from my hand][209]

God's power, dominion, and mercy (in this case) are re-emphasised not only by his appearance in judgment at the conclusion, but by the shape of the play's preceding events.

He continues to describe the all-encompassing certainty of the coming "gret jugement" (l. 3622), he enumerates the "seuene dedys of mercy" (l. 3628) which are requisite for salvation, and finishes by instructing the audience on the ultimate moral of all morality plays, "To mayntein þe goode and mendyn here mys" (l. 3644). The actor playing God then drops out of character, addressing the audience in the manner of an epilogue:

> Þus endyth oure gamys.
> To saue ȝou fro synnynge
> Evyr at þe begynnynge
> Thynke on ȝoure last endynge!
> Te Deum laudamus![210]

The play ends with appropriate certainty: Humanum Genus' soul is restored and God's power and mercy are reaffirmed. But how much control has the protagonist been allowed to exert over the fate of his own soul or over the direction of the play's narrative? The play as a whole obviously attributes the prime motivation to God through the actions of the final scene, but the status of the preceding allegory depicted leaves us in some doubt. It is as if the playwright is struggling with the idea of human free will in a world of contending personifications and charitably administered divine mercy.

Particularly through the characters of the two angels, the earthly Humanum Genus' impulses seem to initiate the advances or defences of the other abstractions. They are Mankind once removed, and they act as advisors, conscience, moral and immoral impulses, and *khoros* for the audience. Through their actions – if viewed in this light – we may see that Humanum Genus *does* have a limited control over the fate of his soul in the play. He is not merely a pawn of the play's abstractions. And he ultimately damns himself by succumbing to the temptations of Covetous. Of course, God does intervene in the end on Humanum Genus' behalf – in lieu of an apparent technicality (Humanum Genus'

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[209] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3610.
[210] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 3645-9.

crying "mercy" on his death bed), but that is ultimately the point. It is God's prerogative
– just as it was with the Incarnation – to intercede. In other words, while Catholic
orthodox doctrine is finally upheld in the play, humanistic gleanings are beginning to
show through the cracks as the allegorized psychomachia begins to give way to the
protagonist's moral dilemma. Now it is internal and external forces that contend for
control of Mankind, rather than good and evil, and God – more merciful than ever – must
referee, rather than initiate.

CHAPTER 3: On the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen*

(from Bodleian MS Digby 133)

Turning now to a consideration of the saint's play, the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, would seem to be a departure from a discussion of allegorical morality plays into the genre of dramatic hagiography. But, suprisingly, *Mary Magdalen* is one of the only late-medieval plays besides *The Castle of Perseverance* to make use of a traditional, full-scale psychomachia. As we shall see, the admixture of a biblically typological dramatic narrative with enacted allegorical violence gives rise to a wide range of intricate allegorical relationships expressed both verbally and physically. The play's premise multiplies the significant interplay between its characters by running history, typology, and metaphor alongside one another for an extended dramatic narrative. If we adhere to strict categories of genre, the result may be viewed as an attempt at a cross-pollination of genres. However, the play more accurately displays the variety and inventiveness offered by much of the late-medieval drama.

The Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* is unique amongst the surviving English saints' plays in that it makes extensive use of allegory. It is not a moral didactic allegory as such, however, as it deals primarily with hagiographic subject matter. But the playwright seems to allow the allegorical material to imbricate the details of Mary Magdalen's life in such a way as to suggest a universal application of the morals specific to Mary's legend. Moral conflict is externalized and universalized, creating a precarious dramatic shift in the first half of the play -- as allegory displaces legendary historical narrative -- which will subside after Mary's conversion. The immediate motive behind the switch to allegory seems to be related to a need for visible dramatic conflict through physical antagonism, but the result skews the distinction between particular example and abstract didactic generality.

Not surprisingly, the primary critical debate surrounding the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* has often revolved around the issue of genre classification.[1] Indeed, the notional genre of "saints' play" as a whole is troublesome, given the scarcity of extant English examples, all of which "extend across a range of early dramatic forms, from

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[1] See Darryll Grantley's article "Saints' Plays" in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 265-88 and bibliography.

liturgical drama to moral interlude."[2] Definitions of the genre differ according to the selected application of criteria. Form, stylistic devices, intent, or subject matter each disrupt a comprehensive definition of the few surviving English examples, so that in this case all-encompassing is favourable to particular. Indeed, terminology can again be problematic, as the alternate term "miracle play" was commonly used by scholars until quite recently.[3]

"Miracle play" might, in fact, be a more appropriate designation. Darryll Grantley rightly points out that "perhaps the only thing these plays have in common is a strong and decisive element of miracle."[4] The handful of plays usually included in the genre deal with post- or extra-biblical material but are not part of a cycle. They are concerned with venerating historical or legendary religious subjects in order to offer an exemplum of saintly virtue to the audience, and they usually avoid full-blown allegory. As such they cannot be classified as either "mystery plays" or "morality plays," based on our previous definitions of these categories (see Chapter 1).

While many examples of this type of drama survive on the Continent,[5] only four remain from medieval Britain: the Digby plays of *Mary Magdalen* and *The Conversion of St. Paul*, the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, and the Cornish play *Meriasek*. As Peter Happé points out, this was inevitable due to the Reformation, which saw "the probable destruction of saint play texts from monastic libraries for polemical reasons,"[6] rather than a lack of abundance or popularity.[7] Of these four, the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* cannot technically be deemed a "saint" play, as it does not contain a saint, but focuses instead on the legend of the abused Host which performs miracles.[8] It would seem, then, that "miracle plays" would be a more appropriate terminology for the four works, except

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[2] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 266.

[3] By E. K. Chambers, for example. See *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, 14-6.

[4] Darryll Grantley, "Producing Miracles," *Aspects of Early English Drama*, ed. Paula Neuss (D. S. Brewer/Barnes & Noble: Cambridge/Totowa, NJ, 1983) 78.

[5] Lynette R. Muir, "The Saint Play in Medieval France," *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, ed. Clifford Davidson, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series, vol. 8 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1986) 123.

[6] Peter Happé, "The Protestant Adaptation of the Saint Play," *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, 205. He discusses later Protestant adaptations of the form, primarily through the work of John Bale in plays such as *John Baptist's Preaching* and the historically emendatory *King Johan*, 205-40.

[7] In fact, Clifford Davidson demonstrates the copiousness of the genre based on contemporary secondary textual references and account records from the period in "The Middle English Saint Play and its Iconography," *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, 31-71.

[8] Grantley (in "Saints' Plays") discusses the auspices of the play and of the legend, which is traced to a fourteenth-century Italian text, Giovanni Vilani's *Cronaca*; 284.

that the term has historically been used in a broader sense to describe plays which are now commonly known as "mystery" plays *and* the "saints'" plays.[9] To avoid this confusion, I too will continue to use the presently accepted term "saint's play" when discussing these four works[10] and will base my employment of the term on Mary del Villar's simple, all-encompassing definition, that "A saint's play is a play that has a saint as its protagonist or a miracle as its main action."[11]

The reason for this discussion of genre categorisation lies in the peculiar nature of the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen*. As noted above, while it embodies both precepts of the above definition of a saint's play, it also contains lengthy, relevant passages of both liturgical material and didactic moral allegory. Any discussion of late-medieval, English allegorical drama must take into account this latter material, and that is why the play is included in this examination.

In his discussion of the saints' plays, Happé draws particular attention to the plays' multi-faceted existence:

> The plays flow and develop insofar as one type shades into another:
> those denizens of the morality play, the Seven Deadly Sins and the World,
> the Flesh, and the Devil, also appear in *Mary Magdalen*, reflecting, of
> course, the didactic objectives common to all genres. Indeed [...] for this
> rather shadowy form we must accept a powerful process of influence and
> counter-influence between the saint play and the more perceptible genres
> of the mystery and the morality play; [...].[12]

Once again, strict notions of genre categorisation are encumbering to a study of medieval drama, as elements of form, technique, and subject are shared from one play to another, yet their combinations are almost always unique. So, the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* will be referred to as a "saint's play" based on its chief subject and action, but -- as will be shown -- certain elements employed by the playwright link the *Mary Magdalen* with many late-medieval play forms, as literary and theatrical technique inevitably bleed through genre categories of the period.

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[9] Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, 16. He states that "No English play was...called a 'mystery' before 1744," and "Certainly the writer of the *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* was not thinking primarily of saints' plays when he condemned the playing of 'the myraclis and werkis that Crist so ernystfully wrouȝt to our helye,' [...]." In other words, the term "miracle" was often used to describe plays dealing with biblical stories (such as Christ's Passion), before the term "mystery" came into common use, and is therefore inappropriate to use for what is commonly called "saints'" plays (Lewis, 15-17).

[10] See Grantley's discussion in "Saints' Plays," 265-6.

[11] Mary del Villar, "Some Approaches to the Medieval English Saints' Play," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 15-16 (1972-3), 84.

[12] Happé, "The Protestant Adaptation of the Saint Play," 207

The history of MS Digby 133 is complicated and still rather speculative, but a basic idea of its background has been established.[13] The manuscript is grouped with a number of tracts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including Galileo's *Discorso del Flusso e Reflusso del Mare* (dated 1616), Roger Bacon's *Radix Mundi* (dated 1550), *Trattato dell'Arte Geomantica* (early seventeenth century), and three tracts in one mid sixteenth-century hand: *De Theorica Trium Superiorum (Planetarium), De Epiciclo Lunae*, and *De Capite et Cauda Draconis*.[14] Alongside these various tracts, three other plays are subsequently included in the manuscript: *The Killing of the Children, The Conversion of St. Paul*, and an incomplete version of the morality play of *Wisdom* (or *Mind, Will, and Understanding*).[15]

Three of the manuscript's four plays (excluding *The Killing of the Children*) bear the initials of a Myles Blomefylde, and thus have an early association with one another. Blomefylde was born in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, in 1525, and lived in Chelmsford, Essex, until his death in 1603.[16] Although no definite conclusions may be drawn, it should be noted that a fuller version of *Wisdom* is included in the Macro plays (Folger MS. V. a. 354 -- which also includes *Mankind* and *The Castle of Perseverance*). The Macro Plays, acquired by the Rev. Cox Macro (1683-1776), all have certain associations with or near Bury St. Edmunds, of which Macro was a native[17] and where Blomefylde might have acquired those plays which bear his initials.[18] It is easy to assume, then, that Bury St. Edmunds is the common referent for all of the Macro plays and for the four plays of the Digby manuscript.[19] Baker and Hall suggest that "Bury may well have been a centre of dramatic activity with which all the Digby plays could have been associated,"[20] although, again, this remains speculation.

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[13] All of the information concerning the details of the manuscripts' history can be found in the introduction to the Early English Text Society's edition of *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS. Digby 133 and E. Museo 160* (EETS 283), eds. Donald C. Baker and Louis B. Hall, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) ix-xv.

[14] Baker and Hall, introduction, ix.

[15] Baker and Hall, introduction, ix.

[16] Baker and Hall, introduction, xii.

[17] Eccles vii.

[18] Baker and Hall, introduction, xiv.

[19] In fact, *The Killing of the Children* -- while the only Digby play not initialized by Myles Blomefylde -- is written in the same hand as a good portion of the Digby copy of *Wisdom*, thus tightening its association to the other plays of the manuscript (Baker and Hall, introduction, xiv).

[20] Baker and Hall, introduction, xiv. They note that -- beyond the Macro plays' association with Bury (through the Revd. Cox Macro) -- Myles Blomefield owned a unique copy of "The Regiment of Life," the work of a monk at Bury named William Bomfild, who might have been related to Myles. They suggest that "It is, in short, possible that the

As all of the Macro and Digby plays have Bury associations, it is comfortable to assume this tidy idea that Bury was a dramatic centre for East Anglia during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, originating and distributing plays for the region, either through touring productions (*The Castle of Perseverance*) or through travelling playscripts which were adapted for local productions or specific occasions. However, as "we know little of the early history of MS Digby 133,"[21] and as none of these plays' origins can be conclusively proven, it is inappropriate to speculate further.

The surviving text of the play of *Mary Magdalen* seems to be a very poor copy.[22] Baker and Hall suggest a date of 1515-1525 for the manuscript based on the watermark and the *cursiva currens* hand used throughout the play.[23] Stanzas are uneven and confused, speaking parts are occasionally mis-assigned, and over thirty lines of text are missing. The language of the play suggests that the original was much older, possibly composed around the end of the fifteenth century.[24]

The most obvious source for the Digby *Mary Magdalen* is the New Testament.[25] The playwright infuses the stories of Mary Magdalen and other women from the Gospels with a satisfying and subject-venerating sense of narrative. In a movement beyond mere representation -- as in much of the vernacular liturgical drama -- the playwright develops his picture of Mary's life and works through the wealth of medieval hagiographic legend in an attempt to edify as well as to inform and entertain. The playwright's choice of subject often exceeds mere literary imitation, often displaying contemporary sensibilities mixed with an intent to universalize -- as with his inclusion of the allegorical material, for instance. However, he does rely heavily on a legendary account of Mary's life for much of the play's narrative.

Many scholars have previously attributed the play's use of lengthy portions of non-biblical material to the account of Mary's life given in the *Legenda Aurea*, by Jacobus

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Digby *Wisdom* passed from Bury to Myles by way of William. Indeed, it is possible [...] that all the Digby plays were transmitted in this way," xiv.

[21] Baker and Hall, introduction, x.

[22] Baker and Hall, introduction, xxxi. Once again, all of the following information on the play in its manuscript form comes from their introduction to the EETS edition, xxx-lii.

[23] Baker and Hall, introduction, xxx.

[24] Baker and Hall, introduction, xi.

[25] As with the legendary narratives, the play presents a conflation of several different women from the New Testament often called the "single Magdalene" (Davidson, 73). They include the woman who washes Jesus' feet in the house of Simon the leper (Matt. 26: 6-13, Mark 14: 3-9, Luke 7: 36-50, John 12: 1-8), the woman from whom Jesus casts out the seven devils (Mark 16: 9), and the sister of Martha and Lazarus (Luke 10: 38-9, John 11: 1-3).

de Voragine (c. 1228 - 1298). Jacobus was a Dominican of Lombardy who was elected

Archbishop of Genoa in 1292; he was known as the 'father of the poor' and 'the peace

maker' for his efforts in quelling domestic strife in northern Italy.[26] His most

accomplished work was the *Legenda Aurea*, and its popularity is attested by its

proliferation in the late-medieval period:

> From the fact that there are over five hundred manuscript copies of the
> book in existence, and that within the first hundred years of printing it
> appeared in more than one hundred and fifty editions and translations,
> it is obvious that the *Legend* was in extremely wide demand.[27]

It was translated into English by an unknown writer in about 1450 and was subsequently

translated and printed by Caxton in 1483,[28] and the author of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*

could have well been acquainted with it prior to writing the play.

In the EETS's definitive edition of the Digby plays, the introduction states that

"The sources of the play are clearly two: the New Testament accounts [...] and *The Golden*

Legend's outline of Mary's life."[29] Chambers also discusses the same sources for the play.

He relates that "The whole life of the saint, as related in the *Legenda Aurea*, is

covered,"[30] hinting at a definitive literary development. Davidson is less specific, noting

that the story:

> is to be found in the liturgy as well as in her widely known legend as it
> was retold in the *Golden Legend* and other collections of saints' lives.[31]

In a more recent article, however, Grantley has demonstrated the more probable

direct source for the legendary material of the play:

> there are several things in the play to suggest as the main direct source,
> though not necessarily the only one, the vernacular version of the legend
> found in the Corpus Christi College MS 145 and related manuscripts of the
> *South English Legendary*.[32]

The more important of Grantley's examples deal with the play's inclusion of allegorical

material and with direct verbal parallels with the *South English Legendary*.

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[26] The details of Jacobus' life are discussed in the introduction to Jacobus' *The Golden Legend*, trans. Helmut Ripperger and Granger Ryan (New York, London, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941) v-vi.

[27] Ripperger and Ryan in Jacobus, vii.

[28] Ripperger and Ryan in Jacobus, vii.

[29] Baker and Hall, introduction, xl.

[30] Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, 45.

[31] Davidson 73.

[32] Darryll Grantley, "The Source of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*," *Notes and Queries*, vol. 229 (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) 457.

The seven devils which are cast out of Mary by Jesus in the biblical story, for instance, are linked with the seven deadly sins in the play:

> Here xal Satan go hom to hys stage, and Mari xal entyr into þe place alone, save þe Bad Angyl, and al þe Seuen Dedly Synnys xal be conveyyd into þe howse of Symont Leprovs, þe xal be arayyd lyke seuen dylf [...].[33]

The biblical reference to the casting out of the seven devils comes from Mark 16: 9[34] and Luke 8: 2, but its original association with the seven deadly sins has been attributed to Gregory the Great.[35] The association appears in several tracts in the medieval period, including *Jacob's Well*.[36] Notably, it does not appear in the *Legenda Aurea*, but is mentioned twice in the *South English Legendary*:

> Þe sunne one of lecherie   he[o] nadde noȝt ido
> Ac of all þe seue heued sunnes   he[o] was fol also

and,

> And caste out of hure seue deuellen   as it iwrite is
> Þat were þe seue heued sunnes   þat he binom hure iwis.[37]

This association is important to *Mary Magdalen*, as it solidifies the relationship between the allegorical adornment of the previous scenes and the biblical story. It links allegory with historical legend, precedented in the *South English Legendary* but not in the *Legenda Aurea*.

Other (perhaps more telling) examples offered by Grantley are verbal echoes. In the *South English Legendary*, Mary suggests that the King of Marcyll visits Peter after the King has thanked her for converting him:

> Anon so þe king to soþe west   to Marie he wende
> And þonkede hure of þat oure Louerd   þoru hure
>   bone hom sende
> Ne þonkeþ me noȝt quaþ Marie   noþing of þis dede
> Ac þonkeþ Peter oure maister   for ich do al bi is rede.[38]

This scene is echoed verbally in *Mary Magdalen*:

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[33] *Mary Magdalen* l. 563 (stage direction).

[34] "[...] he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons."

[35] Grantley, "The Source of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*," 458 (he cites the "XL Homiliarum in Evangelia," *Patrologia Latina*, vol. vi, col. 1239).

[36] The work mentions the association in a brief passing, relating that:
>   as Marye mawdelen dede, wassche þou þe feet of crist, þat is, his
>   manhod, *wyth* wepyng terys in þi *confessioun*, & crist schal cacche
>   out of þe vij. feendys, þat is, vij. dedly synnes, as he dede out of marye
>   mawdelen.
Jacob's Well (EETS, OS 115), part 1, ed. Arthur Brandeis (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1900) 185.

[37] *The South English Legendary* (EETS, OS 235) eds. C. D'Evelyn and A. J. Mill (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), ll. 23-4 and 39-40.

[38] *The South English Legendary* ll. 123-6.

> REX: Now thank I þi God, and specyally þe,
> And so xall I do whyle I leve may.

> MARY: 3e xall thankytt Petyr, my mastyr, wythowt delay![39]

In the *Legenda Aurea*, it is the King himself who decides to make the journey to Peter "in order to know whether all that Magdalen said of Christ were true."[40]

The second verbal echo occurs during the journey, when the queen dies in premature labour brought on by the storm. In the *South English Legendary*, the queen dies because she has no help in labour:

> Child he[o] hadde in þe se   wel ar hure time were
> And for defaute of womman help   þat non nei hure nere
> And gret angwise and drede   he[o] deide ri3t þere.[41]

The play places the words in the mouth of the dying queen:

> REGINA: [...] Alas, þat wommannys help is away!
> An hevy departyng is betwyx vs in syth,
>   Fore now departe wee!
> For defawte of wommen here in my nede,
> Deth my body makyth to sprede.[42]

The stress of blame put on the lack of a midwife in both examples -- a notion not found in the *Legenda Aurea* -- and the repetition of the phrase "defaut of womman" draw the link between the tradition found in the *South English Legendary* and in *Mary Magdalen* closer.

I think, however, that details such as these only heighten the overall fruitlessness of attempting to determine strict derivation with regard to the saints' legends and plays. Both the *Legenda Aurea* -- with its many translations and redactions[43] -- and the *South English Legendary*[44] belong to the literary traditions of a highly hagiographical culture. And, as "the saint's legend was one of the most important and enduring of literary forms from the Conquest to the Renaissance in England,"[45] many questions of originality are both cumbersome and misapplied with regard to the later drama. While it seems that Grantley has adequately demonstrated that the *South*

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[39] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 1678-80.

[40] Jacobus 358.

[41] *The South English Legendary* ll. 148-50.

[42] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 1759-63.

[43] Including the eight surviving manuscripts of the prose collection called the *Gilte Legende* (c. 1430-8) (which has been attributed to Osbern Bokenham) which later became the basis of Caxton's *Golden Legend*; see Sheila Delany's introduction to *A Legend of Holy Women: A Translation of Osbern Bokenham's Legends of Holy Women* (Notre Dame, IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992) xiv.

[44] Which survives in several versions from different dates; see the introduction to *The Early South English Legendary* (*MS. Laud, 108, in the Bodleian Library*) (EETS, OS 87), ed. Carl Horstmann (London: Trübner & Co., 1887) vii-xxiv.

[45] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 267.

English Legendary is a primary source for much of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, it is more important here to investigate how the play uses the biblical and legendary material towards a dramatic end and how a highly precedented literary narrative such as exists around the Magdalen might have been applied on the medieval stage.

With this in mind, it is appropriate to turn to a consideration of the complex staging involved in the production of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*. As with *The Castle of Perseverance*, the staging can be shown to reflect allegorical and didactic relationships in the play itself, usually through strategic and often complex positioning.

Its staging is indeed highly elaborate and theatrically interesting in that it encompasses nearly every possible late-medieval special effect and technological apparatus. Scenes are numerous and varying, as are identifiable speaking roles,[46] and there are no fewer than nineteen different locations called for in the stage directions. A throne must exist for Tiberius in Rome (mentioned in l. 19), and we may assume similar but less elaborate set pieces -- perhaps shared in different scenes -- for the other ranting characters (such as Herod, Pilate, the World, Flesh, the Devil, and the King of Marcyll). The Castle of Magdalen features preeminently in the action of the play and must have had a central position. Also required by the text are a tavern, an arbour (which could easily have been assumed in the unlocalized central "place"), the temple in Marseilles, tombs for both Christ and Lazarus, the house of Simon the Leper, the "rock" on which the Queen of Marcyll and her child are left, the "old logge wythowt þe gate" (l. 1577, s.d.) to which Mary retires in the final section, and, of course, the ship.

Many of the locations themselves must have been scaffolds as in *The Castle of Perseverance*, or at least similar to the place-and-scaffold arrangement. The stage directions are ambiguous, however, and lend themselves to many interpretations:

> *Here xal entyr þe prynse of dyllys in a stage, and helle ondyrneth þat stage, [...].*[47]

Furnivall originally interpreted directions such as these as indicating a pageant wagon performance.[48] This seems unlikely in light of the number of different locations required.

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[46] Over forty different characters may be identified, but the exact number (given the inaccuracies of the manuscript) cannot be definitely deduced. Doubling was certainly used. See Baker and Hall, introduction, xliii.
[47] *Mary Magdalen*, l. 357 (s. d.).
[48] F. J. Furnivall, *The Digby Mysteries* (EETS, ES 70) (London: 1896), xi.

What is apparent from the stage directions is that many of the scaffolds or mansions were intended to be multi-leveled. The previous example offered calls for a hell-mouth beneath the Devil's stage (*"and helle ondyrneth þat stage"*). Beyond this, there are a number of descents, ascents, and appearances to, from, and on the stage representing Heaven, although the play gives no real indication of its particular structure:

1. *Here xall hevyn opyn, and Jhesus xall shew [hymself]* (l. 1348, s.d.)
2. *Tunc decendet angelus* (l. 1375, s.d.)
3. *Tunc dissenditt angelus* (l. 1597, s.d.)
4. *Here xall to angyllys desend into wyldyrnesse, and other to xall*
   bryng an oble, opynly aperyng aloft in þe clowwdys; þe to
   benethyn xall bryng Mari (l. 2018, s.d.)
5. *Asumpta est Maria in nubibus* (l. 2030, s.d.)

The references to ascents and descents are reinforced by the dialogue. In line 386, World asks the Devil to "cum vp onto my tent," then the Devil commands his minions Belfagour and Belzabub to "Com vp here to me!" (l. 725), and later Jesus commands Raphael "To Mary Mavdleyn decende in a whyle" in line 1369.

It is apparent from the previous examples that the scaffolds representing Hell, Heaven, and the World must have been raised structures, and that some (Hell), if not all, contained a lower level. The stage directions further recommend a second chamber within the employed mansions, as two of the stage directions call for characters to make quick exits. Although a drawn curtain would also suffice, a lower chamber in the scaffold with a trap door could easily have been employed: *Her avoydyt Syrus sodenly* (l. 276, s.d.), *Here avoydyt Jhesus sodenly* (l. 1095, s.d.).

It must be noted, however, that the former stage direction takes place in, on, or near the Castle of Magdalen, when Syrus is to exit quickly after his death scene. The play contains no real description of what the castle may have looked like other than reference to it being a "towyre" (l. 49), and there is no direct reference to it being scaffolded. Likewise, Jesus' sudden exit takes place at his sepulchre, presumably located at ground level. While the stage directions would suit a trap-door arrangement in a multi-chambered scaffold (especially for the former example), the evidence in the text is insufficient to support such a recreation.

Later in the play, however, a stage direction occurs that does lend further credence to the idea of the employment of multi-levelled scaffolds. After Mary has confronted the King of Marcyll in the pagan temple, she calls for a miracle to demonstrate God's power:

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> *Here xall comme a clowd from heven, and sett þe tempyl on afyer,*
> *and þe pryst and þe cler[k] xall synke, [...].*[49]

Not only must the cloud descend from a scaffolded Heaven, but the direction that "*þe pryst*

and þe cker[k] xall synke" strongly suggest that the two characters have been lowered into

a lower section or chamber of the temple. This could easily have been achieved by means

of a platform representing the temple with a trap door opening into the lower section.

Grantley posits his vision of the production in more specific terms:

> The disappearance of the priest and boy takes place simultaneously with
> the firing of the temple and the sudden distraction of the audience's attention
> caused by that spectacle would allow the trapdoor to open and shut again
> without being noticed.[50]

Once again, however, physical references to the temple itself are non-existent within the

text of the play, and reconstruction remains mere conjecture. But it is apparent that multi-

layered scaffolds would have been used for at least some of the places called for by the

text and that they were probably shared over the course of the play for different

locations.

This leads to the question of location. Several scaffolds, mansions, and

unlocalized spaces are required by the text, but how might they have been arranged in

relation to each other and to the audience? As noted earlier, Furnivall reconstructed the

performance on and around a movable and multi-scenic pageant wagon,[51] but his

understanding is generated by comparison with the cycle pageant production evidence.[52]

Nagler notes that J. Q. Adams originated an in-the-round reconstruction for the play's set

containing eight mansions around a central plateau,[53] and Victor Albright carries this

arrangement further by placing the Castle of Magdalen in the centre of the place based on

the stage plan from *The Castle of Perseverance*.[54] Additionally, Albright places eleven

mansions around the periphery of the circle with a water-filled moat in which the ship

may traverse to and from Marseilles.

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[49] *Mary Magdalen* l. 1561 (s.d.).

[50] Grantley, "Producing Miracles," 82.

[51] Furnivall xi.

[52] Alois Maria Nagler, *The Medieval Religious Stage: Shapes and Phantoms*, trans. C. Schoolfield (New Haven, CN and London: Yale University Press, 1976) 53.

[53] John Quincy Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1925) 225.

[54] Victor Albright, *The Shakespearean Stage* (New York: 1909) 15-7.

Baker and Hall draw attention to the improbability of an in-the-round

performance, however, noting that:

> If the circular arena-and-scaffolds method was used, it would likely have
> been complex. The constant movement in the play must have been very
> troublesome if the audience had been placed as Southern speculates for
> *The Castle* [*of Perseverance*].[55]

They conclude by recommending a "semi-circular disposition [...], in which the stages are

located close together around one side of the place, and the audience on the other."[56] This

seems far more reasonable in light of the number and variety of the locations required.

Nagler supports this arrangement; however his reconstruction of the play within the

cathedral close (in front of the great west door) of Lincoln Cathedral[57] -- while an

extremely seductive proposition -- cannot be upheld with any textual or historical

evidence.

Alan Nelson comes closer to more adequately realizing the probable nature of the

staging involved in a play such as the Digby *Mary Magdalen*. In his examination of

medieval staging conventions, he describes the apparent existence of what he calls "scenic

clusters" in the N-Town cycle:

> The theory of medieval theater-in-the-round as propounded by Richard
> Southern does not fully recognize the existence of scenic clusters such as the
> N-Town heaven complex.[58]

He goes on to describe the so-called "heaven complex" in the N-Town cycle as containing

all of the set-pieces necessary to the scenes requiring direct communication with the

Heaven mansion: such as paradise, a hill (which will serve as Mount Olivet in the New

Testament portions) with a park at its base (for scenes involving a garden), the temple,

Nazareth, and the Golden Gate (where Anne and Joachim meet).[59]

Nelson sites Renward Cysat's sketch of the Lucerne Easter play (1583) as pictorial

evidence for such an arrangement.[60] The sketch shows an elaborate mansion for Heaven,

with Mount Olivet, a garden, and the three crosses all adjacent to it in the foreground by

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[55] Baker and Hall, introduction, li.

[56] Baker and Hall, introduction, li.

[57] Nagler 53-4.

[58] Alan H. Nelson, "Configurations of Staging in Medieval English Drama," *Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual*, eds. Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972) 136-7.

[59] Nelson 133-6.

[60] Reprinted in Nelson, 138. Also in Nagler, 30-1; Lois Potter, plate 9; and in Allardyce Nicoll's *Masks, Mimes, and Miracles* (London/New York: George G. Harrap & Co., 1931/Cooper Square Publishers, 1964) fig. 136, p. 199.

way of a ladder. While the Lucerne sketch depicts a much later, Continental drama, it does demonstrate Nelson's understanding of "scenic clusters" which he sees as the basis of the N-Town cycle's stage production.

He clarifies his definition of the term by noting two primary benefits:

> Stage clusters are of practical service in scenes which require immediate communication between two or more *loca*, for example, between heaven and Olivet. [...] Stage clusters also serve as visual representations of geographical relationships. [...] This provides for some efficiency of signification and design.[61]

I propose that this type of set arrangement may be applied to *Mary Magdalen*, and that notions such as "scenic cluster," "complex," and "efficiency of signification" are highly appropriate to an understanding of the way in which an outdoor, narrative, stationary medieval drama might have been produced. *Mary Magdalen* revolves around different geographical locations which quickly follow one another and back again with little disruption to the narrative. The play opens in Tiberius' palace in Rome, shifts to Magdalen Castle, back to Rome, then to Herod's palace in Jerusalem, Pilate's palace, and then back to Magdalen Castle for Syrus' death. The play continues in this peripatetic fashion with general geographical locations forming a web of vaguely grouped scenic associations. Certain geographical locations, such as Marseilles or Jerusalem, require a number of interrelated scenic structures in the play.

Marseilles, for instance, must contain a temple on a raised platform (as noted earlier) large enough to contain the priest and his clerk, the King, the Queen, Mary, and the altar and appropriate idols. The King himself must also have a mansion -- or at least some sort of structure with a bed.[62] Mary enters *"an old logge wythowt þe gate"* (l. 1577, s.d.), and the final scene requires a *"wyldyrnesse"* (l. 1970, s.d.) located somewhere near Heaven[63] and a cell for the priest who administers communion to Mary (l. 2072, s.d.). The area or "cluster" of Marseilles, then, must contain at least five separate *loca*: the temple, the King's palace, Mary's *old logge*, a *wyldyrnesse*, and the priest's cell. In addition, all

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[61] Nelson 137.

[62] *Mary Magdalen* l. 1577 (s.d.)

[63] This is so the angels may descend and ascend to and from Mary, as in the stage direction in line 2018:
"Here xall to angyllys desend into wyldyrnesse, and other to xall bryng an
oble, opynly aperyng aloft in þe clowddys; þe to benethyn xall bryng Mari,
and she xall receyve þe bred, and þan go aȝen into wyldyrnesse."

of these places must remain somewhat distanced from the structures associated with Jerusalem if the traversing ship is to serve its purpose.

Scaffold or mansion doubling must have been used in the play, although the only structures that might have been doubled with the Marseilles cluster are the mansions (or "tents," l. 386) of World and Flesh. The Castle of Magdalen seems symbolically inappropriate for doubling, and all of the other main structures are required during the Marseilles sequence: Hell stage is required in ll. 962-92; Pilate, Herod, and Tiberius each speak from their respective structures in ll. 1249-1335; the house of Simon the Leper has been burned earlier (l. 743, s.d. -- all though this need not have been with actual fire!); and the scaffold of Heaven features throughout the sequence. Regardless of doubling, however, the structures associated with Marseilles must remain distinct from those of Jerusalem -- not only geographically and symbolically, but also because of scene requirements in the text -- and Heaven must have been the link between the two, as it is required in the action throughout.

It is clear, then, that a general understanding of the play's possible staging is tantamount to a full understanding of its character associations. The World, the Flesh, the Devil, and the seven deadly sins all vie with the good characters for control and domination of both action and protagonist. As with *The Castle of Perseverance*, the staging of *Mary Magdalen* could heighten the signification of certain character associations and allegorical/typological relationships. If the three enemies of the soul are scaffolded (as discussed previously), the ferocity of their opening bombasts is heightened, while their ludicrous attempts at control are later dwarfed by God on his scaffold following Mary's conversion -- to the point that they eventually disappear from action all together. But why has the playwright chosen to include these allegorical elements in his dramatic biography of Saint Mary Magdalen in the first place?

The genre classification of *Mary Magdalen* as a saint's play (discussed previously) skews a ready understanding of its form and structure. If the purpose of a saint's play is to educate (and entertain) through hagiographic example with action that is seen primarily to be biographical,[64] then the play's inclusion of universal personifications and other

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[64] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 270.

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allegorical elements might be seen as a disruption.[65] Indeed, Happé notes that some use of allegorical material can be merely length-extending elaboration:

> [...] a large-scale play needs an elaboration of material, and this leads to an incorporation of a very wide subject matter which may be more legendary than scriptural, as in the adaptation of Mary's adventures, and may incorporate allied material which is not strictly related except by amplification.[66]

A closer examination of *Mary Magdalen* as a whole, however, reveals a different motive behind much of its allegory. Retaining "the didactic objectives common to all genres,"[67] the play employs methods apparent in examples more adherent to strict genre categories and combines these methods towards its didactic end.

As a hagiographic drama, *Mary Magdalen* retains the episodic nature characteristic of its non-dramatic legendary analogues. While it has "often been regarded as formless and sprawling,"[68] certain symbolic structural arrangements do emerge from the narrative to give it form -- usually dealing with that allegorical material which Happé criticizes as "not strictly related except by amplification." It is nowhere near as symbolically and structurally unified as a play such as *The Castle of Perseverance* and does not reflect the latter's thorough allegorical presentation. But it does attempt a combination of the symbolic parallelism of the mystery plays -- what Harris deems "vertical time" in late-medieval biblical exegesis, based on the use of *figura*[69] -- and a "cumulative audience engagement with the character over a protracted [...] narrative,"[70] central to didactic allegorical drama. As we shall see, however, these two forms of presentation do not always exist comfortably alongside one another.

The play opens with a jarring rant by the character "Inperator":

> I command sylyns, in þe peyn of forfetur,
> To all myn avdyeans present general![71]

He follows on to insist on his authority and dominion, and he tells us that he is "Tyberyus Sesar" (l. 8). The Inperator's opening bombast does more than quell the noise of the assembled audience. It also initiates the first of several tirades that will form a general

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[65] Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, 64. He notes "an intrusion of morality elements [...]."

[66] Happé, "The Protestant Adaptation of the Saint Play," 206-7.

[67] Happé, "The Protestant Adaptation of the Saint Play," 207.

[68] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 279.

[69] Harris 101. This concept is discussed in the first chapter.

[70] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 270.

[71] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 1-2.

pattern through the majority of the play. In fact, *Mary Magdalen* is a veritable play of rants, as more than twenty stanzas are devoted to the alliterative boasting of both good and evil characters.[72]

A rhetorical parallel is developed between the three boastful enemies of Christ (Caesar, Herod, and Pilate) and the three enemies of the soul (World, Flesh, and the Devil). Its purpose, however, serves to unite the form of the play:

> Some parallels are in forms of rhetoric. [...] The triumvirate of Tiberius, Herod and Pilate, the chief enemies of Christ, is thus associated with the diabolic trinity. [...], enabling the audience immediately to place them in the appropriate focus and integrating scriptural, legendary, and allegorical characters in one mode of dramatic presentation.[73]

More than this, the specific parallel between these two sets of characters (there are many others in the play) serves another purpose.

The all-important Christian story of Christ's preaching, trial, suffering, death, and resurrection lies beneath the surface of most legendary accounts of the life of St. Mary Magdalen,[74] as it does with the Digby play. As the foundation of the New Testament it is, of course, the foundation of Mary Magdalen's works and subsequent beatification. Differing from a narrative legendary account of Mary's life, however, a dramatic version must employ the mutual elements of dramatic conflict and economy in order to unify the play's presented action. Notions such as these may seem more at home with modern approaches to drama, but they are wholly unavoidable to any dramatic enterprise; late-medieval dramatists frequently employ innovations in form and subject matter towards their reconciliation.[75] The parallel made in the play between the three enemies of Christ and the three enemies of the soul -- beyond mere rhetoric or elaboration -- serves this purpose by imposing form and unifying action.

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[72] The ranting tyrant is, of course, a popular convention of the medieval drama. Besides the examples discussed in *The Castle of Perseverance* (in the previous chapter), other notable examples include Herod's bombast in "The Death of Herod," (*Ludus Coventriae* XX), ll. 9-40 and 129-41; and in the Digby play of *The Killing of the Children*, ll. 57-80; as well as the introduction by Dux in the early fifteenth-century fragment, "Dux Moraud," in *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments* (EETS, SS 1), ed. Norman Davis (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970) ll. 7-39. For discussions of the convention see Stephen May, "Good Kings and Tyrants: A Re-assessment of the Regal Figure on the Medieval Stage," *Medieval English Theatre*, 5: 2 (1983) 87-102; Lawrence M. Clopper, "Tyrants and Villains: Characterisation in the Passion Sequence of the English Cycle Plays," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 41 (1980) 3-20; and David Staines, "To Out-Herod Herod: The Development of a Dramatic Character," *Comparative Drama*, 10 (1976) 29-53.

[73] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 281-2.

[74] The most prevalent medieval examples include Jacobus' *The Golden Legend*; John Mirk's sermon "De Sancta Maria Magdalena et Eius Festiuitate Sermo Breuis," *Festial*, 203-8; *The South English Legendary*; and the *Gilte Legende*.

[75] Harris' discussion of "vertical time" in the mystery cycles (101), for instance, draws together the various narrative threads of the Scripture into symbolic patterns of action. Morality plays such as *The Castle of Perseverance* rely on a highly unified allegorical structure, often reflected in rhetoric and versification.

In narrative accounts of the legend such as those in the *South English Legendary* and the *Legenda Aurea*, for instance, no mention is made of Tiberius, Herod, or Pilate. While they are abbreviated versions of the saint's life and are parts of greater works, there is no need their more concise accounts to explain the details of Christ's life outside of Mary's individual contacts with it. More important that this, however, the *South English Legendary* and the *Legenda Aurea* make no mention of the three enemies of the soul. Not only are these characters not historically or scripturally appropriate to the narrative biographies of St. Mary Magdalen, but also there is no need in a narrative account to present an antagonistic force external to the protagonist. What remains is a sequential narrative of accumulated material from scripture and legend.

Without the presentation of the universal enemies of the soul, Jacobus attributes Mary's motive for sinning to personal vanity, and in this he is quite brief:

> As rich as Mary was, she was no less beautiful; and so entirely had she abandoned her body to pleasure that she was no longer called by any other name than 'the sinner.'[76]

This passage prescribes a modicum of free will on Mary's part, as she -- because of her wealth and beauty -- "abandons" her body to pleasure, rather than being actively tempted or coerced. Jacobus places the emphasis on her "body" as the abandoned and bespotted element, however, leaving Mary's spiritual self guilty of the abandonment but still receptive of future redemption. This distinction between "Mary" and "her body" leaves the veneration of the saint's spiritual life unsullied by theoretical considerations of any spiritual motivation towards sinfulness.

Bokenham cites a similar set of circumstances, but shifts the impetus towards sinfulness to Mary's personified "qualities":

> In her, then, were joined youth, wealth, and beauty. But for lack of proper supervision these qualities are often agents of insolence and importers of vice; and so they were in Mary Magdalen.[77]

Personification is employed to explain the saint's fall into sin, diluting blame that might be placed on Mary herself to a lack of supervision of her "agents of insolence" and "importers of vice". Both Jacobus and Bokenham distance their protagonist from the

[76] Jacobus 356.
[77] Delany 108.

sinfulness in which her body is inundated, choosing rather to focus on her subsequent

conversion and miraculous ministry.

A second option available to the playwright finds its place in another line of

legendary material. In his *Festial*, Mirk relates that Mary turns to sinning after God

breaks off her betrothal to St. John:

> Then, as mony bokys tellyth, when Ion þe Ewangelyst schuld haue
> weddyd her, Cryst bad Ion sewe hym, and lyf yn maydynhode; and
> soo he dyd. Herfore Mary was wrath, and ȝaf her al to synne and
> namely to lechery, un so moch þat scho lost þe name of Mawdelen,
> and was callyd þe synfull woman.[78]

The same reason for Mary's fall is given in the *South English Legendary*. After Jesus call's

John away from the betrothal, Mary is full of wrath: "For þat he bynom hure spouse • sori

he[o] was and wroþ."[79]

Jacobus, in fact, deals with this strain of the legend, but dismisses it:

> Certain authors relate that Mary Magdalen was betrothed to Saint John
> the Evangelist, and that he was about to take her to wife when Christ,
> coming into the midst of the nuptials, called the Evangelist to Him; where-
> at the Magdalen was so wroth that she abandoned herself to sinful pleasure.
> But this is held to be a false and frivolous tale: and Friar Albert, in his
> preface to the Gospel of Saint John, declares that the espoused wife whom
> the apostle left behind to follow Jesus remained a virgin all her life, and
> later lived in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary.[80]

Davidson suggests that the playwright of the Digby version is fully aware of this

branch of the legend, despite the fact that it is not mentioned as such in the play. While

Mary is never shown to act wrathfully or vindictively, Davidson suggests that other

elements in the play give evidence to this being Mary's probable motivation towards sin.

In the presence of Jesus in the house of Simon the Leper, Mary lists her many vices:

> And for þat I haue synnyd in þe synne of pryde,
>   I wol enabyte me wyth humelyte.
> Aȝens wrath and envy, I wyll devyde
>   Thes fayur vertuys, pacyens and charyte.[81]

She lists her three vices as pride, wrath, and envy, and quells them with humility,

patience, and charity. Davidson suggests that:

> The vices of pride, wrath, and envy are prominent in the legend told by Mirk,
> but otherwise we might feel that of these only pride seems particularly
> appropriate in a list of the sins of a prostitute. Curiously, wrath and envy

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[78] Mirk, "De *Sancta* Maria Magdalena et Eius Festiuitate *Sermo* Breuis," 303.

[79] *The South English Legendary* l. 15.

[80] Jacobus 363.

[81] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 682-5.

would have been exactly right if the playwright had retained the story of Mary's reaction to the breaking off of St. John's betrothal as we have it in Mirk's account.[82]

While I would agree with Davidson in that it is dangerous to remain "fixed in modern notions about causation and motivation," I disagree with his further suggestion that the playwright has confused or avoided his sources' explanations of Mary's fall into sin.[83] It is the inclusion of the three enemies of the soul (World, Flesh, and especially the Devil) that precisely creates that conflict which is lacking or is otherwise explained away in the non-dramatic accounts of the legend such as Mirk's. Mary's list of sins reflect the influence of these spiritual enemies on her, rather than her own supposed spitefulness as depicted in the *South English Legendary* and in Mirk's account.

When Davidson admits, "Mary's fall from grace is a willing act in response to the fraudulent but demonic enticements of evil,"[84] he is paraphrasing the whole basis of the dramatic action in this portion of the play. The Devil, who has initiated this action against Mary (as will be discussed), is first seen attended by Wrath and Envy, his "ryall retynawns" (l. 362). He is the ultimate source of evil, and these two vices he retains from his original fall from grace. Pride, the third sin listed by Mary, disguises himself as the gallant Curiosity (l. 491 and following) in order to lead Mary into the Devil's service. In other words, the Devil (aided by Pride) initiates Mary's fall into sin and imposes the element of dramatic conflict external to the celebrated protagonist. Mary's list of sins -- his own sins -- reflect the Devil's ultimate position in this process. The playwright has universalized the motivation behind Mary's fall into sin, subsequently relating it to the individuals in the audience while keeping his vision of St. Mary free from scurrilous particularities -- a practice which he will employ again and again throughout the play.

With Mary's three spiritual enemies in place (and, by extension, the three spiritual enemies of each member of the audience), the playwright is able to parallel them rhetorically with the three scriptural enemies of Christ. Thus dramatic conflict is created around the protagonist while the ever-important sub-plot of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection is rendered economically viable through the rhetorical parallel. In other

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[82] Davidson 81.
[83] Davidson 79-80.
[84] Davidson 82.

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words, an attempt is made to unify the "vertical time" of the liturgical drama with the abstracted timelessness of the allegorical drama.

Davidson is correct in wholly condemning Robert Bowers' two misapplied statements that the "characters are never fully realized," and that:

> In addition, one feels that the aureate language and the posturing of the main characters are almost calculated euphemisms, society devices employed by the author to keep vitality at a safe distance far from the manor, and to avoid serious consideration of the human condition.[85]

Bowers is approaching the work from an overly modern understanding, and he fails to recognize the universalized approach towards the "human condition" implicit in medieval didactic allegory.[86] As with the personifications, human characters are generally types rather than particulars in order to heighten the universality of the moral or exemplum being presented.

Davidson's position, however, is also insufficient. Motivation in the play -- far from being rendered irrelevant and merely "emblematic,"[87] -- is ultimately built upon the actively antagonistic presence of the three enemies of the soul. They are antagonistic motivation personified on the stage, even if they originated in rhetoric beyond the legendary narrative. In employing them in this way, the playwright attempts to unite the experiences of the audience to the experience of the protagonist.

After Tiberius Caesar's opening rant and instruction to his scribe (called "Serybyl" in the manuscript) to see that his laws "in all your partyys have dew obeysavns" (l. 34), the scene switches to the Castle of Magdalen where Syrus makes a similar rant (ll. 49-84). As Syrus is a virtuous character, the bombastic enumeration of his powers may seem out-of-character, but Grantley explains that:

> The play moves from the ascendancy of worldly powers dramatically represented by the rants of Tiberius, Herod, Syrus and Pilate, all of whom make claims to wealth and power, to a deeper and more insidious level of evil in those of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, until the entry of Christ.[88]

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[85] Robert H. Bowers, "The Tavern Scene in the Middle English Digby Play of Mary Magdalene," *All These to Teach: Essays in Honor of C. A. Robertson*, ed. Robert A. Bryan (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1965) 15. Quoted in Davidson, 80-1.

[86] Davidson 80.

[87] Davidson 81.

[88] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 280-1. John W. Velz further discusses the contrast between the limited claims of authority by the earthly and evil characters and those of Christ in his article "Sovereignty in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*," *Comparative Drama* (1968), 32-43.

The parallel is established between rival claims of earthly authority which will become eclipsed after Mary's conversion.[89] More than this, Syrus' rant establishes Mary as a character of noble birth and of societal advantage "sett in solas from al syyn sore, / [...] Thus for to leuen in rest and ryalte" (ll. 63-5). This reflects the earlier legendary accounts in which "Mary Magdalen was born of parents who were of noble station, and came of royal lineage."[90]

Mary's brother Lazarus is given Jerusalem (ll. 80), her sister Martha is given Bethany (l. 82), and Mary is given rule of the castle (l. 81). After each of the children has thanked his/her father for these gifts (ll. 85-113), the scene returns to Tiberius. The Emperor reiterates his intent to check up on his subjects, and his messenger Nuncius is dispatched to Herod (ll. 114-39). The following rant by Herod is one of the finest in medieval drama, surely intended to instill both terror and amusement through its overblown ferocity:

> In þe wyld, wanyng word, pes all at onys!
> No noyse, I warne yow, for greveyng of me!
> Yff yow do, I xall hovrle of yower hedys, be Mahondys bonys,
> As I am trew kyng to Mahond so fre!
> Help! Help, þat I had a swerd!
> Fall don, ye faytours, flatt to þe grovnd!
> Heve of your hodys and hattys, I cummavnd yow all!
> Stond bare hed, ye beggars! Wo made yow so bold?
> I xal make yow know your kyng ryall![91]

More than the politically-based enumeration of Syrus' rant, Herod's is directed towards the audience with absurd threats of violence in an almost childish temper. He brags about his rich dress and spouts rhetorical questions such as "What kyng is worthy, or egall to my power?" (l. 155), which he later answers himself: "No man is to me egall, save alonly þe emperower / Tyberyus, as I have in provostycacyon!" (ll. 162-3). The result is bombastic to the point of absurdity. The worldly rulers lack the ineffable capacity for evil of the enemies of the soul and the true supremacy of God demonstrated later in the play.

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[89] In his interesting study on kingship in the English medieval drama, Stephen May notes that tyrants and "good" kings both employ the familiar tirade, and that:
> the fact that the differences between good king and tyrant are subtle, and do not involve distinct modes of speech and behaviour, not only argues for a more developed capacity for discrimination than modern criticism has sometimes allowed, but also goes some way towards providing an audience equipped to respond to the flawed nobility and ambiguous morality of the later regal tragic hero. (May, 102)

[90] Jacobus 355.

[91] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 140-48.

Herod's two "philosophers" quote biblical passages foretelling Christ's coming (ll.
167-85) which angers him more, leading to the command that is borrowed from the Digby
play *The Killing of the Children*:

> Be he sekyr I woll natt spare
>   For [to] complyshe hys cummavnddment,
> Wyth sharp swerddys to perce þe[m] bare
>   In all covntres wythin thys regent,
>   For hys love to fulfyll hys intentt.
> Non swych xall from ower handys stertt,
>   For we woll fulfyll hys ryall juggement
> Wyth swerd and spere to perce [þem] thorow þe hartt![92]

Baker and Hall note that this version "is shortened at the expense of some
intelligibility,"[93] as the words are given to Herod himself rather than to his soldiers,
dispensing with the scriptural details of the Slaughter of the Innocents from the other
play. "Hys ryall juggement" now refers to Tiberius' previous message to Herod, as the
playwright curtails the episode for matters of economy.

The scene transfers to Pilate, who enters with a rant of his own (ll. 229-43). He
receives Tiberius' message, and vows to "sett many a snare" (l. 257) for those who would
reject the Emperor's laws. Then the scene quickly reverts back to the Castle of Magdalen
where Syrus takes his death (l. 265 and following).

Mary is obviously still in a state of virtue -- not having yet succumbed to what
Bokenham deemed the "lack of supervision" of her youth, wealth, and beauty -- and she
calls on God for comfort:

> To whom it is most nedfull to cumplayn,
>   He to bry[n]g vs owt of ower dolor;
>   He is most mytyest governowre,
> From soroyng vs to restryne.[94]

Nothing in the play thus far (internal or external) has initiated a direct antagonistic
action on Mary. In fact, she demonstrates a level of faith and calm here not apparent in

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[92] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 217-24. The version in *The Killing of the Children* is divided among for of Herod's soldiers and
runs as follows:
    PRIMUS MILES: My lord, ye may be sure that I shalle not spare,
        For to fulfille your noble commaundement,
    With sharpe sword to perse them alle bare,
        In all contrees that be to you adiacent!
    SECUNDUS MILES: And for your sake, to observe your commaundement!
    TERTIUS MILES: Not on of them alle oure handes shalle astert!
    QUARTUS MILES: For we wole cruelly execute youre judgment,
        With swerde and spere to perse them thurgh the hert!
The Killing of the Children, The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160 (EETS, OS 283),
eds. Donald C. Baker and Louis B. Hall, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), ll. 97-104.
[93] Baker and Hall, introduction, xliii.
[94] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 287-90.

her two distressed siblings who are "sett in grete hevynesse!," "sett in sorowys sad," and "ner mad!" (ll. 277, 291, and 293) in their mourning. But the scene is about to change, challenging Mary's faithful resolve through the introduction of that rhetorical element so dear to the late-medieval dramatists: allegory.

> Her xal entyr þe Kyng of the World, þe Flesch, and þe Dylfe, wyth þe
> Seuen Dedly Synnys, a Bad Angyll, an an Good Angyl [...].[95]

Despite this opening stage direction, we later realize that each evil king and his particular set of sins are meant to enter and deliver their lines in a consecutive order, with the appearance of the World followed by that of Flesh and then the Devil: ("Her xal entyr þe Kynge of Flesch [...]," l. 333, s. d.; and "Here xall entyr þe prynse of dyllys in a stage [...]," l. 357, s. d.). Through the opening stage direction, the playwright intimates in the text his desire to switch modes of presentation from historical to allegorical, and this switch is anything but subtle. Over the next hundred lines we are introduced to a large allegorical company, comprising, in fact, the entire allegorical machine of the play, ranging from the three enemies of the soul to the deadly sins to the good and bad angels.

The World's rant is typical, a mixture of the truths of his state ("þe whele of fortune wyth me hath sett hys senture," l. 312) and boastful overstatements ("[...] most of domynacyon!" l. 310).[96] He also relates the seven metals to the seven planets (the sun, the moon, Mars, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn -- ll. 313-20), over which he wrongly claims dominion.[97]

In *The Castle of Perseverance*, we noted that the World is attended by his "Comly knytys of renoun," (l. 470), Lust-liking and Folly (*Voluptas* and *Stulticia*). We learn later that he is also served by Garcio, the boy who claims Humanum Genus' disinherited property at the end of the play. In the list of characters of *The Castle of Perseverance*, Voluptas, Stulticia, and Garcio (none of whom, by the way, are strictly part of the seven deadly sins) form an allegorical parallel with the three servants given to each of the other evil kings, thus forming a rhetorically appropriate allegorical grouping.

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[95] *Mary Magdalen* l. 304 (s. d.).

[96] Davidson discusses this aspect of his speech, noting "The World further represents precisely the kind of fraudulent claims to dominion which have already been set forth in the play of *Mary Magdalene* by Caesar, Herod, and Pilate," 78.

[97] Davidson points out that the World's reign "must be over the sub-lunar sphere," thus rendering his claims absurd, 78. For a discussion of the tradition linking the seven metals, the seven planets, and the seven deadly sins (or the "seuyn prynsys of hell," l. 324) see Morton W. Bloomfield's *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State College Press, 1952) 234.

Davidson demarcates a similar grouping in *Mary Magdalen*, suggesting, "Pride and Covetousness attend the World."[98] This observation is not entirely correct however, as the World does not claim any specific retainers but braggingly includes all of the deadly sins:

> Lo, all þis rych tresor wyth þe Word doth indure --
> The seuyn prynsys of hell, of gret bowntosness![99]

Beyond this, he ends his rant with a threatening question -- "Now, who may presume to com to my honour?" (l. 325) -- to which Pride and Covetousness make fervent reply (ll. 326-9). The two deadly sins, then, do not appear to be directly within the World's service in the scene's opening, but seem to volunteer their deadly assistance to him. The point should by no means be over-emphasized, but it is wrong to assume an allegorically associated grouping between these three characters of the type so often in *The Castle of Perseverance*. While Pride and Covetousness do associate themselves with the World for matters of dramatic economy (they offer reply to his rant), they are not necessarily related to him on a directly significant level. In other words, this is not an allegorical grouping -- as we *do* find between the other evil kings and their particular retainers in the play.

Flesh, for instance, does claim a direct allegorical relationship between his three servants. He calls Lechery his "fayere spowse," (l. 347), Gluttony his "knyth," (l. 348), and he states that Sloth is "anothyr goodly of to expresse," (l. 350), noting that "A more plesavnt compeny doth nowher abyde" (l. 351). The three are naturally associated with Flesh, and the grouping is reflected in *The Castle of Perseverance* (ll. 248-51). The allegorical relationship is extended briefly to include the suggestion of a salacious relationship between the Flesh and Lechery:

> LUXURIA: O ye prynse, how I am ful of ardent lowe,
>   Wyth sparkyllys ful of amerowsnesse!
> Wyth yow to rest fayn wold I aprowe,
>   To shew plesavns to your jentylnesse!
>
> ÞE FLESCH: O ȝe bewtews byrd, I must yow kysse!
>   I am ful of lost to halse yow þis tyde![100]

Flesh and Lechery are both allowed indulgence in actions that represent their own allegorical natures. This elaboration constructs an allegorical relationship not found in

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[98] Davidson 78.
[99] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 323-4.
[100] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 352-7.

The Castle of Perseverance,[101] but it is not merely rhetorical, as Lechery will play a key role in Mary's eventual fall.

Satan enters atop the hellmouth,[102] and his rant is wholly concerned with mankind's destruction:

> [...] I am atyred in my towyr to tempt yow þis tyde!
> [...] Mannis sowle to besegyn and bryng to obeysavns![103]

Unlike the previous rants of the World (which is primarily concerned with listing dominions and "þe ordor of þe metellys seuyn," l. 313) and Flesh (which is primarily concerned with describing his "deyntys delycyows," through a colourful list of spices and medicines, ll. 335-6), the Devil is solely bent on revenge against mankind:

> So I thynk to besegyn hem be every waye wyde --
> I xal getyn hem from grace whersoeuyr he abyde --
> That body and sowle xal com to my hold,
> Hym for to take![104]

Appropriately enough, he keeps the sins Wrath and Envy at his "ryall retynawns" (l. 362). As noted earlier, these are two of the three sins that Mary will repent before Christ (l. 683).

Several details should be noted concerning the formation of the play's allegory to this point. Firstly, it is the Devil and his retinue who initiate the antagonistic action against Mary. The two sins vow to work against her, and Satan commands them to proceed:

> WRATH: Wyth wrath or wyhyllys we xal hyrre wynne!
> ENVY: Or wyth sum sotyllte sett hur in synne!
> DYLFE: Com of, þan, let vs begynne
> To werkyn hure sum wrake![105]

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[101] In *The Castle of Perseverance*, Flesh draws his retainers to him equally through frequent use (rather than elaborated allegorical relationships), apart from the brief mention of his "swete son" Sloth:
> CARO: In Glotony gracyous now am I growe;
> þerfore he syttyth semly here be my syde.
> In Lechery and Lykynge lent am I lowe,
> And Slawth, my swete sone, is bent to abyde. (ll. 248-51)

[102] Baker and Hall note that "the poet seems uncertain whether his speaker really is Satan, as he is also called, or a chief devil," (*Mary Magdalen*, note no. 367, p. 202). Most of the confusion exists within the stage directions and line attributions, however, where he is called þe Dylfe (l. 304, s. d.), þe prynse of dyllys (l. 357, s. d.), DYLFE (l. 358), SATAN (l. 381), DIAB[O]LUS (l. 555), and REX DIABOLUS (l. 560). In the text he is repeatedly referred to as "Satan" (ll. 359, 385, 403, 413, and 562).

[103] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 360 and 364.

[104] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 369-72. In *The Castle of Perseverance* a similar intent is given:
> (BELYAL): In care I am cloyed
> And fowle I am anoyed
> But Mankynde be stroyed
> Be dykys and be denne. (ll. 205-8)

[105] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 377-80.

None of the allegorical assemblage has mentioned Mary up to this point, and their reference to "hyrre" in the above lines is somewhat oddly unsolicited. The Devil proceeds to recruit the World and Flesh in his plan against Mary, "A woman of worshep ower servant to make" (l. 384). He and his retainers have hatched the plot that will develop the action that follows.

At this stage, Satan joins World on his scaffold, and World's messenger "Sensvalyte" is dispatched to call Flesh (ll. 381-97). After Flesh has joined the evil assembly, Satan spills out the details of his complaint:

> SATAN: Serys, now ye be set, I xal yow say:
> Syrus dyyd þis odyr day --
> Now Mary, hys dowctor, þat may,
> Of þat castel beryt þe pryse.[106]

Satan names Mary here for the first time, and he hints that "þat castel" has taken on more significance than it had previously. Allegorical significance is infused into the Magdalen set through the following lines, and the link between physical location and spiritual alignment is drawn. World carries the idea further:

> MUNDUS: Sertenly, serys, I yow telle,
> Yf she in vertu stylle may dwelle,
> She xal byn abyll to dystroye helle,
> But yf your cov[n]seyll may othyrwyse devyse![107]

The Castle of Magdalen represents not just "vertu", as World indicates, but also Mary herself, in a state of virtuousness. Unlike the Castle of Perseverance -- that "ʒone presyouse place" (l. 1595) guarded by the seven universal virtues -- Mary's castle is rendered specific by the method of attack employed by the evil characters. The playwright manoeuvers between the universality of the allegorical characters and the details of the specific legendary account.

Flesh initiates the primary assault, calling on his attendant Lechery to go to work:

> FLESCH: No ye, Lady Lechery, yow must don your attendans,
> For yow be flowyr fayrest of femynyte!
> Yow xal go desyyr servyse, and byn at hure atendavns,
> For ʒe xal sonest entyr, ʒe beral of bewte![108]

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[106] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 414-7.
[107] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 418-21.
[108] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 422-5.

The notion of "entering" Mary is carried further, as Satan commands the remaining six vices to gain her favour:

> Now alle þe six þat here be,
> Wysely to werke, hyr fawor to wynne,
> To *entyr hyr person* be þe labor of lechery,
> Þat she at þe last may com to helle.[109]

These examples might appear to be mere rhetorical expressions if they were not accompanied by the following siege in which the deadly sins attempt to enter the castle.

The image invoked follows on from the tradition of the castle of Mansoul. It belongs to that group of similar treatments offered in such works as "Homily II: *Hic Dicendum est de Quadragesima,*" the *Ancrene Riwle*, the *Somme des Vices et des Vertus* (each discussed in the previous chapter), and other examples where the castle represents Mansoul rather than a specific attribute (such as *The Castle of Perseverance* or Grosseteste's *Chasteau d'Amour*). The castle here, however, is specifically Mary's soul (rather than Mankind generalized), and the attack of the vices must be tailored accordingly.

The psychomachia that occurs in the following stage direction -- notable because of the absence of any defending virtues -- reveals the vices besieging the castle itself. It contains a great amount of visually symbolic action:

> *Here xall all þe Seuyn Dedly synnys besege þe castell tyll [Mary] agree
> to go to Jherusalem. Lechery xall entyr þe castell wyth þe Bad Angyl [...].*[110]

Davidson (noted earlier) and Spivack are correct in noting that the battle itself is "homiletic pageantry rather than dramatic action, elocution and spectacle rather than plot."[111] The stage direction leads us to believe that attack of the vices against the castle forces Mary to concede to travel to Jerusalem, but how the actor playing Mary might have conveyed this change of heart during the sequence is not reflected in the dialogue. Instead, the essential symbolic action in the stage direction is Lechery's entrance into the castle, as the siege enacted by the vices bears no apparent effect on the subsequent action.

What arises is an allegorical relationship somewhere in between that of the castle of Mansoul and attribute-based employments such as *The Castle of Perseverance.*

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[109] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 430-3 (my emphasis).
[110] *Mary Magdalen* l. 439 (s. d.).
[111] Spivack 86.

We have noted how the vices attempt to "entyr hyr person" through their attack on Mary's castle, and -- as Flesh predicted -- Lechery "xal sonest entyr." However, Mary has not yet succumbed to sinfulness through the action, but has only granted Lechery her audience. The stage direction and accompanying dialogue at this point shift the castle's allegorical role to a position similar that of the Castle of Perseverance. It ceases to represent Mary's virtuous self and takes on a role of externalized virtuousness or perseverance which Mary herself is at liberty to leave. And her decision to leave comes not from the onslaught of the vices, as the stage direction suggests, but from Lechery's subsequent enticement. In other words, the castle ceases to represent Mary's soul into which the vices attempt to gain admittance, and it takes on the role of a place of virtuousness, a spiritual space away from which Lechery must woo Mary.

Similar to Covetousness in *The Castle of Perseverance*, Lechery is given a special role within the general psychomachia. Instead of a vice geared toward mankind in general (albeit in old age, in the former example), however, Lechery is geared specifically towards the traditional Mary Magdalen. In a conventional medieval representation of fickle womanhood,[112] Lechery uses flattery to draw Mary into her favour:

> [LECHERY]: Heyl, lady most lavdabyll of alyauvns!
>   Heyl, oryent as þe sonne in hys reflexite!
> Myche pepul be comfortyd be your benyng afyavuns.
>   Bryter þan þe bornyd is your bemys of bewte,
>   Most debonarius wyth your aungelly delycyte![113]

Lechery's Latinate praise does the job, as Mary admits with almost childlike sincerity: "Your debonarius obedyauns ravyssyt me to trankquelyte!" (l. 447). Mary confuses Lechery's flattery with reason -- "Your tong is so amyabyll, devydyd wyth reson" (l. 451) -- that quality (noted earlier) that was so important to the allegory of *The Castle of Perseverance*.

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[112] For traditional presentations of misogynistic and "antifeminist" ideas, see Alcuin Blamires' excellent anthology, *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). For particular references to women being presented as fickle or easily flattered, see Blamires' translated selections from St. Ambrose's *De Paradiso* (61), from Jean de Meun's *Le Roman de la Rose* (158 and 163), and, in particular, from Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore*, where he states:
> 'Woman is also found fickle as a general rule. There is no woman so firmly determined on anything that her reliability cannot be soon dispelled by slight persuasion from someone. For woman is like melting wax, always ready to assume fresh shape and to be moulded to the imprint of anyone's seal.' (120)

[113] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 440-4.

Mary eagerly takes Lechery into her service. In the following lines, we find that the "reson" that sways her turns out to be a need for comfort in mourning her father's death:

> LUXURYA: Now, good lady, wyll ȝe me expresse
>   Why may þer no gladdnes to yow resort?
> MARY: For my father I haue had grett heuynesse --
>   Whan I remembyr, my mynd waxit mort.
> LUXSURYA: ȝa, lady, for all þat, be of good comfort,
>   For swych obusyouns may brede myche dysese [...].
> MARY: Forsothe, ye be welcum to myn hawdyens!
>   Ye be my hartys leche![114]

Now it is apparent that Satan's original observation that "Syrus dyyd þis odyr day -- / Now Mary, hys dowctor, þat may, / Of þat castel beryt þe pryse" (ll. 415-7) has come full circle, and it is Mary's weakness in mourning that provides the historical basis for her descent into sinfulness in the play. On a "realistic" level, then, the playwright forgives Mary's fall, not through the vengeful means expressed in the *South English Legendary* and in Mirk's legendary account, but through the more sympathetic reason of her bereavement. Recognizing her weakened state, the evil allegorical antagonists have picked their moment and their method specific to Mary Magdalen. While the universalizing allegory encourages the audience to sympathize with Mary's fall, it fails to compel a direct identification with the legendary protagonist. She remains a specific historical figure -- a localized protagonist rather than an Everyman -- amidst Everyman's allegorical, dramatic machinery.

Satan initiates the action against Mary's weakened person by ordering the attack on the castle, but Flesh's minion Lechery -- appropriate to the legend of Mary Magdalen[115] -- is the only one to gain admittance. Lechery leads Mary to the tavern in Jerusalem in the following scene:

> *Here takyt Mary hur wey to Jherusalem wyth Luxsurya, and þey xal resort to a tavernere.*[116]

Beyond this, the playwright establishes a link between Mary and Lechery through verbal echo.

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[114] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 452-61.

[115] It is, of course, how she traditionally manifests her sinfulness, as Mirk explains in his *Festial* that she "ȝaf her al to synne and namely to lechery, yn so moch þat she lost þe name of Mawdelen" (Mirk, "De Sancta Maria Magdalena et Eius Festiuitate Sermo Breuis," 203).

[116] *Mary Magdalen* l. 469 (s. d.).

Earlier in the play, when Syrus introduces Mary, he describes her as "ful fayur and ful of femynyte" (l. 71), a description later used in Flesh's description of Lechery: "you be flowyr fayrest of femynyte!" (l. 423). Pride (as Curiosity) will again use a similar adulation on first meeting Mary, calling her "Splendavnt of colour, most of femynyte" (l. 516). The playwright draws the traditional link between the sinful Mary and Lechery, allowing Lechery the privilege of wooing Mary out of virtuousness and into a state where she will be receptive to sin -- signified by her movement from the castle to the tavern in Jerusalem. But he is careful not to show Mary partaking directly in lecherous acts. He avoids casting his portrayal of the saint in any overt sexual licentiousness, not only to circumvent a bawdy or lewd representation, but to make room for the later, more significant influence of Satan's primary minion: Pride.

The tavern scene begins with the boasting of the eponymous Taverner who lists his wines of "grete plente" (l. 474), establishing the gluttonous setting which Theresa Coletti compares to a "mock Eucharistic feast."[117] After Mary and Lechery begin drinking, a character enters introducing himself boisterously: "Hof, hof, hof! A frysch new galavnt!" (l. 491). His self-description betrays his true nature, being centred on clothing and personal appearance:

> My dobelet and my hossys euyr together abyde.
> I woll, or euen, be shavyn for to seme ȝyng!,[118]

but he also demonstrates a gluttonous thirst and a lecherous nature, boasting that he is "lusty in lykyng" (l. 505).

The gallant is introduced as "mastyre Coryossyte" in line 511, and his real identity is not revealed in the dialogue until forty lines later, when Bad Angel is reporting the vices' success to Satan. Hence Mary is never made aware that Curiosity is really Pride disguised. It is uncertain whether the audience was meant to be aware of Curiosity's true identity during the tavern scene, although, if they were allowed to see his former costume peaking out beneath his gallant's dress it would render his final boast -- "Thus I lefe in þis word, I do it for no pryde!" -- comically ironic.

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[117] Theresa Coletti, "The Design of the Digby Play of *Mary Magdalene*," *Studies in Philology*, 76 (1979), 319.
[118] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 502-3.

Lechery urges Mary to join Curiosity's company, suggesting that "þis man is for ȝow […] / To sett yow i[n] sporttys and talkyng þis tyde!" (ll. 507-8). Through the vices, the playwright continues to emphasize Mary's recent bereavement as the basis for her turn towards sinfulness. By presenting Lechery as her allegorized companion, he is able to forego a realistic depiction of her turn towards promiscuity. In fact, the playwright's depiction of Mary's fall and life-in-sin is the only segment of the play in which allegory is used, and he conveniently allows the allegory to overlay the details of her traditional moral indiscretion.

Pride's disguise as Curiosity continues this design. As Curiosity, Pride piques Mary's interest, and his romantic declarations of love (ll. 515-9 and 521-2) allow her to ask questions in all innocence: "wene ȝe þat I were a kelle?" and "Qwat cavse þat ȝe love me so sodenly?" (ll. 520 and 523). Curiosity's aggressive reply -- "Your person, itt is so womanly, / I can not refreyn me, swete lelly!" -- allows Mary a virtuous retort: "Syr, curtesy doth it yow lere!" (l. 527). Despite being encouraged by Lechery, Mary enters Curiosity's presence with restraint, curious to discover more about his apparent love for her, but suspicious of his intentions.

Curiosity, as a "species of pride,"[119] woos Mary with flattery, appealing to her own sense of vanity:

> A, dere dewchesse, my daysyys ice!
> Splendavnt of colour, most of femynyte,
> Your sofreyn colourrys set wyth synseryte!
> Consedere my loue into yower alye, […].[120]

He finally achieves his aim by inviting Mary to dance (l. 530), to which she assents "in good maner" (l. 531). Their final exchange signifies Mary's willing acceptance of sinfulness, as Pride accompanies her through the gluttonous enterprises of the tavern and towards an insinuated (but carefully unspecified) act of lechery:

> CORYOSTE: Now, derlyng dere, wol yow do be my rede?
> We haue dronkyn and ete lytyl brede --
> Wyll we walk to another stede?
> MARI: Ewyn at your wyl, my dere derlyng!
> Thowe ȝe wyl go to þe wordys eynd,
> I wol neuyr from yow wynd,
> To dye for your sake![121]

[119] Davidson 84.
[120] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 515-8.
[121] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 540-6. The stanzaic pattern here suggests a line is missing between lines 542 and 543, and Baker and Hall agree with this assessment (*Mary Magdalen*, note no. 542, p. 204).

Pride -- in his deceptive guise as Curiosity -- has led Mary to literally embrace vice, and she is now wholly inundated with sinfulness.

Immediately following Mary's declaration of love and subordination to Curiosity, a stage direction calls for them to exit (l. 546, s. d.). It further directs that Bad Angel will pick up the action by returning to the three evil kings. He joyfully announces that Mary has fallen into their "grogly gromys" (l. 550), and he praises Pride's ability to trick Mary:

> 3a, Pryde, callyd Curioste, to hure is ful lavdabyll,
> And to hure he is most preysseabyll,
> For she hath gravnttyd hum all hys bonys![122]

In fact, Pride's recent success forms the bulk of Bad Angel's report, and not once does he mention his own actions towards the enterprise or attempt to claim credit.

On the whole, it is difficult to conclude how the playwright intended Bad Angel's character to function within the play's allegory. It seems altogether understated, as his presence is often required by the stage directions, but his dialogue is limited and his exits are either omitted or forgotten. A comparison with the role of his spiritual opposite -- the Good Angel -- should throw light on his own position within the allegory, but it only emphasizes its insignificance. Bad Angel's character does occasionally aid in matters of dramatic economy. But he never really takes an active role in the allegory, and his effect on the protagonist is either missed out on or subverted, allowing Mary's victimisation by the three evil kings (and the vices) to occur free from his usual influence.

His service is ordered by Satan prior to the attack on the castle, and the evil king's charge -- "Hyre [Mary] to tempt in euery plase" (l. 429) -- is accepted with annoyance: "Speke soft, speke soft, I trotte hyr to tene!" (l. 439). After the siege, we see Bad Angel accompany Lechery into the castle of Magdalen. The action certainly appears to be significant, but it is not reflected in the dialogue or in the subsequent action. In fact, when Lechery and Mary make their way towards the tavern in Jerusalem, no mention is made of Bad Angel's whereabouts. He most likely accompanied Mary towards her moral lapse, rather than remaining in the symbolically virtuous castle, but his presence is not required by the stage directions nor by the dialogue of the tavern scene. Does he exit at

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[122] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 550-2.

this point? One cannot be certain, but he plays no role in the wooing of Mary, as Lechery and especially Pride are given that task exclusively.

Following Pride's success in the tavern, Bad Angel is employed once again to report back to the three evil kings. His intimate awareness of the action of the tavern scene suggests that he has been in Mary's presence throughout, but again, he has played no apparent part in her downfall. Satan's command to "Go thow agayn and ewyr be hur gyde!" (l. 557) sends Bad Angel back to Mary, with the stage direction *"Here goth þe bad angyl to Mari agayn"* (l. 559, s. d.).

At this point, Satan returns to the Hell stage, and the scene is arranged for Mary's subsequent cleansing and conversion through a lengthy stage direction:

> *Here xal Satan go hom to hys stage, and Mari xal entyr into þe place*
> *alone, saue þe Bad Angyl, and al þe Seuen Dedly Synnys xal be conveyyd*
> *into þe howse of Symont Leprovs, þey xal be arayyd lyke suen dylf, þus*
> *kept closse; Mari xal be in an erbyr [...].*[123]

It is obvious that the playwright does intend some significance in Bad Angel's presence alongside Mary during her life-in-sin. Unlike his counterpart in *The Castle of Perseverance*, however, Bad Angel does not speak to Mary, and she does not acknowledge his presence. As the seven deadly sins are now busying themselves with devils' costumes for the coming scene in Simon's house, perhaps Bad Angel's attendance in the arbour is meant as a visual tag for Mary's continued state of sin. Or perhaps his proximity to Mary serves to contrast Good Angel's arrival in the following scene.

After Mary lies down in the arbour to await "some lovyr [...] / That me is wont to halse and kysse" (ll. 570-1), Simon enters -- unaware of her presence -- to deliver a short speech in preface of Jesus' coming (ll. 572-87). After this, the Good Angel enters in order to berate Mary for her turn to sin:

> [GOOD ANGYLL]: Woman, woman, why art þou so onstabyll?
> Ful bytterly thys blysse it wol be bowth!
> Why art þou aȝens God so veryabyll?
> [...] Salue for þi sowle must be sowth,
> And leve þi werkys wayn and veryabyll![124]

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[123] *Mary Magdalen* l. 563 (s. d.).
[124] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 588-95.

He points to the true culprit behind her current state, saying, "Remembyr, woman, for þi pore *pryde* / How þi sowle xal lyyn in hell fyre!" (ll. 596-7, my emphasis). In his subsequent list of proper remembrances, he defines his own character in relation to mercy:

> Remembyr þe on mercy, make þi sowle clyre!
> I am þe gost of goodnesse þat so wold þe gydde.[125]

Bad Angel is still present throughout the scene, but -- similar to the good and bad angels in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (noted earlier) -- he and his counterpart neither address nor acknowledge one another. Bad Angel simply stands idle as Good Angel disables the pernicious achievements of the evil characters.

But what is Good Angel's precise relationship to Mary? His character's development is limited to the speech in the arbour and a brief prayer later on in the play (ll. 705-12), but his impetus does appear to exact Mary's conversion. She awakes, commenting on "how þe speryt of goodnesse hat promtyt me þis tyde, / And tetyd me wyth tytyll of trew perfythnesse!" (ll. 602-3), crediting the "speryt of goodnesse" with her sudden alteration. However, the following lines show the playwright backpedalling almost immediately. Mary does not seem to have noticed Good Angel's promise to be her "gost of goodness þat so wold þe gydde":

> [MARY:] O Lord, wo xall put me from þis peynfulnesse?
> A, woo xal to mercy be my gostly gyde?[126]

The playwright now shows Mary questioning Good Angel's position. Despite his demonstrated ability to instigate Mary's reform, Good Angel fades into Mary's subconscious upon her waking -- like a vague, yet compellingly recollected dream. As the active involvement of the allegory begins to dissolve, Mary's new "gostly gyde" is set to make an appearance. He is, of course, the "Prophett" Jesus (l. 610).

Mary's direct involvement with allegory in the play has come to an end, and the playwright has quickly shifted modes back to legendary/historical. All that remains is Jesus' emblematic expulsion of the seven devils from Mary's person. Good Angel's power to convert or entice (now more closely resembling his analogue in *The Castle of Perseverance*) has been subsumed within Mary's own consciousness.

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[125] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 600-1.
[126] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 608-9.

After Mary washes and anoints Jesus' feet, Jesus chides Simon for questioning her actions (ll. 640-76). Mary then confesses her sins (ll. 682-5). Jesus' subsequent remission of her sins completes the transformation out of the allegorical mode by localizing moral responsibility within Mary herself :

> JHESUS: Woman, in contryssyon þou art expert,
>   And in þi sowle hast inward mythe,
>   That sumtyme were in desert,
>   And from therknesse hast porchasyd lyth.
>   Thy feyth hath savyt þe, and made þe bryth!
>   Wherfor I sey to þe, 'Vade in pace'.[127]

It is Mary who is now "expert" in contrition, and Good Angel's formerly distinct ability to compel has become composite within her soul's "inward mythe." Jesus' final acknowledgment, while based directly on scripture,[128] places the entire impetus of Mary's conversion in the play on her own, unpersonified faith.

Jesus' final admonition to Mary, "'Vade in pace,'" also seems to be inadvertently directed towards the play's allegorical apparatus. The accompanying stage direction sends off the seven deadly sins (now seven devils) and the Bad Angel:

> Wyth þis word seuyn dyllys xall dewoyde from þe woman, and the
> Bad Angyll entyr into hell wyth thondyr.[129]

The seven deadly sins -- now no longer personifications -- and the personified representative of the human *spiritus malignus* are now forcibly expelled from Mary's narrative. Presumably, the Bad Angel has been waiting in the arbour during the scene in the house of Simon, although nothing is specified. Also, we are not told whether or not the seven devils are required to accompany Bad Angel into Hell at this point. For a more sensational exit, they could first run amok through the audience members, although they will be required in or near the Hell stage no later than line 739.

After Jesus takes his leave from Mary (with his disciples), Good Angel rejoices in Mary's conversion with a speech resembling "a tripartite hymn to the Holy Trinity of a kind which was common in the Middle Ages."[130] As such, his speech is addressed to God rather than the audience, asking God to "Illumyn ower ygnorans wyth your devynyte!" (l.

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[127] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 686-91.

[128] "And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'" (Luke 7: 50).

[129] *Mary Magdalen* l. 691 (s. d.).

[130] *Mary Magdalen*, note no. 705, p. 206. They refer to Leon Euguene Lewis' discussion in "The Play of *Mary Magdalene*," Ph.D. thesis (University of Wisconsin, 1963) 132.

712). In other words, he does not explicate the play's moral or invoke the audience directly, as his analogue so often did in *The Castle of Perseverance*. While the audience is implicated in Good Angel's prayer, they are not challenged to identify directly with the protagonist through his character in the manner that was used in *The Castle of Perseverance*.

The good and bad angels here are used from time to time for certain dramatic efficiencies and movements of narrative. Bad Angel's significance is, at times, diffused or else forgotten, as he is never allowed to address the protagonist or the audience, and his presence in the action is difficult to pinpoint through many of the stage directions. Good Angel serves that ever-important position in the allegorical drama as the force of moral conversion. In this, he reflects the roles of Penitence and Confession in *The Castle of Perseverance*, Mercy in the play of *Mankind*, and "Oure Lady mylde" in *The Pride of Life*,[131] although his symbolic proximity to the protagonist is much closer than the latter examples. But his position is immediately subsumed into the person of Mary after her conversion, as the play switches from its allegorical mode to the more traditional legendary narrative.

The seven deadly sins appear once again in the play (still as seven devils), but only to be punished. Satan, who is "hampord wyth hate" (l. 722), finishes what he and his co-conspirators began by hurling his revenge on the Bad Angel and the now de-allegorized vices.

He calls for his servants Belfagour and Belzabub to join him in judgment (l. 725), and he accuses Bad Angel of neglecting his office:

> REX DIABOLUS: Thow Theffe! Wy hast þou don all þis trespas,
>   To lett yen woman þi bondys breke?[132]

Given Bad Angel's complete lack of compulsion in the play, Satan is right to accuse him of negligence. Bad Angel's defence -- that "The speryt of grace sore ded hyr smyth, / And temptyd so sore þat ipocryte!" (ll. 733-4) -- only serves to highlight the fact that Bad Angel chose not (or was not allowed) to do any tempting of his own. Whereas the vices can only be faulted for failing in their efforts, Bad Angel has not made any active attempt to

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[131] *The Pride of Life* l. 97.
[132] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 731-2.

woo Mary. The playwright has avoided giving Bad Angel the ability to speak to her. In fact, the playwright downplays Mary's relationship with her Bad Angel altogether, choosing to distance the saint from that human capacity for evil which Bad Angel should represent. Not being allowed to speak to his protagonist, Bad Angel serves only as an occasional visual tag for Mary's life-in-sin and as an ornamental counter to Good Angel.

Bad Angel's diminished character, then, may be seen as a casualty of the play's multiplicity of modes. The playwright chooses to shift into allegory when presenting the traditional circumstances of Mary's fall and life-in-sin. The possible reasons behind this choice are numerous and varied. The most important, though, seem to be a need to create an active dramatic conflict which was unnecessary to the narrative legendary accounts -- that universal antagonism offered by the presence of the three enemies of the soul and their accompanying psychomachia -- and also a desire to overlay the salacious details of Mary's sinful life with allegory, apparently in order to bolster her ultimate veneration throughout the rest of the play.

Satan orders Belfagour and Belzabub to "skore away þe yche" (l. 737) by beating Bad Angel severely, and the seven vices get the same treatment: *"Here xall þey serva all þe seuyn as þey do þe frest"* (l. 739, s. d.). His final command to burn the house of Simon (l. 741-3) seems only to be a meaningless, vengeful outburst. It does not have any apparent effect on any of the other characters, but it does give opportunity for some impressive pyrotechnics while Mary makes her way back to the Castle of Magdalen (l. 743, s. d.).

The rest of the play continues with the traditional literary narrative. Mary returns to the castle in time for Lazarus' death (ll. 748-823), then Jesus resurrects him (ll. 824-924). Jesus' Passion is not presented, but the narrative picks up with Satan's lament following the harrowing of Hell (ll. 963-92). The details of the Resurrection are limited to those directly involving Mary, such as the discovery at the sepulchre (ll. 993-1030) and Mary's report to Peter and John (ll. 1031-1060). The *hortulanus* scene follows in which Mary encounters Christ in the garden (from John 20: 11-7). Upon Mary's mistaking him as "Symov[n]d þe gardener" (l. 1079), Christ constructs a metaphor equating man's heart to the garden and man's sins to ""þe fowle wedys and wycys" which he weeds out (l. 1083).[133]

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[133] Davidson discusses the tradition of the *hortulanus* scene, suggesting that the earliest iconography presenting Christ as a gardener with a spade comes from a thirteenth-century gospel book from St. Chapelle (Paris,

After this, we are presented with the scene concerning the heathen ceremony and sacrifice in Marseilles (ll. 1133-1248). Then the play moves back to Jerusalem, where Pilate sends a message to Herod and then to the Emperor Tiberius, claiming that Christ's body was stolen away by the disciples (ll. 1249-1335). Having finished with the biblical material, the play continues with Mary's mission to Marseilles.

Christ sends the angel Raphael to charge Mary with the conversion of the King and Queen of Marcyll (ll. 1366-94), a detail not found in the primary legendary accounts, where Mary traditionally finds herself in Marseilles after being forcibly expelled from Jerusalem.[134] After the brief comic relief offered by the shipman and his boy (ll. 1395-422), Mary boards the ship and sails to Marseilles (ll. 1423-53). She then speaks with the King (1454-1533). Still unconverted, the King brings her to his temple, but the resident heathen priest is unable to speak with Mary present (l. 1546). Mary causes the temple to tremble (1553, s. d.) and then to be set afire, disposing of the priest and his clerk (l. 1561, s. d.).

After the King "goth to bed in hast" (l. 1577, s. d.), Mary retreats to an old lodge and is visited by comforting angels who dress her in a white mantle (l. 1604), which she interprets as "tokenyng of mekeness" (l. 1607). Wearing the mantle and accompanied by the two angels, she visits the King and Queen in their chamber (l. 1609, s. d.), thus initiating their conversion.

Afterwards, Mary tells the King to make a pilgrimage to Peter in Jerusalem (l. 1680). He agrees, reluctantly consenting to bring his pregnant wife with him (ll. 1685-1715), and the couple set off with the shipman and his boy (l. 1716-44). The Queen takes her death on the voyage, and the King leaves her and the child on a rock while he completes the pilgrimage (ll. 1745-1862). On his return voyage, he finds the Queen and the child miraculously alive and well on the rock. The company returns joyfully to Marseilles (ll. 1863-1922).

Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. lat. 8892, fol. 12), 89. He further attributes Gregory the Great with the invention of the garden metaphor, tracing its development through several later works, 89-90.

[134] In the *Legenda Aurea*, Mary and a large company of Christians:
> were thrown by the infidels into a ship without a rudder and launched into the deep [...].
> But the ship was guided by the power of God, and made a port in good estate in at Marseilles.
> (Jacobus, 357)

In the *South English Legendary*, the journey is made by Mary, "[...] and hure soster also / And of Godes deciples moni ek [...]" (ll. 61-2). Mirk and Bokenham offer the same explanation ("De *Sancta* Maria Magdalena et Eius Festiuitate Sermo Breuis," 204; and Delany, 115).

The King and Queen give praise to Mary, who then departs into the wilderness (ll. 1923-70). Mary spends "thirty wyntyr" (l. 2054) in solitude, being fed by angels, until a priest discovers her in her devotion (ll. 1989-2044). The priest agrees to administer communion to Mary before her death, after being urged by two angels (ll. 2085-100). Once she has received the host, Mary commends her spirit to God, accompanied by the angels' praise (ll. 2101-22). Finally, the priest offers a prayer to God and to Mary, promising to bear Mary's body with reverence to his bishop (ll. 2123-30).

The final stanza appears still to be assigned to the priest, although it is out-of-character and is directed towards the audience (not an uncommon effect in morality plays).[135] Breaking the double quatrain style of the previous passages, the speaker blesses the assembled congregation and calls for a traditional *Te Deum* to be sung.[136]

Finally, four additional lines are added to the manuscript by the scribe. While they are written apologetically and with all humility, they hint again at that lingering penchant for allegory:

> Yff ony thyng amysse be,
> *Blame connyng*, and nat me!
> I desyer þe redars to be my frynd,
> Yff þer be ony amysse, þat to amend.[137]

The Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* cannot be considered an allegory, despite its hagiographic intent to present Mary's life as an example for its Christian audience and its extensive use of allegorical elements. The playwright shifts into the allegorical mode when relating the story of Mary's fall and sinful life -- that same segment which his non-dramatic sources and analogues often avoid or only mention in passing. He does this in order to create dramatic conflict, employing those ultimate universalizing Christian antagonists: the three enemies of the soul and the seven deadly sins. He also allows the allegory to claim responsibility for Mary's sinfulness, leaving Mary's presented self an untainted and victimized subject for veneration. But he relinquishes the allegorical mode

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[135] Baker and Hall note there is "some doubt whether this speech was in fact spoken by the priest; it seems more likely to have been the speech of a 'Poeta', or some such character [...]" (*Mary Magdalen*, note no. 2131, p. 218).

[136] Medieval plays often ended with the *Te Deum* or another appropriate hymn. See, for example, *The Castle of Perseverance*, l. 3649; The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, ed. Greg Walker (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000) 1. 927; and the Towneley plays of "The Judgment" (XXX), *The Towneley Plays* (EETS, ES 71), ed. George England (London, New York, Toronto: University of Oxford Press, 1897) ll. 619-20; and "The Deliverance of Souls" (XXV), also in *The Towneley Plays*, ll. 401-4.

[137] *Mary Magdalen* ll. 2140-3 (my emphasis). This nod towards cunning -- or the author's lack thereof -- is a medieval trope. Chaucer, for instance, exhibits the same humility in *The Canterbury Tales*:
  [...] if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute

upon Mary's conversion, and he returns once again to the traditional presentation offered in the non-dramatic legendary accounts. The parallel established between the three enemies of the soul and the three enemies of Christ enhance a sense of structure, allowing the ever-important story of Christ's persecution, death, and resurrection to develop adequately but unobtrusively alongside Mary's dramatized conflict. In the play's place-and-scaffold staging, the use of scenic clusters could highlight such symbolic and allegorical groupings, reflecting that sense of structure.

Despite any structure it offers, however, the allegory does unravel certain implied relationships in the play from time-to-time. As the general awareness of Mary's legendary narrative keeps her from becoming a Mankind or an Everyman, an underlying struggle develops between the universalized personifications of the allegory and the historical Mary, dealing primary with notions of motivation and responsibility. As we have demonstrated, this is especially apparent in the relationship between Mary and her good and bad angels, as the possibilities the two spirits offer for dramatic development are either downplayed or avoided in order to focus on Mary's human character.

Grantley makes the observation that:

The saint's play shares with the allegorical plays the interest in keeping
to the very forefront of the action the moral dichotomies that are the natural
product of conversion drama, but it differs from them in that its characters
are perceived to be historical, and these moral dichotomies have necessarily
to be presented in historical terms.[138]

The playwright of the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* shows both ingenuity and artistic sensibility in his dramatized legend of the saint. His use of allegory in the opening segment demonstrates that lingering desire to broaden the entire narrative with moral prosopopeia, trying to encompass certain hopes and fears in every member of the Christian audience. He is ultimately limited by Mary Magdalen herself, however, as

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of myn unkonnynge and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyd bettre if I hadde had konnynge.
Chaucer, "The Parson's Tale," *The Canterbury Tales*, X (I), l. 1082.
[138] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," 270.

emulation -- rather than universal identification -- is the only possible outcome her legend

will promote. Despite our playwright's best efforts, he is forced into reality.

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CHAPTER 4: On *The Pride of Life*

We have seen how the early and substantial morality play of *The Castle of Perseverance* weaves a rather complex dramatic tapestry out of threads of the didactic allegorical tradition, at once upholding the conservative moral doctrine of the late-medieval Church, while supplying -- through various allegorical characterisations -- a suggestion of free will with regard to salvation. At least during his lifetime, Humanum Genus is relatively able to choose for himself, unlike Prudentius' unpersonified battleground. He moves between his own good and bad impulses -- represented by the Good and Bad Angels -- who operate through reason and persuasion rather than physicality.

In the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, we noted the playwright's apparent penchant for dramatic allegory, mingling his traditional presentation of Mary Magdalen's legend with the elements of the psychomachia. The effect, as discussed, becomes a somewhat lopsided dramatic hagiography, where the salacious details of Mary's youth are disguised, and yet the scene spectacularly supercharged through the extended allegorical narrative in the first half of the play. But allegory ultimately gives way to "realistic" legend, as the presentation of Mary's saintly life returns to the traditional account also represented in the play's non-dramatic predecessors and analogues. While this backpedalling ultimately represents the playwright's reliance on his sources, the allegory of the first half is no intrusion. In fact, the attempt to allegorize Mary's position -- to portray her, however unsuccessfully, as an Everyman figure -- emphasizes her own free will and self-determination once the allegorical trappings have dissolved. Good Angel urges her conversion, but only in a dream. Once she is awake in the world of "reality", Mary chooses to seek out the Saviour herself, initiating her own salvation. In this way, the play's use of allegory markedly draws attention to the "realism" that follows it.

It is useful at this point to turn to an earlier example of didactic allegorical drama in order to emphasize a contrast which arises through the presentation of character in the morality plays. As only a handful of English examples survive from the late-medieval period, our identification of this contrast is by no means conclusive. But it should adequately demonstrate a general shift in motivation for the drama, reflected primarily in the allegorical portrayal and limitations of the protagonist. As immediate influence (and hence strict "evolution") is impossible to establish, we must rely on the wealth of

non-dramatic analogues to construct a general context from which to discuss the plays. But a detailed study of allegorical character in the morality plays -- despite the scarcity of surviving texts -- does highlight an important shift in dramatic emphasis. This difference is made apparent when we turn back to a consideration of *The Pride of Life*.

The elusive Anglo-Irish play fragment *The Pride of Life* frustrates any narrow definition of the morality play genre, yet its existence -- lamentably incomplete -- sheds light on earlier manifestations of didactic, allegorical English drama in the vernacular. Davenport observes that:

> The playwright has invested the basic diagram of Man versus Morality with associations from lyric, narrative, allegory and debate to create a work, which, even in the fragmentary state in which it survives, has a suggestive richness.[1]

King goes further to describe this "suggestive richness," pointing out that "To the literary critic the most striking characteristic of this play is the plethora of analogues -- dramatic, pseudo-dramatic and non-dramatic -- suggested at every turn."[2] A rich amalgamation of older themes, *The Pride of Life* betrays an evident reliance on traditions of folk drama,[3] as well as on non-dramatic homiletic material. Yet it is cast in the didactic allegorical form of a morality play. Its intent to instruct, its wholly allegorical presentation, and its pre-Tudor date of composition mandate its definition as a medieval English morality play, but its use of allegory -- which will be discussed -- is unique. More than this, *The Pride of Life* is a much older play than the other works examined, and it often betrays its age in comparison -- not only linguistically, but also thematically. As shall be demonstrated, it is a different sort of morality play.

As the earliest example of an English morality play in the vernacular, however, *The Pride of Life* remains a conspicuous necessity to any understanding of the genre. The surviving manuscript copy was destroyed in an explosion in Dublin's Four Courts building in 1922, and scholars have been forced to work primarily with an edition by James Mills (deputy-keeper of the public records) from 1891, in which he included a photo-zincographized facsimile of one of the leaves.[4] As it exists, the play's incomplete nature

[1] Davenport 20.
[2] King 259.
[3] Discussed by Richard Axton, *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1974) 166-8; and Robert Potter, *The English Morality Play* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975) 14-5.
[4] Information concerning the history and details of the manuscript and subsequent editions of the play comes from Norman Davis' introduction to *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments* (EETS, SS 1), lxxxv-lxxxviii.

has initiated occasional scholarly conjecture while avoiding a full, comprehensive

examination. It remains a virtual Rosetta Stone to those critics of the morality plays who

require a malleable example in support of a theoretic speculation, yet it remains virtually

impenetrable to more circumspect observations of the genre. By closely examining what

does survive of the original, and by making a probable, conservative reconstruction of what

does not survive, a fuller understanding of the play-fragment may arise.

The staging of the play has provoked a fair amount of critical debate,[5] as the

stage directions are few and brief. The characters themselves, however, shed some light

on the subject. The Prolocutor is the first to speak, and he provides a conventional call for

peace[6] and plot summary that doubles as a sort of advertisement for the play to follow,

similar to the Banns in *The Castle of Perseverance* and in the mystery cycles:

> Now stondith stil and beth hende,
> ‹And ter›yith al for þe weder,
> ‹And› ȝe schal or ȝe hennis wende
> Be glad þat ȝe come hidir.[7]

One can tell from these lines that the play was most likely performed outdoors because of

the reference to "þe weder." Marion Jones suggests that the play "seems to have required a

similar version of the place-and-scaffold system of outdoor staging,"[8] and this is apparent

in the text for the most part.

The character Mirth makes reference to a throne for the King: "King of Lif and

lord of londe / As þou sittis on þi se [...]" (ll. 275-6). He also tells us of a throne for the

Bishop: "Sire Bisschop, þou sittist on þi se [...]" (l. 323). It is probable that the King and

the Bishop are both visible to the audience at the same time and yet far enough away

from one another to suggest a reasonable symbolic distance. The most economical and most

likely arrangement is some sort of place-and-scaffold setting, similar to that suggested for

The Castle of Perseverance and the Digby *Mary Magdalen*.

The stage directions verify this notion as well, as the Queen uses a tent door (or

curtain) to separate herself from the King: "*Et tunc clauso tentorio dicet Regina secrete

nuncio* [...]" (l. 306, s. d.). Later Mirth goes out into the unlocalized "place" ("*Et eat

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[5] Davis lxxxviii-x.
[6] *The Pride of Life* l. 1.
[7] *The Pride of Life* ll. 9-12.
[8] Jones 221.

pla<team>," l. 470, s. d.) and publicly announces the King's challenge to Death. The entrance and exits of the characters are not openly indicated, and it is most likely that everyone in the surviving scenes is present within the acting area from the beginning. It would stand to reason that many characters -- such as Death and his followers, the Virgin, Jesus, and the devils -- would be hidden in their tent or scaffold until their appearance, and that the enactment of a pitched battle would occur amidst or in front of the scaffolds in the "place". Separate, curtained structures would be required for such an arrangement, between which the messenger Mirth could travel.

The play's staging might reflect its allegorical arrangement in a manner similar to *The Castle of Perseverance*. This is definitely Fifield's restrictive understanding, as she postulates a circular staging for all of the morality plays, based on the template offered by the stage plan in *The Castle of Perseverance*.[9] But her decision to play the Bishop's sermon on a central pulpit or tower,[10] surrounded by the other scaffolds, seems to push the analogy with *The Castle of Perseverance* too far, as no evidence exists in the text to uphold such an arrangement. She concludes by looking at textual evidence from the opposite direction: "*The Pride of Life* [...] includes no evidence or action which prevents circular staging, but rather does contain action most suited to a circular stage."[11] In fact, nothing in the play particularly recommends a circular staging, although the notion is not "prevented".

In his recent introduction to James Mills' edition of the play and its accompanying account roll, Alan J. Fletcher suggests a semi-circular arrangement of scaffolds.[12] Textual evidence is inconclusive towards any formal disposition, but the scaffolds of the King of Life and the King of Death must, of course, be diametrically opposed. As mentioned before, the Bishop must also have a scaffold or tent representing his palace, bringing the minimum number of *loci* required by the text to three.

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[9] Fifield, *The Castle in the Circle*. She rightly suggests that the plays "gain variety, meaning, and impact when placed on a circular enclosed stage," (47) and precariously concludes that:
> The English [...] morality, as evidenced by text and action, was performed in an enclosed area, surrounded by mansions, frequently containing a central tower, and viewed by a mobile audience standing or sitting between the mansions and about the *platea*. (48)

[10] Fifield, *The Castle in the Circle*, 21.

[11] Fifield, *The Castle in the Circle*, 22.

[12] Alan Fletcher, introduction, *Account Roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin: 1337-1346* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996) xxxviii-xxxix (and especially plate I).

The Prolocutor's description of the missing section of the play discusses the King of

Life's dream:

> Deth comith, he dremith a dredfful dreme --
> Well aȝte al carye;
> And slow fader and moder and þem heme:
> He ne wold none sparye,[13]

which has led to the suggestion that the concluding action of the play was represented by

a dumb-show.[14] The battle sequence that follows and its subsequent action might still be a

part of the King's dream -- however it was played -- but this seems unlikely, as it would

significantly limit the length and drive of the text. Moreover, the Prolocutor's continuing

description -- "Sone affter hit befel þat Deth and Life / Beth togeder itaken" (l. 86) --

seems to suggest that the dream sequence has ended and that the battle is indeed enacted.

This would ultimately require a heaven-stage for "Oure Lady mylde" (l. 97), and

an opposing hellmouth from which the "þe fendis" shall come to fetch the soul after the

King's death (l. 106). Jesus would presumably appear on the scaffold with the Virgin, as

she evidently pleads with him to allow her intercession on the soul's behalf (l. 99). This

raises the number of apparent scaffolds to five, although doubling could take place in the

case of the latter two. So a set comprised of three to five scaffolds is required by the text,

with those for the King of Life and Death distanced through symbolic opposition, which

could easily be doubled for Heaven and Hell in the final movement of the play.

This is, in fact, a play of diametric opposition. But in the context of the battle

between life and death, the traditional psychomachia plays no apparent part at all. The

play deals with the supra-Christian theme of life versus death, avoiding the traditional

moral presentation of the virtues versus the vices. What emerges is the portrayal of an

allegorical conflict, only "Christianized" by the events that take place (or are presumed

to take place) after the struggle is concluded and the protagonist is dead.

Certain allegorical relationships give weight to this idea. The King's messenger,

Mirth, and his two knights, Strength and Health, make up an interesting allegorical

group of figures in that they bring about the fall of the King, yet they are not part of a

psychomachia. In describing Mirth, Spivack makes the mistaken observation that "He is,

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[13] *The Pride of Life* ll. 81-4.
[14] King 260.

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according to the eschatological view of the play, a vice, along with Strength and Health [...]."[15] This is stretching the "eschatological view of the play" a bit too far. Pamela King's understanding of the three characters seems more reasonable:

> [...] Fortitudo and Sanitas, his two guards, serve to corroborate the King's erroneous moral stance rather than to construct it. Mirth, the messenger figure, is more agent of misrule than vice, part commentator, part court fool.[16]

Strength and Health are extensions of the King's earthly existence. In this way they resemble characters such as Beauty and Strength in the play of *Everyman*, although they are used quite differently. Far from being vices, Strength and Health support the King in his earthly life -- with a modicum of flattery -- to the full extent of their abilities:

> PRIMUS MILES, FORTITUDO. Lord, in truþe
> þou mit trist
> Feþfuli to stond,
> Þou mit liu as þe list,
> For wonschildis þu fond.[17]

If anything, they are intensely faithful in the section of the play that remains, and it appears they are fully prepared to war with Death at the King's command:

> II MILES. May I him onis mete
> With þis longe launce,
> In felde oþer in strete,
> I wol him ȝiue mischaunce.[18]

They represent, then, two parts of the King's own earthly character. They are emblems of his boastfulness, and they are entirely subservient to him both socially and allegorically. Unlike the vices of the psychomachia, they have no personal motive or agenda. They do not attempt to persuade or tempt the King into sin, and their flattery is simply an allegorically attributive extension of his own haughtiness. But as Strength and Health they can only resort to physical violence, and this proves ineffectual against Death's allegorised presence in the play.

Mirth seems the closest in nature to a vice through his playful foolishness. He does, however, fulfill the Queen's order to fetch the Bishop for a sermon:

> NUNCIUS. Madam I make no tariying
> With softe wordis mo;

[15] Spivack 122.
[16] King 259.
[17] *The Pride of Life* ll. 143-6.
[18] *The Pride of Life* ll. 255-8.

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> For I am Solas, I most singe
>> Oueral qwher I go.   *Et cantat.*
>
> Sire Bisschop, þou sittist on þi se
> With þi mitir on þi heuede;
> My lady þe Qwen preyith þe
> Hit schold noʒt be bileuyd.[19]

Because of a lacuna in the text, we are unable to see the ensuing dialogue between Mirth

and the Bishop. But Mirth obviously fulfills his obligation to the Queen because the

Bishop is delivering his sermon in the following scene. His only real "sins" are mirth and

flattery, and -- as with the two knights -- his flattery is an element of rather than a cause

for the true, unspecified "vice" of the play: Pride. The King himself embodies the

negative vice of a subsumed psychomachia; he is a representative of the pride of life.

This brings the character of Rex Vivus into question. If, as it has been suggested,

he is not acted upon or influenced by external vices in the play, how precisely does he

function as the protagonist of this particular morality play? Spivack states that:

> He is displayed as a monarch of great prowess and unlimited dominion.
> But he is Everyman nonetheless, and the entire regal setting is essentially
> a metaphor with the broadest possible meaning for humanity in general.[20]

It is easy to accept the view of the King as the "epitome of blindly confident

mankind"[21] given his actions in the play, and an audience would probably identify with

him on this level, to an extent. By the admission of the Prolocutor, however, a different

picture of the King arises:

> ‹Of þe Kyng of› Lif I wol ʒou telle;
>> ‹He stondith› first biffore
> ‹All men þat beth› of flessch and fel
>> ‹And of woman i›bore.[22]

What we seem to be dealing with is a protagonist who is an allegorical figure more than a

universalized type -- "first biffore / All men" -- and, as such, he operates within the

overall allegorical paradigm. Not only his social distance as king, but also his

characterisation as a personified abstraction (rather than as a "type" of mankind), serve

to create a distance from the sympathy of the audience.

Pamela King notes that:

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[19] *The Pride of Life* ll. 319-326. Davis translates "bileuyd" as "neglected".
[20] Spivack 228.
[21] Spivack 71.
[22] *The Pride of Life* ll. 17-20.

The protagonist of *The Pride of Life* is radically different from that of the other plays studied so far, for he is not a representative of all mankind in the face of death, but a personification of the life-force itself and, therefore, the natural opponent of death.[23]

He is a representation of Life, of the "life-force," and concordantly an allegorical representation of the pride of life. This is not the scheming, alluring Pride of the psychomachia who is one of a rank of villainous soldiery, but the unavoidable, all-encompassing Pride that exists in a life without fear of Death. Within the context of the narrative, Life and Pride are inseparable, as the Prolocutor makes clear:

> ‹In› pride and likinge his lif he ledith,
> Lordlich he lokith with eye;
> ‹Prin›ce and dukis, he seith, him dredith,
> ‹He› dredith no deth for to deye.[24]

There is a real sense that Pride is the obvious effect of life when one does not think on Death or fear a last ending. It is not the Pride of the seven deadly sins. It is, in fact, the Pride of Life, as the King explains to the Queen:

> I ne schal neuer deye
> For I am King of Life;
> Deth is vndir myne eye
> And þerfor leue þi strife.[25]

The King, then, is not an Everyman figure who is a victim of scheming vices, as is Humanum Genus in *The Castle of Perseverance* and who is partially invoked through the character of Mary in the Digby *Mary Magdalen*. He is the resolute and understandably arrogant embodiment of Life itself.

The King's arrogance as the embodiment of Life does not go completely unchecked, however, as the warnings of the Queen and the Bishop demonstrate. Even without the Prolocutor's introduction, the audience is fully aware of the disastrous outcome awaiting the King, and, moreover, it is apparent that the King himself is also aware. Continuing the speech above, the King gives evidence of at least some fear of Death:

> þou dost bot mak myn hert sore,
> For hit nel noȝt helpe;
> I prey þe spek of him no more.
> Qwhat wolte of him ȝelpe?[26]

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[23] King 260.
[24] *The Pride of Life* ll. 25-8.
[25] *The Pride of Life* ll. 211-4.
[26] *The Pride of Life* ll. 215-8.

The physical conflict in the play is the antagonism between Life and Death, but it is suggested here that the King is struggling with an internal conflict as well: between his own allegorically constructed arrogance and a fear of Death.

The analogue offered by Spivack (the psychomachia), then, is not adequate to define the dramatic action offered through *The Pride of Life's* allegory. Other vaguely analogous allegories have been suggested, such as the dance of death.[27] Made famous by Hans Holbein's engravings (1524-26),[28] the dance appears in several tracts from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries, most notably by Thomas of Hales, Jean le Fevre, and Lydgate.[29] The image of Death indiscriminately leading figures through the graveyard does somewhat befit the Prolocutor's description of the King of Life's dream, in which the King's father, mother, and uncle are taken by Death (ll. 83-4). But the connection is tentative, and it is subordinate to the enacted struggle between Life and Death and the later heavenly intercession on behalf of the soul.

> Pamela King observes a connection with the game of chess:
>
> the action of the whole play, but particularly the Queen's attempted protection of her King, is assailingly suggestive of the game of chess, not uncommonly employed in medieval didactic allegory, notably in the protracted complaint of the Man in Black in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*.[30]

The two opposing kings, the Queen, two knights, and the Bishop are undoubtedly suggestive of a game of chess in which Life and Death contend. Chaucer's Man in Black recalls this sort of allegorizing when Lady Fortune "takes" his queen through her "false draughtes dyvers," placing him in a despairing checkmate.[31] Unlike Lady Fortune, however, Death's victory in *The Pride of Life* is allegorically assured from the outset. Thus the Queen's efforts at protection are directed not towards the King in his struggle with Death, but rather towards the game's aftermath -- towards the defeated King of Life's ultimate providence.

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[27] Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, 53; and David J. Leigh, "The Doomsday Play and the Early Moralities: Some Implications," *Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual*, eds. Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972) 268-9.

[28] Radu Boureanu, *Holbein*, translated from the Romanian by Florin Ionescu (London: Abbey Library, 1977) 18-9.

[29] Specifically Thomas' *Love Rune* (13th cent.), Lydgate's verses in the Pardon Churchyard near St. Paul's (c. 1430), and Jean's '*Je fis de Macabree la danse*' (1376), discussed by Rossiter, 82-6.

[30] King 261.

[31] Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987) ll. 652-64.

This concentration on events following death is, of course, the intent of the morality play genre, and -- whether a psychomachia, a game of chess between Life and Death, or another allegory of mortality is played out for the audience -- the events of the afterlife crystallize the edifying moral on which the plays are based.

We have seen that the King does not represent the Everyman or Mankind figure of the later moralities in that he is not a victim of either a realized or implied psychomachia, and that he is, in fact, an embodiment of Pride. But clearly his own internal conflict dispels the notion that he is some sort of one-dimensional representation. Pride, in this sense, is an effect rather than a cause, and it is a natural, although sinister derivative of Life personified. The Prolocutor demonstrates this in his introduction when he describes the death of the King:

> Qwhen þe body is doun ibroȝt
> Þe soule sorow awakith;
> Þe bodyis pride is dere aboȝt,
> Þe soule þe fendis takith.[32]

It is clear that Pride within the play belongs to the body ("þe bodyis pride") and is a result of the King's earthly life. The King's soul is not condemned to Hell because his body was a victim of the vice called Pride. He is condemned because he failed to look to his last ending and to follow God's laws in preparation for the coming of Death. In this way he is in a similar predicament to the protagonist in *Everyman*.

Unlike *Everyman*, however, *The Pride of Life* centres on the certainty of death and on God's benevolence, rather than the *ars moriendi* or the proper trappings of holy dying. The concluding (missing) section of *The Pride of Life* acknowledges death's certainty while undermining its sting.

Fletcher makes an important connection between history and *The Pride of Life* that goes a long way towards explaining the play's preoccupations:

> [...] we should consider whether the play's strategies had some part to play in the general project of social engineering that had largely fallen to the church's lot during the years of great mortality. It was important for society to retrieve a means of making sense of death, for death's threat might be alleviated if its damage [...] could somehow be limited within the uncreated scheme which was governed by providence.[33]

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[32] *The Pride of Life* ll. 93-6.
[33] Fletcher xxx.

He then makes the quite profound statement that the entire morality play genre came about as "One cultural response by the church to the social needs wrought by the Black Death [...]."[34]

It lies outside of the scope of this examination to discuss the possible influence the great plagues may have had on the invention of the morality play genre, but, with *The Pride of Life* in particular, that influence seems undeniably present. As the "years of great mortality" ravaged many parts of Britain, Dublin, too, fell prey to the Black Death initially in the years 1348 and 1349, which quickly spread to other parts of the country.[35] The primary reference to these events comes from John Clyn, an Anglo-Irish, Franciscan friar of Kilkenny, who apparently died of the plague himself shortly after chronicling the plight of so many of his countrymen.[36] Clyn's description is particularly poignant and endues the imagination with some of the terror and distress which must have accompanied the ravages of the Black Death:

> This pestilence was so contagious that those who touched the dead or persons sick of the plague were straightaway infected themselves and died, so that the confessor and his penitent were carried to the same grave. And from very fear and horror men were seldom brave enough to perform the works of piety and mercy, such as visiting the sick and burying the dead. For many died from boils and ulcers and running sores which grew on the legs and beneath the arm-pits, whilst others suffered pains in the head and went almost into a frenzy, whilst others spat blood.[37]

Clyn reflects the anxiety that he and his fellow churchmen must have felt while attempting to enact the public duties of their offices during the time of the "pestilence". He concludes his account with a pointed and despairing purpose:

> among the dead expecting death's coming, I have set them down in writing, truthfully as I have heard them and tested them; and lest the writing should perish with the writer and the work fail with the worker, I leave parchment to carry on the work, if perchance any man survives or any of the race of Adam may be able to escape this pestilence and continue the work I have begun.[38]

Gwynn notes that Clyn's account is supported by at least two other contemporary accounts of the Black Plague in 1348 and 1349 from the eastern counties,[39] and these years were

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[34] Fletcher xxxi.

[35] Aubrey Gwynn, "The Black Death in Ireland," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review of Letters, Philosophy, & Science,* 24 (1935) 25-6.

[36] His account is published in *The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn and Thady Dowling*, ed. Richard Butler (Dublin: Irish Archaeological Society, 1849) 35. His life is discussed by Gwynn, 25-6.

[37] From Butler's edition of *The Annals* (35), translated by Gwynn, 27.

[38] From Butler's edition of *The Annals* (35), translated by Gwynn, 27-8.

[39] Namely the Hiberno-Latin chronicle from the Franciscan convent of Nenagh, and the anonymous "Pembridge" chronicle from Dublin in 1348. Gwynn 26.

inevitably marked by a general disturbed consciousness concerning mortality.

The dating of the play and its Anglo-Irish origin, then, are important to Fletcher's

argument, which is founded on the fact that "the nearer it originated to the mid-

fourteenth century, the nearer was it located to a period of social turbulence."[40]

Despite earlier suggestions of an English origin and a fifteenth-century date,[41] W.

Heuser has solidly demonstrated an affinity between the play and the early fourteenth

century "Kildare Poems" (British Library MS Harley 913).[42] Davis agrees with Heuser,

and discusses some of the fine points of his and other arguments for an earlier, Anglo-Irish

origin.[43] While comparing the play to the "Kildare Poems," he explains that:

> Despite the occasional northerly features of A's work [that of the first scribe]
> (*qwh-*, *scho*, *-is* in pres., *schal* in 2 sg., *-en* in past parts.) and the eccentricities
> of B's [the second scribe] spelling, there is so much common ground between
> the play and the poems that Heuser was surely right in claiming that the
> exemplar of the play was Anglo-Irish.[44]

He later states that:

> None of the objections to an Irish origin of the play appear to be decisive.
> Its linguistic affinities with the Kildare poems are not only in scribal
> usage but in a distinctive cluster of criteria certified by rhyme, and it
> is reasonable to conclude that it was composed as well as written down
> in Ireland.[45]

The primary objection with which he struggles is, of course, the King's reference to

English place names when he promises to reward Mirth with "Þe castel of Gailispire on þe

Hil, / And þe erldom of Kente" (ll. 301-2). Earlier Mirth promises "Doȝtely to done a

dede" (l. 283) for the King, anywhere he is commanded, from "Hen to Berewik opon

Twede" (l. 285). But Davis explains that this latter reference could easily refer to a place

in the country (of England) that is far away -- in the opposite extremity -- from Dublin.[46]

As far as the former two references, Davis suggests that "the earldom implies no

special territorial interest," but he remains uncertain about the castle of "Gailispire,"

which he tentatively attributes to Gaspire in Wiltshire.[47] Here, however, Fletcher's

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[40] Fletcher xxix.

[41] James Mills, introduction, *Account Roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin: 1337-1346* (Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1891); and Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, 53.

[42] W. Heuser, *Die Kildare-Gedichte* (Bonn, 1904) 66-71.

[43] Davis xcvi-c.

[44] Davis xcvii.

[45] Davis xcix.

[46] Davis xcviii.

[47] Davis xcviii.

recent research sheds light on a more probable location. Based on its connection with the Augustinian canons of Dublin, the lack of any similar candidate in England, and other topographical reasons, Fletcher suggests that "The present-day townland of Giltspur, in the barony of Rathdown, county Wicklow" is a more likely candidate for the reference.[48]

The references to English place-names, then, do not indicate an English origin for *The Pride of Life*, and the linguistic/poetic similarities between the play and the so-called "Kildare Poems" recommend an Irish origin. While not upholding a *direct* relationship between the "Kildare Poems" and *The Pride of Life*, it should be noted that many of the of the poems (from British Library MS Harley 913) are preeminently concerned with themes also emphasized in the play. In the fourth poem ("The Song of Michael of Kildare"), for instance, the reader is warned to abandon pride and covetousness and to prepare for death. As in the play, kings are singled out specifically:

> Al we beth iclung so clai,
> We schold rew that sore.
> Prince and king, what wenith thai
> To libbe euir-more?
> Leueth your plai and crieth ai:
> Jesu Crist, thin ore![49]

The poem continues in this fashion, warning "Riche man be-thenche the, / Tak gode hede wat thou be!" (ll. 51-2). It reminds the reader that Death pays no heed to rank or station:

> Of al the lond thou art the mest,
> Thou doist no streinth of God is hest.
> Of deth whi neltov thenche?
> Whan thou wenist libbe best,
> Thi bodi deth sal qwench.
> [...] Est and West schal be thi qwest,
> Ne might thou nothing blench.[50]

While "Frere Michel Kyldare" (l. 144) claims to have composed this particular poem, the others in MS Harley 913 cannot be attributed to him with any certainty.[51] However, it should be noted that the same themes -- condemning the sins of pride and covetousness, warning of the certainty of death, and listing the Abuses of the Age -- creep up again and again in most of the poems of the manuscript. These are the same themes

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[48] Fletcher xxvii. He provides a convincing and detailed investigation of his suggestion (xxvi-xxix).

[49] "Song of Michael of Kildare," *Anglo-Irish Poems of the Middle Ages*, ed. Angela M. Lucas (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1995) ll. 15-20.

[50] "The Song of Michael of Kildare" ll. 61-70.

[51] See Angela M. Lucas' discussion in the introduction to *Anglo-Irish Poems of the Middle Ages* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1995) 14-44.

central to *The Pride of Life*, and in particular to the Bishop's sermon, which reflects the

voice of the playwright in its explication of the play's overall moral (as will be

discussed). His sermon reflecting the theme of the Twelve Abuses of the Age (l. 327 and

following)[52] echoes the sentiments expressed in the brief poem "Five Hateful Things":

> Bissop lorles,
> Kyng redeles
> Yung man rechles,
> Old man witles,
> Womman ssamles --
> I swer bi heuen Kyng,
> Thos beth fiue lither thing.[53]

This particular form of complaint -- where a station or character is described as being

laden with the sin most inappropriate to it -- is further expanded in another poem from

the manuscript, "Song of the Times." Both poems display the same form of the complaint

which will be expressed in the Bishop's sermon in *The Pride of Life*.

It is apparent, then, that similar themes are employed in the "Kildare Poems"

and in the play, beyond the poetic and linguistic similarities already observed. As the

poems were probably written as a pocket book for an Anglo-Irish preaching friar,[54] it is not

surprising that similar themes would be equally important to the community responsible

for the survival of the play -- the contemporary Augustinian priory of the Holy Trinity in

Dublin.

Despite the use of "English" place-names, then, the greater evidence supports an

Anglo-Irish origin for the play. The "Kildare Poems" supply the most secure grounds for

dating, as "the general similarity of sounds and forms indicates that the composition of

the play cannot have been very much later that that of the poems -- certainly not a

century later."[55] Given the mid- to late-fourteenth century date for the play and its

provenance in the Augustinian community of Anglo-Irish Dublin, the play is surely

connected with the terrible events surrounding the Black Death of 1348-1349, and Fletcher

is certainly right in his assertion that:

> If before the years of massive mortality people had tended to live less mindful
> of their end, now confrontations with death would be brutal and repeated, and

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[52] A common theme for much medieval homiletic material, the tradition of the Twelve Abuses will be discussed further.

[53] "Five Hateful Things," *Anglo-Irish Poems of the Middle Ages*, ed. Angela M. Lucas (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1995) ll. 1-7.

[54] Discussed in Lucas' introduction, 20.

[55] Davis xcix.

social consciousness of death's imminence would be heightened reciprocally. The play's preoccupation with the dominion of death must be regarded as the incarnation in a dramatic guise of such a consciousness.[56]

Death (the event, rather than the personification) in *The Pride of Life* is not merely that necessary shift between mankind's psychomachia and salvation/judgment, as it is in *The Castle of Perseverance*. It is more urgent ("Deth comith [...], / Well aȝte al carye"), more indiscriminate ("And slow fader and moder and þen heme: / He ne wold none sparye"), and altogether more severe:

> With him driuith adoun to grounde,
> He dredith nothing his kniȝtis;
> And delith him depe deþis wounde
> And kith on him his miȝtis.[57]

This is Death-as-warrior. His personification here is not as God's messenger as in *Everyman* (l. 63), nor is he a "teacher," as in *The Castle of Perseverance* (ll. 2795 and 2832). This is the armoured, feudal Death, ferociously asserting his dominion over a vain contender. The missing ending of the play foreshortens our picture of his character, but it is apparent from the Prolocutor's introduction that Death in *The Pride of Life* will be formidable.

A comparison has been made between Death in *The Pride of Life* and his now familiar counterpart in the *Ludus Coventriae* "The Death of Herod."[58] There are similarities in their allegorical presentations. Both slay a boastful king *because of* his pride, both are indiscriminate and dominion-asserting:

> For now I go to sle hym with strokys sad and sore, / Þis tyde.
> Bothe hym and his knyghtys all,
> I xal hem make to me but thrall;
> With my spere sle hem I xall
> And so cast down his pride![59]

Death in "The Death of Herod" is a striking and terrible characterisation, a mixture of both suddenness and the grotesque that poignantly offsets Herod's vain merriment following the Killing of the Children. Unlike his counterpart in *The Pride of Life*, however, Death in the mystery play is still represented as "Goddys masangere" (l. 177) and not in direct opposition to his victim. Herod does not openly challenge Death, as does

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[56] Fletcher xxx.
[57] *The Pride of Life* ll. 91-4.
[58] King 260.
[59] "The Death of Herod" ll. 201-6.

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the King of Life. Rather, he challenges the authority of Christ -- a blasphemous, rather than just an impossible enterprise. In other words, the audience would have condemned Herod to death and damnation through his actions before the play began. But what of the King of Life?

Fletcher suggests:

> Contemporaries were historically well equipped to condemn the aspiration of the king of life while at once recognizing how they shared in the absurd confidence lying behind it. Thus the king was a figure whom they might both identify with and judge.[60]

As discussed earlier, the diametric allegory presented largely prevents the identification of the King of Life with a Mankind or Everyman figure. And, as mentioned in the opening chapter, the allegory surrounding the battle is uneasy anyway, as Death cannot lose a battle to the death -- thus the King's undertaking is necessarily absurd. Yet his character *is* meant to invoke a relative amount of identification from the audience, or else the didactic morality invoked through the concluding action is rendered powerless.

The ensuing conflict in the first portion of the play, moreover, seems to echo elements from the early or extra-Christian folk-drama. Pamela King points to the rituals involved with the agricultural year,[61] perhaps of the type indicated by Grosseteste's castigation of "'plays called Inductions of May or of Autumn.'"[62] She also points to Elisabeth Brewer's selection of beheading/regeneration stories from Irish folklore,[63] which demonstrate a non-dramatic tradition of tales concerning Gawain and the Green Knight and similar narratives.[64]

Richard Axton examines the folk-drama associations further, coming to the conclusion that:

> The modes of play used in *The Pride of Life* betray their origins in a popular, non-ecclesiastical drama: the vaunt and combat, audience intimidation, running about the 'place'. As we have seen, these modes were established in the popular religious drama of the thirteenth century. They survive most purely in the stylized combat of the mummers' plays, from which they may originally have been adapted.[65]

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[60] Fletcher xxx.
[61] King 260.
[62] Grosseteste, as cited by Richard Axton, 35.
[63] King 260.
[64] Elisabeth Brewer, *From Cuchulainn to Gawain: Sources and Analogues of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1973).
[65] Richard Axton 167-8.

The battle of Life versus Death does seem to be in line with some elements of what is known of the early folk drama. Axton draws attention to the similarity between the boasts of Strength and Health and the "simple vernacular of the sword and mumming plays,"[66] while the sequence of life, death, and resurrection -- outside of biblical auspices -- does apparently reflect what is known of the seasonal rituals and resurrection plays associated with the folk drama.[67] But the connection is difficult to establish, as both Axton and King are forced to use the term "sub-literary"[68] to describe the traditions through which these motifs were transmitted. Largely based on nineteenth-century "descendants" in the form of mummers' plays,[69] knowledge of the early English folk drama remains largely hypothetical, as Axton is forced to admit:

> Whether the early Middle Ages knew a drama recognizably like that
> of the nineteenth-century mummers' tradition remains partly con-
> jectural.[70]

In other words, while the battle, death, and subsequent "resurrection" in *The Pride of Life* may betray a reliance on motifs from the pre-Christian folk drama, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact nature of that folk drama, as examples thereof only exist as nineteenth-century redactions in the form of mummers' plays, and the medieval "originals' remain lost in their now dissipated oral existence.

One final way of treating the action of *The Pride of Life* remains to be examined. Possibly taking Spivack's notion that the King's pride "is the Christian equivalent of the classic *Hubris*" within the context of the play,[71] Davenport suggests that the play "seems embryonic" in light of the developed drama of the Elizabethan period.[72] His condemnation of the play is based on the inappropriate assertion "that medieval drama may be within the realm of tragedy,...as long as the play remains in this world."[73]

Davenport is guilty, however, of what could be called retrospective scholarship, in which he -- like so many before him -- views the medieval plays as undeveloped versions of an Elizabethan archetype. This causes him to misinterpret *The Pride of Life*:

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[66] Richard Axton 167.
[67] See Richard Axton's discussion, 34-6.
[68] Richard Axton 42, and King 260.
[69] Discussed by Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, vol. 1; and Richard Axton 34-42.
[70] Richard Axton 38.
[71] Spivack 228.
[72] Davenport 17.
[73] Davenport 28.

It is the kind of play which connects medieval and Elizabethan drama, through the idea of the king as central character and the treatment of the human mind as composed of potentially warring elements and as the microcosm of the realm and of human society.[74]

This is the danger always present in tracing a line of dramatic continuity between the moralities and Elizabethan drama in that similar elements lead to full comparisons.

The Pride of Life, like *Everyman* and *The Castle of Perseverance*, is primarily concerned with life beyond this world. The homiletic intentions of its presentation are paramount to its internal success. Perhaps Spivack's understanding is a bit more plausible:

The early moralities, in brief, while they could and zealously did address the threat of hell to individual men, could not enact such a consummation on their universal stage without becoming unintelligible to the Christian spectator. Of necessity they turn away from tragedy although it is latent in their theme and temper.[75]

This description does acknowledge that moralities such as *The Pride of Life* are not merely tragedies with benign happy endings tacked on for the sake of a God-fearing audience. But it still presents the moralities as somewhat abortive attempts at Elizabethan conventions.

The Pride of Life is not a tragedy. It is a homiletic drama concerning the danger of a lack of preparation for Death, the importance of the intercession of grace, and the Christian responsibility for attaining that grace by accepting virtue and shunning vice. The King is guilty of *hubris*, perhaps, in the most general sense of the word, but the subsequent actions of the play exhibit little resemblance to classical or Elizabethan notions of tragedy. By examining these actions more closely, moreover, a more suitable picture of *The Pride of Life's* form may arise.

After the Prolocutor's opening, the King of Life appears in (or on) his scaffold, delivering an alliterative rant, typical of a tyrannical ruler:

Pes, now, ʒe princis of powere so prowde,
ʒe kingis, ʒe kempis, ʒe kniʒtis ikorne,
ʒe barons bolde, þat beith me obowte;
<Sem> schal ʒu my sawe, swaynis i[s]worne.[76]

The King's reference to the pride of those "obowte" him immediately draws the audience

[74] Davenport 28.
[75] Spivack 242.
[76] *The Pride of Life* ll. 113-6.

into an awareness of their shared vanity, linking their sins with his own. And his position as a tyrant in the modern sense must be suspended, as Stephen May explains:

> the full impact of the protagonist's fall can only be appreciated if his original status as apparently ideal ruler is realised. The modern tendency to equate boast with tyranny will certainly obscure the effect. [...] regal power is intrinsically acceptable, indeed necessary, having its proper place in the cosmic hierarchy; at the same time, within it lie greater possibilities for abuse than are available to lesser men.[77]

The point should not be over-emphasised with *The Pride of Life*, but it is necessary to realize that -- like Syrus in the Digby *Mary Magdalen* -- threats and tirades do not necessarily equal an evil king in the minds of a medieval audience.

After a lacuna at line 126, the Queen is presented acknowledging her faithfulness to the King (ll. 127-30). Then the King calls his two knights, and Strength and Health praise him and enumerate their own powers (ll. 131-66). Following this, the King delivers his allegorically appropriate line, "Qwherof schuld I drede / Qwhen I am King of Life?" (l. 171-2), which prompts the Queen to question his arrogance and his disregard for death:

> Sire, þou saist as þe liste,
> þou liuist at þi wille;
> Bot somthing þou miste,
> And þerfor hold þe stille.
>
> Thinke, þou haddist beginninge
> Qwen þou were ibore;
> And bot þou mak god endinge
> þi sowle is forlore.[78]

This is the play's first attempt to limit the allegorical bounds of its protagonist. With a new, Christian motivation, the Queen specifies that the King of Life had a beginning -- his birth -- and that he has a soul. Despite the King's proclaimed belief in his allegorical position, the Queen defines his mortality. The two argue about the power of Death (ll. 191-210), and the King does show some sign of doubting his previously perceived immortality: "þou dost bot mak myn hert sore, / [...] I prey þe spek of him no more" (ll. 215 and 217). The Queen again takes up the Christian line, advising her king to "serue God Almiȝte" (l. 229).

In the Queen's characterisation, we find a correlation with those figures who normally prompt the conversion of the protagonist, such as the Good Angels in *The Castle*

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[77] May, "Good Kings and Tyrants," 93. He provides a number of medieval examples of "good" kings engaging in threatening boasts (87-99).

[78] *The Pride of Life* ll. 179-86.

of Perseverance and the Digby *Mary Magdalen*. They are not agents of conversion in themselves, but they do represent the motivating force behind that ever-important change of heart. Here, however, that force goes unheeded, as the King turns to his two knights again for flattering support (ll. 243-62).

The King then calls on Mirth, who compliments his master in the manner of Strength and Health and re-acknowledges the King's nominal allegorical position:

> I haue ben boþe fer and nere
> In bataile and in strife;
> Ocke þer was neuer þi pere,
> For þou art King of Life.[79]

This comforts the King, for he rewards Mirth with the promise of "auauncemente" (l. 300) -- namely the castle and earldom discussed earlier -- and takes his rest behind a drawn curtain (ll. 303-6). This stage-blocking allows the Queen to speak to Mirth privately (*"Et tunc clauso tentorio dicet Regina secrete nuncio:,"* l. 306, s. d.), and she bids him to bring the Bishop.

As discussed earlier, Mirth fetches the Bishop, but a lacuna at line 326 prevents us from knowing anything about the exchange between the two or their move back to the King's scaffold. The Bishop's sermon begins as "an embedded standard complaint against the abuses of the age,"[80] allowing the playwright a moment of didactic self-speaking outside of the narrative's activity:

> Þe world is nou, so wo-lo-wo,
> In suc bal ibound
> Þat dred of God is al ago
> And treut is go to ground.
>
> Med is mad a demisma[n],
> Streyint betit þe lau;
> Geyl is mad a cepman
> And truyt is don of dau.[81]

Davenport paraphrases Carlton Brown's original argument,[82] noting that the Bishop's speech expresses "the common medieval theme of the mutability of the world, based upon

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[79] *The Pride of Life* ll. 291-4.
[80] King 261.
[81] *The Pride of Life* ll. 327-34.
[82] Carlton Brown, *"The Pride of Life* and the 'Twelve Abuses,'" *Archiv.*, 127 (1912).

the medieval Latin topic of 'The Twelve Abuses of the Age' [...]."[83] Brown himself offers

several contemporaneous English examples in his *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century.*

A poem entitled "Perversities of the Age," for example, from Westminster Abbey

MS. 27, offers comparison with many individual lines:

> Wise men bene but scorned,
> & wedowȝ eke foryerened,
> Grete men arn bot glosid,
> & smale men arn borne doun & myslosed,
> lordis wex euer blynd,
> ffrendis ben vnkynde,
> dethe is oute of mynde,
> Treuth may no man fynde.[84]

Notice the similarities -- in a different order -- between the poem and the Bishop's

complaint:

> Slet men bet bleynd
>   And lokit al amis;
> He bicomit onkynd
>   And þat is reut, iuis.
>
> Frend may no man find
>   Of fremit ne of sib;
> þe ded bet out of mind,
>   Gret soru it is to lib.
>
> þes ricmen bet reuþyles,
>   þe por got to ground,
> And fals men bet schamles,
>   þe sot ic hau ifound.[85]

Brown notes many other examples based on the common 'Twelve Abuses' template.[86]

For a moment, then, the Bishop is allowed to lecture the audience with a standard

didactic treatise, abandoning the plot in order to make a comment on society. The theme of

the 'Twelve Abuses' simply allows him a ready, acceptable way in which to proceed with

his sermon, couched with more relevant references to "Det þat is so strong" (l. 366).

He then turns his attention to the King ("*Tunc dicet regi:,*" l. 390), advising him to

"þing oppon þin end" (l. 391). Like the character Mercy's opening in *Mankind*, however,

the Bishop's sermon is quickly ridiculed by the King with a childish and name-calling

response, bidding the Bishop to be quiet and to depart:

> Wat! bissop, byssop babler,

[83] Davenport 16.

[84] Carlton Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939) no. 175, p. 268.

[85] *The Pride of Life* ll. 343-54.

[86] Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*, 345-7.

> Schold y of Det hau dred?
> Þou art bot a chagler--
>   Go hom þi wey, I red.
>
> Wat! com þou þerfor hidir
>   Wit Deþ me to afer?
> Þat þou and he bot togidir
>   Into þe se scot uer.[87]

The Bishop's character brings to mind that of Confession in *The Castle of Perseverance* and (to an extent) Jesus in the Digby *Mary Magdalen*. They represent the means by which the protagonist may be saved. Called upon by the moral reminder (the Queen, in this case) the Bishop has the authority of the Church and the power of absolution. However -- unlike the other two examples -- the Bishop is wholly ignored by the King, and his advice goes unheeded. The King, through his own vain impetus rather than through the temptation of a vice, remains resolved to "let car away" (l. 427). The Bishop departs sadly, commending the King to Christ (ll. 447-8).

At this point the King is poised for death. He has forsaken both the advice of his Queen and the services offered by the Bishop, and he now has the audacity to challenge Death openly:

> Nou, mafay, hit schal be sene,
>   I trow, ȝit to-daye,
> Qwher Deth ne durst tene
>   And mete in þe waye.[88]

He summons Mirth, and tells him to:

> [...] loke þat þou aspye, [...]
> Of Deth and of his maistrye
>   Qwher he durst com in siȝte,
> Oȝeynis me and my meyné
>   With force and armis to fiȝte.[89]

Mirth departs immediately, pausing in the "place" in order to issue his master's decree to the audience. First he announces generally "ȝif any man dar warre arere" (l. 489) against the King, and then he specifies "þegh hit wer þe King of Deth" (l. 495), warning "He wol se his hert-blode / And he with him stryue" (ll. 501-2). Sadly, this is where Mills' manuscript ends, right as the two allegorical contenders of Life and Death are about to meet in mortal combat.

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[87] *The Pride of Life* ll. 407-14.
[88] *The Pride of Life* ll. 451-4.
[89] *The Pride of Life* ll. 461-6.

Returning to the Prolocutor's opening speech, the concluding of the play is sketched out in full (ll. 81-108). Death does indeed take up the King's challenge, appearing first in a dream (as discussed earlier), where he slays members of the King's family. Afterwards, the King of Life and Death "striuith a sterne strife" (l. 87), in which the King and his knights are defeated. A dispute between the King's body and soul apparently takes place following his death ("þe soule and body schul dispyte," l. 98), and the soul is taken away (perhaps into a hellmouth) by "þe fendis" (l. 96). Then "Oure Lady" (l. 97) the Virgin shall intercede, praying to her son that the soul shall be saved (l. 99). The Prolocutor's account ends with the detail that "with her he schal be lafte" (l. 108), leaving no doubt that the King's soul is finally saved through the Virgin's arbitration.

Amongst the apparent violent activity associated with the play's folk-dramatic elements -- Life and Death in combat, death, resurrection -- and the overt pride of its protagonist, the Christian message of salvation through grace is interwoven. Bolstered by his knights Strength and Health, who serve as representations of his physical vanity, the King of Life instigates his own downfall and damnation. Despite the Queen's pleading and the Bishop's authoritative counsel, the King still leans on his own pride until death. He is fully deserving of damnation in the afterlife, and the audience would have so judged him. And yet the Virgin still intercedes. For this reason, the didactic message behind *The Pride of Life* is by far the most positive of all of the English morality plays.

If we agree with Fletcher in attributing the play's ultimate germination to the after-effects the Black Death of 1348-1349, its positive Christian outcome makes complete sense. Far from being a tragedy, *The Pride of Life* might more appropriately be deemed a Christian comedy, given the moral message suggested in its missing conclusion. The salvation of a protagonist, wholly deserving damnation at his death -- who does not cry out for "mercy" -- is unprecedented in the rest of the morality play genre. Its allegory demonstrates the remnants of an earlier folk-drama tradition meeting the Christian idealisation of salvation through grace. Although the play seems at times to struggle with the reconciliation of these two allegorical traditions, the ultimate synthesis it arrives at emphasizes a message latent in both. Crucial to a suffering community, that message is hope.

CHAPTER 5: On *Mankind*

It is highly beneficial to turn to the late-medieval morality play of *Mankind* at this point, as stark differences -- related primarily to intent and to allegorical responsibility -- may be felt between this later morality and earlier examples of the genre. The allegorical mode, the sequential structure (still uninterrupted by act divisions), the overriding moral didacticism, and the general sense of all-inclusiveness are all still very much important to the make-up of *Mankind*, yet we may still wrangle with an immediate sense of distance between this play and the others examined so far. *Mankind* is unique as each of the morality plays are unique, yet its difference lies chiefly in its particular edifying intent (as compared to that of the other plays examined), latent in its allegorical expression of character. Mercy in *Mankind* is not a reappearance of the Mercy we encountered in the 'Four Daughters of God' section of *The Castle of Perseverance*, nor is Mankind a recapitulation of Humanum Genus. Beyond the characterisation, the difference in *Mankind*'s intent is also made manifest when we compare its scope with that of the other plays discussed so far, as the experiences of the protagonist have been clipped and magnified in order to approach salvation from a different vantage.

I should reiterate, however, that it would be incorrect to place too much emphasis on things such as influence, growth, or evolution within the morality play genre. We are dealing with isolated surviving examples of a larger body of dramatic activity,[1] and any evidence of direct influence is rare, despite broad, reoccurring themes such as the psychomachia, the debate between the body and the soul, and the intervention of heavenly adversaries. While comparisons that bring to light particular artistic differences of employment or dramatic intent should be encouraged -- inasmuch as they strengthen our overall understanding of early English drama and culture -- comparisons founded on moral judgment or on modern ideas of "good" theatre tend to blot out important and enlightening elements within the plays.

With *Mankind*, for instance, we need only look to some earlier editions of the play. In his 1925 edition, for example, Adams' footnotes several passages as

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[1] See Harris' discussion, 160.

"unprintable",[2] protecting the reader from the play's low humour and, consequently, from a full understanding of the surviving text. Hardin Craig also finds fault with the language in *Mankind*, calling it "ignorant, corrupt, probably degenerate and vulgar to the point of obscenity."[3] We may also be misled by Rossiter's statement that *Mankind* is "extremely low in parts, and often just dirty: written for inn-yard amusements and East Anglian [...] bumpkins."[4] Craig and Rossiter both make condemnations that might lead to inappropriate assumptions. Mercy's (and occasionally Mankind's) theology, elaborate diction, and frequent use of Latin tags all indicate an educated audience rather than "bumpkins", and Richard Axton suggests that "one is tempted to see it as the Shrovetide *jeu d'esprit* of a group of Cambridge clerks,"[5] despite the play's bawdiness. The "notorious demotic exuberance and rustic scatology"[6] exhibited by the vices in some of the comic scenes is obviously not the whole picture. As we shall see, the moral of *Mankind* is present throughout the play, balancing the vicious and comic elements with careful theological argument, Latinate diction, and a unique allegorical framework.

It is precarious, then, to view the plays within the genre in terms of evolution or some sort of dramatic development, as inappropriate judgments may arise. Furthermore, it is also inappropriate to view the plays as under-developed ancestors of Elizabethan drama. In Anthony Burgess' examination in *Shakespeare*, for instance, he approaches the idea of character in the morality plays from the wrong perspective:

> The moralities are mostly dull, ill-made, didactic, totally lacking in both action and character. [...] We long for genuine conflict and a little humour, more humanity and less morality.[7]

It is not the purport of this study to defend the artistry of the morality plays, but it is important to examine and judge the plays based on their own elements, avoiding some of the pitfalls that arise from the evolutionary model of English drama. We may identify changes in emphasis, development of certain motifs and ideas, and shifts of focus as the changing drama accumulates and sharpens certain elements while abandoning others.

[2] Adams 307. He footnote for line 127 reads, "Omitted because of obscenity," and for line 140, "The language is unprintable." Discussed by Rossiter, 100.

[3] Hardin Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955) 351.

[4] Rossiter 100.

[5] Richard Axton 201.

[6] Richard Beadle, "The Scribal Problem in the Macro Manuscript," *English Language Notes*, 21, no. 4 (June, 1984) 2.

[7] Anthony Burgess, *Shakespeare* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1970) 78.

Character in the morality plays is not based on psychological realism, as it is now understood.

Sarah Carpenter discusses the "demonstrative mode" in her article on morality-play characters, noting that the typical character:

> instead of being inside his role, stands slightly outside it, 'showing' or presenting it to the audience; as if there is a space between him and the quality or 'character' he represents. The actor seems to mediate between the audience and the quality, rather than trying to 'be' that quality.[8]

This manifests itself in the Mankind figure in the play of *Mankind*, for instance, when he first appears to the audience, eloquently explicating his own human nature: "My name ys Mankynde. I haue my composycyon / Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye" (ll. 194-5). He espouses full knowledge of the division between his soul and his body in the lines that follow, and he recognizes the dangers of sin. Later in the play, however, we see Mankind slip into sin and foolishness, displaying a naiveté not present in his character at the opening. "Realistically" speaking, he is not the same Mankind throughout the play.

The personifications also illustrate the "demonstrative mode" from time to time. Carpenter draws our attention to an example from *The Castle of Perseverance*, when Flesh introduces himself to the audience, warning them of the dangers he represents:

> In Lechery and Lykynge lent am I lowe,
> And Slawth, my swete sone, is bent to abyde.
> [...] Woso wyl do þese werkys iwys he schal wepe
> Euyr wythowtyn ende.[9]

If Flesh were presented in any sort of realistic manner, surely he would not warn the audience against those very vices that he is trying to tempt Mankind into embracing. But we are not dealing with impersonations, we are dealing with presentations: "it is the ideas that are the centre of interest rather than the individual character through which they are expressed [...]."[10]

It is pointless to look for "realistic" characters in the morality drama, then, as modern dramatic notions of impersonation run counter to many of the morality plays' intent. Beyond this, Schmitt draws our attention to the obvious differences in perception for medieval man, whose idea of "reality" is quite different from our own: "The world

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[8] Sarah Carpenter, "Morality-Play Characters," *Medieval English Theatre*, 5: 1 (1983) 21.

[9] *The Castle of Perseverance* ll. 250-1 and 264-5. Discussed by Carpenter, 22.

[10] Carpenter 20.

itself was a great analogy making manifest the otherwise invisible and only reality of

God. The medieval artists were Realists."[11] She draws a distinction between the

physical world of modern reality -- "a product of a scientific rationalist age"[12] -- and the

reality of medieval man, which saw the vices and virtues as corporeal, unseen realities,

constantly making themselves felt in the challenges of man's life and journey through the

physical world.[13] With this understanding, impersonations of physical realities are not

examples of real "character" at all, as they remain subordinate to the more significant

reality of man's constant internal struggle and its universal significance:

> for the medieval person distinction between literal and allegorical was not
> what it is for us and had not the sharpness of a contradiction, and that these
> plays which we call allegories are to a far greater extent than we have
> realized representations of phenomenological reality.[14]

Burgess' criticism of the lack of "character" in the morality plays, then, is based both on a

lack of understanding with regard to the play's intent, carried by its demonstrative

presentation, and on a misidentification of what "character" really meant to a medieval

audience member. Modern ideas of psychological realism only cloud a full appreciation of

character in medieval drama, and this remains true for the relatively late morality play

of *Mankind*. Differences between this and earlier examples of the genre abound, but to

what extent these differences affect the overall shape of the drama must be examined.

The date of *Mankind* has been rather easily located, based on two topical

references in the text itself.[15] While collecting money from the audience in order to bring

on the devil Titivillus, Nowadays says, "Gyf ws rede reyallys yf ȝe wyll se hys

abhomynabull presens" (l. 465). Royals were first coined in 1465,[16] and Donald Baker has

pointed out that the other coins mentioned (l. 464 and following) were all current during

the reign of Edward IV (1461-1483), but notes the absence of the angel, minted between 1468

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[11] Schmitt, "The Idea of a Person in Medieval Morality Plays," *The Drama of the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays*, eds. Clifford Davidson, C. J. Gianakaris, and John H. Stroupe (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1982) 305.

[12] Schmitt, "The Idea of a Person in Medieval Morality Plays," 306.

[13] Bloomfield notes that:
> the Sins were from their earliest appearance in Christian thought considered concrete devils or
> demons, and throughout the Middle Ages they continued, at times, to be so visualized. (35)

[14] Schmitt, "The Idea of a Person in Medieval Morality Plays," 313.

[15] Discussed in full by Eccles, xxxviii.

[16] Eccles xxxviii.

and 1470.[17] This would date the play between 1465 and 1468, but the absence of a reference to the angel need not be a limiting factor.

The second reference comes during a mock-court scene, when Mischief calls the court to order, finishing with "Anno regni regitalis / Edwardi nullateni" (ll. 689-90). This reference, acknowledging Edward's reign but essentially negating it, has imbued a fair amount of critical speculation.[18] Eccles argues that the topical reference to "Master Alyngton of Botysam" in line 514 locates the play during Edward's reign and not during his exile in 1470-1471 in which Alington was a participant.[19] We may safely date the play, then, during the second half of the 1460s. This situates it at least fifty years after *The Castle of Perseverance*, a full century after *The Pride of Life*, and makes it roughly contemporaneous with the Digby *Mary Magdalen*.

The play's East Midland dialect and references to place names in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk (ll. 505-15) locate its performance geographically.[20] Many scholars suggest that *Mankind* was a travelling play,[21] primarily because of the collection of money from the audience suggests similarities with the mumming plays,[22] but (as with *The Pride of Life*) connections drawn with the mummers' plays are tenuous as they lack direct evidence. If the play did travel, it must have had a very limited geographical berth, because of the list of local personalities in lines 503-16. These persons must have been known to the audience in order for the comedy of the scene to make sense. The size and scope of the play and the relatively small number of players required[23] would easily suit a travelling production, but the text suggests that the play originally remained within its Cambridgeshire/Norfolk auspices.

Having established a date and a location for the appearance of *Mankind* as a text and in performance, it is tempting to proceed, by comparison with the other plays discussed, with an evolutionary model of the morality play genre. As shall be demonstrated, allegory and allegorical character in *Mankind* differ from their use in the

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[17] Donald C. Baker, "The Date of Mankind," *Philological Quarterly*, 17 (1963) 90-1.

[18] Eccles xxxviii.

[19] Eccles xxxviii.

[20] Eccles xxxviii-xl.

[21] See, for example, Bevington's discussion, 901

[22] Richard Axton 200-3.

[23] Six, if Mercy doubles for Titivillus (Eccles xlii).

plays discussed previously, and critical discussions of *Mankind* as a transition between medieval morality play and Tudor moral interlude abound. Miyajima embraces this understanding with yet another all-too-familiar glance towards that consummate benchmark, Shakespeare:

> Clearly, it represents a move nearer to the interludes and other characteristic forms of pre-Shakespearean comedy of the 16th century.[24]

Schell, too, notes an evolutionary quality in *Mankind*, which he uses to generate a generalisation about differing didactic intentions within the morality play genre:

> displaced by the humanistic redirection that marked the Renaissance, it [the "eschatological vision of the fifteenth-century moralities"] moder-ated to an interest in rewards and penalties of this world, which were seen, not always perfunctorily, as emblems of the rewards and penalties to come.[25]

The action of *Mankind* is concerned with the Christian's life "in this world," and -- as we shall see in our discussion of the play's allegory and use of character -- the surface of the play seems to suggest that an evolution of sorts has taken place. However, it is precarious if not impossible to discuss evolution or development ("a move nearer" for Miyajima and "humanistic redirection" for Schell) with regard to the medieval morality play genre as a whole.

We need only glance briefly at the late medieval play of *Wisdom* to recognize this difficulty. Written in the same decade as *Mankind* and with identical auspices,[26] *Wisdom* presents the struggle between Wisdom (Christ) and Lucifer for control of Anima in a traditional cosmic battle between personified good and evil that stretches beyond things "of this world." Its presentation is wholly allegorical, laden with sermon-like soliloquy and colourful pageantry. Eccles condemns the play as being "too intent on teaching moral virtue to have much concern with dramatic virtues. The author combines preaching with pageantry [...]."[27] Although Mind, Will, and Understanding slip somewhat out of the Latinate mode of the play's opening once they are tempted by Lucifer (l. 399 and following), their language remains far from modern, "realistic" dialogue. They still

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[24] Miyajima 82.

[25] Schell, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 55.

[26] Eccles discusses the date and location in his introduction, xxx. His decision that the texts of both *Mankind* and *Wisdom* of the Macro Manuscript (Washington D.C., Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.345) were copied by the same scribe is still in some doubt. See Richard Beadle, "The Scribal Problem in the Macro Manuscript," 1-13.

[27] Eccles xxxvi.

proceed -- as abstract personifications -- in the demonstrative mode of dramatic allegory: "WNDYRSTONDYNGE: Lett eche man tell hys condycyons howe [...]" (l. 626).

If we are to agree with Miyajima and Schell in seeing "realistic" undertones in the presentation of character in *Mankind*, then we must place that understanding beside the more traditional presentation of character in the contemporaneous play of *Wisdom*. And if a development in the genre has taken place, then surely *Wisdom* is exceptional in its old-fashionedness. Or else *Mankind* is the exception -- ahead of its time in its slightly more "realistic" presentation of character -- while *Wisdom* remains the more representative morality play of the late sixteenth century. In other words, no definite evolution is identifiable within a genre consisting of only five very different examples. A few decades later, during the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509) we will encounter a new glut of moral "interludes," concerned primarily with "things of this world,"[28] with which one might begin to construct an evolutionary model of early English moral drama. But with the genre of the English medieval morality play, no definite movement towards "realistic" presentation can be applied throughout. Presentation in each play must be considered separately, as each play is essentially unique. *Mankind* may very well signal a change in artistic sensibilities, but it is an exception in the late-medieval morality drama. In order to discuss its uniqueness, we must first identify how the play is indebted to its possible sources.

Mabel Keiller makes a rather interesting case for an analogous relationship between *Mankind* and the Half-Acre scene from *Piers Plowman* (A-Text, Passus VII; B-Text, Passus VI). The scene in question, in which Piers agrees to lead the folk to Truth after he has finished ploughing, with its agricultural setting and allegorical narrative, suggests a resemblance with the middle section of *Mankind*. But Keiller makes too many assumptions about the playwright of *Mankind* and his possible use of the scene from *Piers Plowman*:

> It would be easy for him [the playwright] to change Piers and the
> Knight into his admonitory Mercy, and, for the sake of the comedy, to
> bring Mankynde out from the ranks of the wastours to make him the hero
> of the most original, and perhaps the funniest of the early 'moral' plays.[29]

[28] Medwall's *Nature* (1490-1500), *Fulgens and Lucrece* (1497?), and Rastell's *Good Order* (1500?), for example.

[29] Mabel M. Keiller, "The Influence of *Piers Plowman* on the Macro Play of *Mankind*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 26 (1911), 342.

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In other words, Keiller suggests that the playwright creates the character Mercy out of an amalgamation of Piers and the Knight, and that Mankind himself is an amalgamation of both Piers (as a ploughman) and the host of "wastours" on their way to find Truth.

W. Roy Mackenzie, however, demonstrates that the play's "central situation" (to use Keiller's term) comes from a much wider allegorical tradition, and that an agricultural setting does not necessarily signal a direct influence. In his article "A New Source for *Mankind*," Mackenzie demonstrates nearly identical thematic parallels between *Mankind* and a fourteenth-century poem entitled "Mercy Passith Riȝtwisnes."[30] The poem describes a dialogue between a sinful man and Mercy, in which Mercy consoles the hopeless man and assures him that God's mercy is ever-abundant. Thus Mackenzie is able to draw a parallel based on theme and without Keiller's awkward amalgamation of characters.

With regard to theme, the poem very closely parallels the play's final discussion. In the poem, the sinner argues that the devil has convinced him that it is useless to ask for mercy:

> Þe deuel bad me neuere mercy craue,
> And he can more clergie þan al þi kynne;
> And he him silf is ful of synne,
> And ȝit wole he neuere mercy crie:
> I coueite neuere heuen to wynne
> While riȝt schal forþ, & no mercie.[31]

Likewise in the play, it is the devil Titivillus who has imbued Mankind with *wanhope* by telling him Mercy is dead (ll. 594-600). Thus, when Mankind encounters Mercy in the final scene, he is in a similar state as the sinner of the poem. Mankind blames his "gostly enmy" for his present state of woe:

> Þan mercy, good Mercy! What ys a man wythowte mercy?
> Lytyll ys our parte of paradyse were mercy ne were.
> Good Mercy excuse þe ineuytabyll objeccion of my gostly enmy.
> The prowerbe seyth 'þe trewth tryith þe sylfe.' Alas, I hawe
> mech care.[32]

In the poem, Mercy explains to the sinner that all he need do is ask for mercy:

> [...] woldist þou god know,
> And wiþ good entent mercy calle,
> And to him meekeli þee abowe,

[30] W. Roy Mackenzie, "A New Source for *Mankind*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 27 (1912) 98-105.

[31] "Merci Passith Riȝtwisnes," *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, the Parliament of Devils and other Religious Poems (Chiefly from Lambeth MS No. 853)* (EETS, OS 24) ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1867) ll. 67-72.

[32] *Mankind* ll. 835-8.

Þan schal neu*ere* myscheef in þee falle,[33]

naming "myscheef" specifically. Personified Mischief, of course, will become the chief

instigator of the vicious actions against Mankind in the play.

Similarities such as these abound between the poem and the play, but they do not

necessarily prove a direct influence. Mackenzie suggests, however, that:

> It is the exact similarity in motive, situation, characters, together with
> the distinct departure, in both dialogue and play, from the traditional
> motive of the Debate of the Four Daughters of God, that convinces me
> of the dependence of the play upon the dialogue.[34]

The dialogue in the poem and that in the play do parallel one another very closely, and

the fact that both present rare instances of Mercy personified as a man,[35] separated from

the debate of the Four Daughters of God, further recommends an influence.

However, Mercy in the poem provides rather strict admonitions for the sinner --

"Go euery day & heere a messe, / And schryue þe clene," (ll. 14-5); and:

> Þou muste suffre boþe riȝt and wrong
> If þou þi syn*n*e wolt forsake
> In good praiers þou muste wake,
>   And neu*e*rre wilne to do a-mys;
> And for þi sorewe þat þou doost make,
>   Merci schal passe riȝtwisnes.[36]

This is a Mercy with prerequisites. In other words, the sinner of the poem must maintain a

vigilant state of goodness if he is to be sure of mercy, and there is always a danger --

should he fail -- that righteousness shall surpass mercy. This is not the more tolerant

Mercy of *Mankind*, with his recommendations of moderate living and proverbial quips like

"Mesure is tresure" (l. 237) and "Take þat ys to be takyn and leue þat ys to be refusyde" (l.

185). Mercy in *Mankind* is altogether easier to obtain.

More than this, Mackenzie's identification of the poem as the source for *Mankind*

suffers from the same narrow focus that destabilized Keiller's previous argument.[37] Both

suggest almost telling similarities between the texts offered as sources and equivalent

scenes in the play, but neither is capable of encapsulating the action of the play as a

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[33] "Merci Passith Riȝtwisnes" ll. 57-60.

[34] Mackenzie 105.

[35] Mackenzie notes this in a footnote, 105.

[36] "Merci Passith Riȝtwisnes" ll. 139-44.

[37] Besides the other analogues discussed, Sister M. Philippa Coogan suggests an analogous relationship between the play and a sermon in *Jacob's Well* in her book *An Interpretation of a Moral Play, Mankind* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947) 38-45. But Eccles notes that "this is only another example of traditional

whole. Mackenzie's complaint against Keiller's argument -- in which he states that "while it might easily be argued for as the source of one episode in *Mankind*, loses its point at once if it is set up as the origin of the whole play"[38] -- may also be waged against his own nomination of "Merci Passith Riʒtwisnes" as the play's source. It does not take into account the almost dominant dramatic role of the vices and how their appearance and subversive speech and actions affect the overall moral of the play. Spivack over-enthusiastically notes that "their physical exuberance and verbal pungency transmuted the pious monotony of the homily into the profane excitement of the play."[39] As we shall see, the moral is still very much intact and effective by the play's end, but only after it has been thoroughly deconstructed and examined -- primarily on linguistic grounds -- by the intervening dialogue of the three Ns,[40] Mischief, and Titivillus.

Mercy begins the play, without banns or introduction, with a rather lengthy exhortation on man's duty to God and on his own allegorically spiritual function. Eccles states that "The speeches of mercy are tedious, but moralizing must be expected in a moral play,"[41] offering little explanation as to why Mercy should be so "tedious". Spivack also condemns what he calls the "inert polysyllabic tedium"[42] of Mercy's opening speech. A glance at the first stanza of Mercy's sermon should make this condemnation understandable:

> MERCY: The very fownder and begynner of owr fyrst creacyon
>   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 an crucyfyede.
> Owr obsequyouse seruyce to hym xulde be aplyede,
>   Where he was lorde of all and made all thynge of nought,
> For þe synnfull synnere to hade hym revyuyde
>   And for hys redempcyon sett hys own son at nought.[43]

As discussed previously in this chapter, the original intended audience for *Mankind* is still in some doubt, but a sermon such as this would seem -- at first glance -- to recommend

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teachings about mercy" (xil). The passage in question (*Jacob's Well*, part 1, 255-9) is more in line with traditional portrayals of the Four Daughters of God and bears no exceptional affinity with the portrayal of Mercy in *Mankind*.

[38] Mackenzie 98.

[39] Spivack 123.

[40] For simple economy I will refer to New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought collectively in this abbreviated fashion. Rosemary Chaplan's title "Worldlings"is not entirely appropriate, as she is incorrect in assuming that "these characters are properly representatives of the World and not true allegorical figures," in "'Farewell, Jentyll Jaffrey': Speech-Act Theory and *Mankind*," *Evil on the Medieval Stage, Medieval English Theatre*, 11 (1989) 148. As these characters demonstrate, characters may exist both as "representatives of the World" and as allegorical figures.

[41] Eccles xlv.

[42] Spivack 124.

[43] *Mankind* ll. 1-8.

an educated audience. Its elaborate typology and extravagant language are far from a

simple explication of Christian morality. In comparison with plays such as *The Castle of

Perseverance*, the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, and *The Pride of Life*, the Latinate diction

employed by many of the characters of *Mankind* (especially Mercy) stands in some contrast

to the simple vernacular of much of the other medieval drama. Without certain

knowledge of the play's original audience, however, the full extravagance of Mercy's

diction only becomes immediately troublesome when contrasted with the simple and

humourous vernacular employed by the vices in the very next scene.

As Amanda Piesse notes in her discussion on representing truth in *Mankind*,

"Mercy's language concentrates on spiritual truth, and his version of reality is entirely

abstract, word-centred."[44] Mercy's thoroughly abstract outlook and devotion to his own,

continuous "talkyng delectable" (l. 65) distinguishes his presentation throughout the play,

and a moral framework is established using his opening sermon and his closing

admonitions to the audience which repeat the moral:

> Wyrschepyll soferyns, I hawe do my propirte:
> [...] Now for hys lowe þat for vs receywyd hys humanite,
>   Serge ȝour condicyons wyth dew examinacion.
> Thynke and remembyr þe world ys but a wanite,
>   As yt ys prowyd daly by diuerse transmutacyon.[45]

The moral is reiterated at the conclusion -- Mercy having done his "propirte" by saving

Mankind from the vices -- and the vanity of the world is again shunned. Further, a final

flourish of Latinate diction elucidates the moral with traditional references to the

ultimate "Word" (the Bible), constantly invoking vague, self-referent typology through

abstract imperatives to the audience to make "dew examinacion" of their souls. Mercy

ends as he began, spilling out the moral of the play in a language totally devoted to the

abstract and the ornate.

From the very first glimpse of the vices on stage, it is apparent that they, too, are

obsessed with language. Not with its ability to convey a moral, however, but with its

universal power for dissimulation:

> MYSCHEFFE: I beseche yow hertyly, leue yowr calcacyon.
> Leue yowr chaffe, leue yowr corn, leue yowr dalyacyon.
> Yowr wytt ys lytyll, yowr hede ys mekyll, ȝe are full of

[44] Piesse 136.
[45] *Mankind* ll. 903 and 907-10.

predycacyon.[46]

Mischief berates Mercy's ornate "dalyacyon" and immediately pulls apart the

typological metaphor -- "The corn xall be sauyde, þe chaffe xall be brente" -- of which

Mercy has been speaking.[47] He breaks it up into its composite parts, emphasizing the

literal meaning while ignoring the metaphorical.

Through his mockery, Mischief has, in fact, momentarily taken away Mercy's

power to use language as an exegetical tool, as a means of interpretation through typology.

But his fear of Mercy's possession of this capacity is quickly overtaken by his own desire to

employ the dissimulating power of language himself:

> But, ser, I prey þis questyon to claryfye:
> Mysse-masche, dryff-draff,
> Sume was corn and sume was chaffe,
> My dame seyde my name was Raffe;
> Onschett yowr lokke and take an halpenye.[48]

His response to Mercy's allegorizing is not a simple, literal use of the language. It is,

rather, utter nonsense. He does mock Mercy's language, but his mockery is in no way

edifying or suggestive of a more succinct alternative. Similarly, when he mocks Mercy's

use of Latin, his language does break down literally, but with inappropriate and

(contextually) nonsensical meanings:

> 'Corn seruit bredibus, chaffe horsibus, straw fyrybusque.'
> Thys ys as moche to say, to yowr leude wndyrstondynge,
> As þe corn xall serue to brede at þe nexte bakynge.
> 'Chaff horsybus et reliqua,'
> The chaff to horse xall be goode provente,
> When a man ys forcolde þe straw may be brent,
> And so forth, et cetera.[49]

His response to Mercy's use of language is to adhere to the literal level of meaning, but the

result is more confusing in context than Mercy's original metaphor. The immediate

question that arises from Mischief's deconstruction of Mercy's abstract language is: why?

What purpose does his mockery serve towards his own ends -- as a character within the

play -- and what purpose does this sort of vicious deconstruction serve in the play's overall

moral?

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[46] *Mankind* ll. 45-7.

[47] The passage comes from Matt. 3: 12 (and Luke 3: 17) where John the Baptist is describing the Last Judgment:
His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat
into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

[48] *Mankind* ll. 48-52.

[49] *Mankind* ll. 57-63.

At this point, it is advantageous to turn to the rather ingenious and revelatory study by Janette Dillon, "*Mankind* and the Politics of 'Englysch Laten.'"[50] Dillon discusses the use and abuse of language in the play, attempting to form a theory based on history to describe the play's ultimate motivation. Dillon examines Mercy's "tedious" opening sermon, concluding:

> Mercy's opening speech probably initially struck a fifteenth-century audience
> in two ways: as the characteristic voice of ecclesiastical authority and,
> simultaneously, as well-nigh incomprehensible.[51]

Eccles notes that a number of words that make their first literary appearance in *Mankind* (according to the OED): in Mercy's opening sermon, words like *obsequyouse* (l. 5), *partycypable* (l. 16), and *defendawnte* (l. 24).[52] If *Mankind* was played to a primarily uneducated, popular audience, much of Mercy's Latinate language must have been difficult to understand, while Mischief's (and the other vices') parody of that language would have been comically attractive and a welcome relief.

Dillon's argument does not conclude there, however, as she posits a mixed audience of both educated and uneducated, based on Mercy's address to "ȝe souerens þat sytt and ȝe brothern þat stonde ryght wppe" (l. 29). The crux of her subsequent complex argument may be gleaned from her following summary:

> For the uneducated members of the audience, this send-up of the clerical
> manner as both distant and patronizing disentangles religion from its
> alienating mediations; for the clerical element in the audience, it poses the
> question of mediation as a direct challenge. It may, of course have provoked anger,
> but at the same time it exposed the naturalized link between latinity
> and truth as ideologically constructed, and identified the typical clerical
> discourse as precisely that, a 'priestly dialect.' It confronts this dialect with a
> radical skepticism, showing that clerics, through their mode of speech,
> involuntarily convey meanings about themselves and their relations with the
> laity over and above the direct meaning of the words they choose.[53]

She points towards the fourteenth and fifteenth-century Lollard movement in England (and the Church's subsequent response to it) as historical context for the play's use of Latinate language and subsequent parody of it.[54]

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[50] Janette Dillon, "*Mankind* and the Politics of 'Englysch Laten,'" *Medievalia et Humanistica*, new series, 20, ed. Paul Maurice Clogan (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993) 41-64.

[51] Dillon 41.

[52] Eccles xl. According to the MED, this is the first time *defendawnte* is used with the sense of a legal representative who will defend an accused party.

[53] Dillon 52.

[54] Dillon 43.

Lollardy and the vernacular challenge to Latin scripture and preaching had been heavily debated in England at least from the time of Wyclif.[55] If we look at Archbishop Arundel's Constitutions of 1407 in response to Lollardy and preaching in English, we may begin to understand the Church's condemning stance towards vernacular preaching and the dangers inherent in publicly espousing theology in plain English in the decades running up to *Mankind*'s appearance:

1. that no one should preach in the vernacular or in Latin without a proper license, such licenses should only be given to those whose orthodoxy had been assured by examination [on pain of excommunication].
2. that the preacher should regulate his observations according to his congregation, specifically that clerical vices should only be castigated to a congregation of clergy and not before one in which the laity were present.
3. that the discussion by any preacher of any of the sacraments of the church was forbidden: the determinations of the church might be set out, but no doubt cast on any part of these.
4. and that the translation of any text of sacred scripture in English was forbidden, as was the ownership of any translation of the bible made in the time of Wyclif or later without the express permission of the diocesan.[56]

The sense of an attempt by the Church to regulate meaning is immediately apparent, and the continued use of Latin scripture, only interpreted for the laity by educated and Church-licensed preachers, was a way of assuring control over interpretation. Anne Hudson's discussion of the continuing legal debate (and individual convictions) concerning theological uses of the vernacular through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries indicate that the issue was still relatively precarious in the 1560s and 1570s when *Mankind* was written and performed.[57]

Dillon suggests, finally, that the play "may represent an attempt to tread a dangerous line between sympathy for some Lollard positions and endorsement of the orthodox church."[58] If this argument is to hold, we must agree that the vice's mockery of Mercy's "priestly dialect" is given preeminence in the play, so that the play's moral (the orthodox line) is ultimately communicated, but the traditional representative of that

[55] At least since 1382, when "Hereford, Aston, Alington, and Bedman, with other unnamed followers" set out to spread his views with their own interpolations. See Anne Hudson's *Lollards and Their Books* (London and Ronceverte: The Hambeldon Press, 1985) 13-4.

[56] I have paraphrased from Hudson's translations, 146-7. With regard to Wyclif in particular, an additional constitution (paraphrased by Hudson) states that "no book or tract by John Wyclif or by any other written at this time or since should be read in the schools or anywhere else unless it had been examined and found orthodox; [...]" (147).

[57] Hudson 161-3.

[58] Dillon 47.

moral (Mercy, the priest-figure) is "outstaged" by the plain-speaking vices who pick apart and successfully ridicule his extravagant language.

I think Dillon's discussion of the politics of 'Englysch Laten' in *Mankind* is indispensable to a full understanding of the play's historical context and use of language. Indeed, in the critical debate surrounding language in the play, Dillon's argument comes closest to suggesting an overall motivation for the play's apparent obsession with the use of language.[59] However -- as suggested in the previous discussion of Mischief's parody of Mercy -- the vices' ability to recapture language in the play is not as pronounced as Dillon would have it be. Her identification of an underlying support for Lollardy in the play is less tangible than she suggests, and its supposed struggle with the orthodox moral that the play presents is far from preeminent.

To return to the previous example, it is clear that Mischief *does* deconstruct Mercy's Latinate, metaphorical language and subject it to ridicule, but his subsequent use of the plain vernacular is only employed towards nonsense and confusion. This liberal usage is equally ridiculous to – or perhaps more ridiculous than – Mercy's verbosity. In other words, we cannot view the vices as plain-speaking, authority-challenging defenders of an uneducated laity (or as pseudo-Lollards), because the use of language that they offer in place of that "priestly dialect" is driven by ludicrous dissimulation. They offer laughable in place of Latinate. While the extravagance of Mercy's language may be picked apart and exposed, nothing meaningful is constructed to take its place.

With this understanding in mind, it is useful once again to turn to the play's allegory for clarification. Why does Mischief dismantle Mercy's ornamented language? Towards what end? Is it so that he and his fellow vices may offer a straight-speaking alternative for the audience in order to question the social conditions of the late-medieval Church? Perhaps the playwright was obliquely inspired by the contemporary criticism associated with the Lollard movement -- perhaps its tenets are winked at. But for the character Mischief himself, the answer is surely "no". Mischief deconstructs Mercy's language because it is mischievous to do so. His subsequent mockery is marked by confusion,

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[59] Other notable discussions include Kathleen Ashley's "Titivillus and the Battle of Words in *Mankind*," *Annuale Medievale*, 16 (1975) 128-50; G. C. Britton's "Language and Character in Some Late Medieval Plays," *Essays and Studies*, 33 (1980) 4-5; Paula Neuss' "Active and Idle Language: Dramatic Images in *Mankind*," *Medieval Drama*,

delay, irrelevancy, and meaninglessness -- all elements which may be associated with mischief. By ridiculing Mercy, Mischief creates momentary chaos, drawing the audience's attention, so that his mischievous minions will have the opportunity to create more mischief when they enter and begin the incriminating Christmas song. In short, Mischief is mischievous, and that is why he interrupts Mercy's "talkyng delectable".

Attention to the characters' allegorical alignment reveals their individual motivations and explains the subsequent action. Mischief tells Mercy, for instance, that "I am cumme hedyr to make yow game" (l. 69), and this is precisely what he attempts to do. His "game" is to bring about Mankind's eventual damnation. A lacuna after line 71 prevents us from knowing more of their subsequent exchange and Mischief's departure. When the manuscript picks up again, however, we find the three Ns molesting Mercy by attempting to get him to dance. New Guise calls for music of "þe comyn trace":

> And how, mynstrellys, pley þe comyn trace!
> Ley on wyth þi ballys tyll hys bely breste![60]

Nought is worried that, by participating, he may injure himself: "I putt case I breke my neke: how than?" (l. 74). Nowadays pipes up in his typical, Devil-may-care manner:

> Leppe about lyuely! Þou art a wyght man.
> Lett ws be mery wyll we be here![61]

It is suggested in this first appearance of the three Ns, then, that their individual behaviour is motivated by their particular allegorical alignments. Rossiter's negative suggestion that "The Vices' buffooneries have no relation to their symbolenda,"[62] does not stand up to careful scrutiny, nor does Van Dyke's statement that "They are not ethical principals or categories, [...] exactly what they denominate is unclear, in fact, and so is the distinction among them."[63] Stanton B. Garner also fails to note the distinction between the behaviour of the three Ns, suggesting that:

> They enter and move on stage with a bewildering randomness, filling the stage less with clearly delineated moral abstractions than with a chaos of individual bodies.[64]

Stratford Upon Avon Studies, 16, ed. Neville Denny (London: Edward Arnold, 1973) 41-68; and Piesse's "Representing Spiritual Truth in *Mankind* and *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*."

[60] *Mankind* ll. 72-3.

[61] *Mankind* ll. 76-7.

[62] Rossiter 100.

[63] Van Dyke 141.

[64] Stanton B. Garner, Jr., "Theatricality in *Mankind* and *Everyman*," *Studies in Philology*, 84: 3 (1987) 277.

Garner's observation is not wrong, but it does not identify the subtle differences

occasionally displayed by the vices that demarcate their allegorical positions.

We are meant to see Nought as the primary buffoon -- the constant butt of the joke

for his two pernicious companions:

> Nought can be singled out most easily as being the useless one -- he gets bullied by
> the other two at the beginning of the play in the mock bear-bating entrance; he
> fails to return from his evildoing sortie with any tale of derring-do [ll. 636-7]; and
> gets his foot fouled at the end of the play [l. 784] -- in sum, a loser.[65]

New Guise and Nowadays are less distinguishable -- as the similarity of meaning between

their names suggests -- but the play continually upholds a subtle distinctiveness between

their characters in relation to its allegory. We are meant to see them as a unified cluster

of mayhem and dissent,[66] as they are each allegorical representatives of the idle, foolish,

distracting temptations of the world. Mercy makes this allegorical grouping clear at the

end of the play when he interprets the proceeding action for Mankind, saying "The New

Gyse, Nowadayis, Nowght, þe World we may hem call,"[67] so that they broadly represent

"the world". They each, however, adhere to distinct but correlating modes of behaviour

associated with their own particular worldly vice.

Words or lines dealing directly with the clergy or with matters of law and

business, for example, are invariably given to Nowadays. His nature is repeatedly

associated with legal, political, and clerical abuses, and his character seems to be a

parody of the activity of contemporary public offices. He says to Mercy, for instance:

> I prey yow hertyly, worschyppull clerke,
>   To haue þis Englysch mad in Laten:
> 'I haue etun a dyschfull of curdys,
> And I haue schetun yowr mowth full of turdys.'
> Now opyn yowr sachell wyth Laten wordys
>   Ande sey me þis in clerycall manere![68]

In other words, he picks up Mischief's previous mockery of Mercy's use of language,

emphasizing its clerical auspices.

When the vices return from their criminal escapades in the countryside, it is

Nowadays who robs the church: "A chyrche her besyde xall pay for ale, brede, and wyn. /

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[65] Heap 97.

[66] R. D. S. Jack groups them as "Conviviality Vices," who present the "affable face" of evil, in *Patterns of Divine Comedy* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989) 166.

[67] *Mankind* l. 884.

[68] *Mankind* ll. 130-4.

Lo, here ys stoff wyll serue" (ll. 633-4). Later, during the mock-trial scene, each of the vices lists certain acts, which Mankind must swear to perform. Mischief tells him to take other men's wives "when þe goodeman ys owte" (l. 704) and to carry a long "da pacem" (l. 714) with which to murder and rob passers-by. New Guise tells him that lechery is not a deadly sin (l. 706) and that he should "goo robbe, stell, and kyll" (l. 708). Nowadays, however, focuses on the offices of the Church: "On Sundays on þe morow erly betyme [...] / forbere masse and matens, owres and prime" (ll. 710-2).

Likewise, with the vices' quips about the law or about business matters, it is Nowadays who takes the initiative. After surveying Mankind's labour, he offers a fair "bargen" (l. 365) in exchange for Mankind's laughably meager harvest. He is chosen to call for the collection from the audience in order to bring on the devil Titivillus (ll. 462-5). During the mock-trial scene, it is Nowadays who Mischief calls upon to "mak proclamacyon [...] sub forma jurys:"

> MYSCHEFF: [...] I wyll sett a corte.
>   Nowadays, mak proclamacyon,
>   And do yt sub forma jurys, dasarde!
> NOWADAYS: Oyyt! Oyȝyt! Oyet! All manere of men and
>   comun women
> To þe cort of Myschyff othere cum or sen![69]

Again, when Mercy seeks the fallen Mankind, Nowadays answers him in mocking, legalistic rhetoric:

> Yf ȝe wyll haue Mankynde, how domine, domine, dominus!
> Ȝe must speke to þe schryue for a cape corpus [writ of arrest],
> Ellys ȝe must be fayn to retorn wyth non est inventus ['not found'].[70]

The identification is not conspicuous, but it does seem that the playwright associated the vice of "nowadays" with contemporary abuses of or towards institutions such as the law and -- in particular -- the clergy. The vice of "nowadays" is repeatedly related with sins committed by or against offices of authority.

New Guise's particular traits are less easily distinguished from Nought and Nowadays, but he does make repeated references to the abstraction represented by his name. He refutes Mercy's suggestion that the vices "betray" many men (l. 116) by asserting the more pleasing qualities of his own condition:

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[69] *Mankind* ll. 664-8.
[70] *Mankind* ll. 779-81.

> Betray! nay, nay, ser, nay, nay!
> We make them both fresch and gay.[71]

During the mock-trial scene, New Guise volunteers to make Mankind "a fresche jakett after þe new gyse," (l. 676), and Mankind responds with: "Go and do þat longyth to yowr offyce" (l. 677). When he returns after trimming Mankind's cloak, New Guise presents him with "a feet tayll, lyght to leppe abowte!" (l. 697).

Nought complains that there is still too much cloth left on the jacket and takes it away for further alterations (ll. 699-701). Upon his return, he presents it to Mankind, asking New Guise for his approval of the alterations:

> NOUGHT: Here ys a joly jakett! How sey ȝe?
> NEW GYSE: Yt ys a goode jake of fence for a mannys body.
> Hay, doog, hay! whoppe whoo! Go yowr wey lyghtly!
> ȝe are well made for to ren.[72]

Here New Guise plays the part of fashion consultant, overseeing Mankind's physical change (signalling his change of moral alignment) with an obscenely short jacket to make him both "fresche and gay" in the new guise.

Overall it is difficult to identify a large amount of distinction in New Guise's character, but -- especially in these scenes -- he is vaguely associated with his abstract namesake's qualities of fashion and newfangledness. This carries over into his quips concerning the vices' use of language. In fact, while the other two Ns generally berate Mercy for his extravagant language (primarily in the first two hundred lines), only New Guise brags about their own verbal doutiness:

> Ser, yt ys þe new gyse and þe new jett.
> Many wordys and schortely sett,
>   Thys ys þe new gyse, euery-dele.[73]

Later he instructs his companions to take their leave of Mercy, suggesting that it is their use of language -- their "many wordys and schortely sett" -- that has brought on Mercy's anger:

> Goo we hens all thre wyth on assent.
>   My fadyr ys yrke of owr eloquence.
> Þerfor I wyll no lenger tary.[74]

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[71] *Mankind* ll. 118-9.
[72] *Mankind* ll. 718-21.
[73] *Mankind* ll. 103-5.
[74] *Mankind* ll. 149-51.

Again, the distinction is by no means conspicuous, but New Guise is occasionally differentiated by an emphasis on fashion, newfangledness, and love of "many wordys and shortely sett" -- all characteristics related to the abstract quality behind his name. He is, simply, a personification of the "new guise".

To suggest, then, that "They are not ethical principals or categories, [...] exactly what they denominate is unclear [...] and so is the distinction among them," is to fail to notice the many subtle distinctions between the three Ns' actions and dialogue. Collectively, they represent the world, but individually they attempt to personify individual vices associated with the world: such as idleness, buffoonery, abuse of authority, and newfangledness.

With the entrance of Titivillus, the nimbus of abstract personifications surrounding Mankind is momentarily suspended, as a representative of the Devil -- of superhuman and absolute evil -- takes his corporeal form. Broadly speaking, however, the allegorical triumvirate of evil providing antagonistic action in the *The Castle of Perseverance* and the Digby *Mary Magdalen* is also at work here -- namely the World, the Flesh, and the Devil:

> [MERCY]: ȝe hawe thre aduersaryis and he ys mayster of hem all:
> That ys to sey, the Dewell, þe World, þe Flesche and þe Fell.
> The New Gyse, Nowadayis, Nowghth, þe World we may hem call;
> And propyrly Titiuillus syngnyfyth the Fend of helle;
>
> The Flesch, þat ys þe vnclene concupissens of ȝour body.
> These be ȝour thre gostly enmyis, in whom ȝe hawe put ȝour confidens.[75]

Titivillus, then, is brought in by the vices as a second line of attack beyond the abstract personifications of evil which they represent. He is a representative of the Devil, and as such he is endowed with magical powers, beyond the clownish reasoning and worldly temptations of the vices. As we shall see, his capacity for superhuman action within the allegory is countered by Mercy -- who is a representative of God's limitless and all-encompassing mercy, rather than a personification of a merely human abstract quality.

We first hear Titivillus from "off-stage", as he announces "I com wyth my leggys wnder me" (l. 454), in response to Nought's summoning-whistle (l. 452). Following this introduction of musical conjuring, the audience is now curious to see the snake come out of

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[75] *Mankind* ll. 883-8.

the basket. The three Ns busy themselves gathering money to complete the spell. New

Guise solicits the audience in his typically polite (with mock-flattery) manner,

subsequently parodying Mercy's opening speech while asking for money as a performer:[76]

> Now gostly to owr purpos, worschypfull souerence,
> We intende to gather money, yf yt plesse yowre neclygence,
> For a man wyth a hede þat ys of grett omnipotens.[77]

Nowadays again directs his attention to the money -- specifically the recently minted (c.

1465) "rede reyallys":

> Kepe yowr tayll, in goodnes I prey yow, goode broþer!
> He ys a worshyppull man, sers, sauyng yowr reuerens.
> He louyth no grotys, nor pens of to pens.
> Gyf ws rede reyallys yf ʒe wyll se hys abhomynabull presens.[78]

Spurned by Nought's whistle, Titivillus' offstage reply, and descriptions of the

forthcoming "abhomynabull presens" of "a man wyth a hede þat ys of grett omnipotens,"

the audience is compelled into participating in what Pamela King compares to a "black

mass" of demon-conjuring.[79]

Nowadays builds the suspense further with his final introduction, making a

parodic reference to Christ's words from the Harrowing of Hell (from the Gospel of

Nicodemus):

> Ita vere, magister. Cumme forth now yowr gatus!
> He ys a goodly man, sers; make space and be ware![80]

And with this Titivillus makes his powerful entrance, quoting scripture in a blasphemous

manner: "Ego sum dominancium dominus and my name ys Titivillus" (l. 475).[81]

Titivillus originates in an early fourteenth-century Latin sermon attributed to the

Dominican Petrus of Palade.[82] He makes his way into English literature through the

Exempla of Jaques de Vitry,[83] which was to influence much of the sermon writing and *artes*

[76] King 251.

[77] *Mankind* ll. 459-61.

[78] *Mankind* ll. 462-5.

[79] King 251.

[80] *Mankind* ll. 473-4. The apocryphal passage reads:
> And as Satan the prince, and Hell, spoke this together, suddenly there came a voice as of thunder and a spiritual cry: Remove, O princes, your gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

The Gospel of Nicodemus, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, trans. M.R. James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924) 5: 21.

[81] The reference comes from Deuteronomy 10: 17: "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords [...]."

[82] Ashley 128.

[83] Jaques de Vitry, *Exempla of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. Thomas T. Crane, Folklore Society Publications, 26 (London: D. Nutt, 1890) 6.

praedicandi of the fifteenth century.[84] He is usually presented as the devil who creeps around churches and religious houses, collecting the *fragmina verborum* of lazy or careless monks in his bag, to be used against them at the day of Judgment. Often he records their names in his book:

> Tutivillus, þe deuyl of hell,
> He wryteþ har names soþe to tel,
> *Ad missam garulantes.*[85]

Typically, he gathers words skipped by the clergy and takes note of idle words mumbled by members of the congregation:

> Jacob*us* de vitriaco tellyth þat an holy man stood in cherch in a qwere, & seyȝ a feend beryng a gret sacchell full of thyng. Þe feend, as þe man askyd þe feend what he bar*e*, þe feend seyde: 'I bere in my sacche sylables & woordys, ou*er*skyppyd and synkopyd, & v*er*se & psalmys þe whiche þese clerkys han stolyn in þe qweer*e*, & haue fayled in her*e* seruyse.'
> [...] ffor þis same clerk seyth þat, þe deuyl in a cherche wrote þe woordys of þe peple, wiche þei iangledyn & rownedyn in cherch, [...]. An holy man seyȝ þis, & askyd þe feend why he dyde so. Þe feend seyde: 'I wryte þise talys of þe peple in þis cherche, to recordyn hem a-fore god at þe doom for her*e* damp-nacyou*n*, [...].[86]

Titivillus' traditional association with idle words makes him especially suited to be the chief force of evil in a play which is so concerned with language. Previously, Mercy warned the audience against idle words with a rhetorical question concerning the Judgment:

> How may yt be excusyde befor þe Justyce of all
> When for euery ydyll worde we must ȝelde a reson?[87]

Later he cautioned Mankind to be wary of the "large" idle language of the three Ns:

> Nyse in þer aray, in language þei be large;
> To perverte yowr condycyons all þe menys xall be sowte.[88]

The playwright's choice of Titivillus, then, is highly appropriate, as he is traditionally the evil representative of idle chatter. Kathleen Ashley, in fact, suggests that this focus on idle language is in accordance with the liturgy of the Lenten and pre-Lenten Church season.[89] It is certainly true that the play's concern with idle language stems from a

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[84] Owst 513.

[85] Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*, 277.

[86] *Jacob's Well*, part 1, 114-5.

[87] *Mankind* ll. 172-3.

[88] *Mankind* ll. 295-6.

[89] Ashley 142-8. She suggests that "the idea of a battle of words, implicit in the liturgy of Lent, dictated the choice of Titivillus as the devilish representative of wrong speaking" (148).

concern with sloth in general,[90] further recommending an association with Lent. Mercy's primary admonition to Mankind sums up this concern: "Do truly yowr labure and be neuer ydyll" (l. 308).

We should note that in the Towneley Play of "The Judgment," the devil Titivillus also plays the role of primary demon. He tells his minions (two demons) that his position as court registrar makes his appearance on the day of Judgment highly important:

> *Tutivillus*: I was youre chefe tollare,
> And sithen courte rollar,
> Now am I master lollar,
>   And of sich men I mell me.
> I haue broght to youre hande / of saules, dar I say,
> Mo than ten thowsad / in an howre of a day; [...].[91]

He is the record-keeper of Hell, collecting the sins of mortals in his bag to be rendered up as evidence for judgment. This aspect of Titivillus' role as the general account-keeper of sins comes to the forefront during the time of Judgment, with his:

> [...] roll of ragman / of the rownde tabill,
> Of breffes in my bag, man / of synnes dampnabill [...].[92]

But his bag here contains not only the *fragmina verborum* of lazy clerics and chatty congregation members ("kyrkchaterars," l. 296); here he pulls out sins of all sorts, which he lists in detail over the next one hundred and thirty lines (ll. 233-367), marking him as a more versatile soul-collector than his analogous relation in *Jacob's Well*.

In both of the surviving dramatic appearances of Titivillus, then, his position is extended beyond that of the non-dramatic material, so that he does more than just collect idle words. In the Towneley play, he instructs the minor demons about the day of Judgment, acting as the primary demon and voice of evil at the day of Judgment. In the play of *Mankind*, Titivillus also acts as the primary force of evil, and his powers are not limited to his traditional role as word-collector.

In contrast with the three N's temptations with their "many wordys and schortely sett," Titivillus' initial attack concentrates on Mankind's physical idleness. He describes his plan in detail to the audience, focusing on a physical assault on Mankind: "To yrke hym of hys labur" (l. 532) so that he will "dawnce anoþer trace" (l. 528). Using his net of

[90] See Neuss' discussion in "Active and Idle Language: Dramatic Images in *Mankind*," 41-68. She says the "theme of *Mankind*, of which all the ideas expressed in the play are amplifications, is concerned with *Accidia* [...]" (44).

[91] "The Judgment" (*Towneley* XXX) ll. 211-16.

[92] "The Judgment" (*Towneley* XXX) ll. 224-5.

invisibility (ll. 529-31), Titivillus hides a board under the earth where Mankind will dig (l. 533). When Mankind enters to do his planting, he finds the ground "so harde yt makyth wnlusty and yrke" (l. 545), so he abandons the endeavour, deciding to leave the work for winter and "lett Gode werke" (l. 546). Then Titivillus mixes Mankind's corn "wyth drawke and wyth durnell" (l. 537), causing Mankind to despair and give up his spade (which Titivillus symbolically removes, ll. 547-50).

Next Titivillus uses his magic on Mankind's body. When Mankind proposes to say evensong and kneels to pray, Titivillus whispers in his ear, causing him to have to relieve himself: "Aryse and avent þe! nature compellys" (l. 560). When Mankind returns, he is in a slothful state: "Of labure and preyer, I am nere yrke of both" (l. 585), and he goes to sleep (l. 588). Having concentrated his wicked assault on Mankind's physical environment, Titivillus has succeeded in lulling Mankind into a state receptive of sin. But his fall is still not assured, and Titivillus' work is still not at an end. His most important magic is still to come, as he cautions the audience to keep silent:

> Ande euer ȝe dyde, for me kepe now yowr sylence.
> Not a worde, I charge yow, peyn of forty pens.
> A praty game xall be scheude yow or ȝe go hens.[93]

In order to complete Mankind's downfall, Titivillus must convince him that Mercy is unavailable to him, thus disrupting the allegorical relationship established in Mercy's opening sermon:

> [MERCY:] I haue be þe very mene for yowr restytucyon.
>   Mercy ys my name, [...].
> 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.[94]

Titivillus whispers to Mankind that Mercy is dead, having either broken his neck or been hanged for stealing a horse:

> Alasse, Mankynde, alasse! Mercy stown a mere!
> He ys runn away fro hys master, þer wot no man where;
> [...] But ȝet I herde sey he brake hys neke as he rode in Fraunce;
> But I thynke he rydyth on þe galouse, to lern for to daunce,
> Bycause of hys theft, þat ys hys gouernance.
>   Trust no more on hym, he ys a marryde man.
> Mekyll sorow wyth þispade beforn þou hast wrought.[95]

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[93] *Mankind* ll. 589-91.
[94] *Mankind* ll. 17-23.
[95] *Mankind* ll. 594-601.

As Titivillus departs, Mankind wakes up convinced that Mercy "hath brokyn hys neke-kycher [...] / Or he hangyth by þe neke hye wppon þe gallouse" (ll. 607-8), and he goes to ask "mercy" of the three Ns.

In this scene, Titivillus explicates the allegorical relationship between Mankind and Mercy by essentially attempting to negate it. He convinces Mankind of a theological (and, therefore, allegorical) impossibility: that God's Mercy is dead. It is significant that Mankind believes Mercy is not only unavailable to him, but that Mercy is dead -- that he is unavailable because he has ceased to exist.

Earlier in the play, it is somewhat puzzling as to why Mercy ever leaves Mankind's presence in the first place, apparently abandoning him to the temptations of Mischief and the three Ns. After all, is not God's mercy a constant reality? If Mercy is truly concerned for Mankind's moral safety, why leave him at all? We know, for example, that Mercy has power over the three Ns -- power enough to keep them at a distance:

> MANKYNDE: Wher spekys þis felow? Wyll he not com nere?
> MERCY: [...] They wyll be here ryght son, yf I owt departe.[96]

After Mercy has commanded them to leave in the previous scene ("Out of þis place I wolde ȝe went," l. 148), the three Ns seem unable to re-enter his immediate presence, and are reduced to taunting him from across the "place":

> MERCY: [...] Wythin a schorte space I must nedys hens.
> NOWADAYS: Þe sonner þe leuer, and yt be ewyn anon!
> I trow yowr name ys Do Lytyll, ȝe be so long fro hom.
> Yf ȝe wolde go hens, we xall cum euerychon, [...].[97]

If he remains, Mercy will keep the vices at bay. So why "must [he] nedys hens[?]"

Neuss deals with this apparent allegorical difficulty by suggesting that Mercy is testing Mankind's resolve -- as a sort of Job figure:

> Mischief 'makes his avaunt' that he will easily be able to tempt Mankind into sin, [...] while Mercy, trusting to Mankind's goodness (or perhaps believing that it will be a lesson to him to experience temptation), agrees to go away and leave him open to the wiles of his enemies.[98]

She also suggests that this helps with matters of dramatic practicality as well, if Mercy is to double for Titivillus.[99]

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[96] *Mankind* ll. 253-7.
[97] *Mankind* ll. 260-3.
[98] Neuss, "Active and Idle Language: Dramatic Images in *Mankind*," 48.
[99] Neuss, "Active and Idle Language: Dramatic Images in *Mankind*," 48.

While not wholly disagreeing with Neuss' understanding, I would suggest that

Mercy's early disappearance from the action is not necessarily allegorically significant.

As Mercy has acted as narrator for the audience, as father-figure for Mankind, and as

preacher for both, his role has necessarily assumed characteristics that transcend a mere

personification of abstract mercy. His relaxed and confident remarks to the audience, such

as:

> I dyscomende þe vyvyouse gyse; I prey haue me excusyde,
> I nede not to speke of yt, yowr reson wyll tell it yow
> Take þat ys to be takyn and leue þat ys to be refusyde,[100]

suggest a broader character -- not necessarily constrained by his traditional position as a

virtue within the psychomachia at work around Mankind.

It is Mankind's perception of Mercy's availability that is being displayed -- not

the audience's. By extension, it is the audience's understanding of Mankind's changeable

perception of Mercy that takes precedence, and Mercy's physical presence on or off the

stage need not be an indication of allegorical significance to the audience. After all, the

audience has been told that "þe grett mercy of Gode [...] / [...] ys euer habundante / To þe

synfull creature þat wyll repent hys neclygence" (ll. 21-3), acknowledging that Mercy is

always available, *if* he is called upon. As he himself has explained to the audience, the

character Mercy need not be physically present in order for his represented quality to be

available to Mankind.

In a recent production in Trinity College, Dublin, Piesse found an interesting way of

dealing with some of the overlapping relationships between audience, Mercy, and

Mankind:

> We wondered how to communicate the sense we had of knowing contradictory
> truths simultaneously, of the audience being aware that there is a desired
> spiritual narrative (what the audience knows to be 'right') which runs at
> times consistently and at times diametrically opposed to the physical narra-
> tive taking place on stage.
> [...] In the final production, a shadow puppet display was performed simul-
> taneously with the peopled drama.[101]

When Mankind awakes, believing Mercy to be dead, for example, "on the shadow screen at

the back of the stage the figure of Mercy crumbles and the figure of Mankind is suddenly

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[100] *Mankind* ll. 183-5.
[101] Piesse 135. Helene Hugel was chief producer for the Trinity College production.

withdrawn, representing his abandonment of the spiritual struggle."[102] In this way, allegorical significance -- already implicit in the play's action and dialogue ("I felt that we weren't adding anything that wasn't already there in the spirit of the text,"[103]) -- is rendered visually immediate on the shadow screen. When Mankind asks "mercy" of the three Ns, Mercy's allegorical position (as a constant "presence" in the psychomachia) and Mankind's shifted understanding of that position are again played out on the shadow screen:

> [...] the conceptual nature of this presence is again represented by his being on the shadow screen, in a weeping posture, unavailable to Mankind because Mankind has abandoned the spiritual paradigm of life. Mercy is still present, but in a way which serves the audience's understanding, not Mankind's and thus in a form not available or even perceptible to Mankind.[104]

This is not an allegory of location, as is *The Castle of Perseverance*, and allegorical relationships -- whether physical or dialogical -- supersede any significance that might be found in the play's blocking. Mercy the concept is a universal constant, and Mercy (the character) does not need to be standing near Mankind for the audience to recognize that God's mercy is still available to the protagonist.

For this reason, Titivillus is only fully successful in enacting Mankind's downfall when he convinces Mankind that Mercy no longer exists. In order to do this, he emphasizes Mercy's physical presence within the action to Mankind, dismissing the abstraction which Mercy represents. By describing Mercy as a man who has stolen a horse and who has been killed, Titivillus draws Mankind's attention to that side of Mercy which was physically present on the stage in the earlier scenes. His deception is heightened by the dramatic medium itself, as Mankind -- as well as the audience – have just seen Mercy, in the flesh, as a corporeal character in a costumed drama. Mercy himself downplayed this side of his character in the earlier scenes, covering his physical presence with a barrage of Latinate diction and theology that was (is) entirely abstract. Once Mankind is forced to focus on Mercy's physical nature -- to see him as a man who may be killed, negating his allegorical significance -- his downfall is assured.

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[102] Piesse 135.
[103] Piesse 136.
[104] Piesse 136.

This further reflects Titivillus' powers. He *is* capable of effecting Mankind physically with his magic (ruining his farming, causing him to relieve himself) -- something that Mischief and the three Ns are not capable of doing. As a representative of the Devil – an historical, superhuman embodiment of evil impulses -- he is granted the ability to cross the line of allegorical necessity and to assert physical violence on the character of Mankind. But none of these things are wholly capable of drawing Mankind to sin. It is only when he focuses on Mankind's allegorical relationship with Mercy -- convincing him that Mercy is corporeal -- that Titivillus is able to ensure Mankind's fall. Again, he must use language rather than physical tricks to turn Mankind to sin.

There are two other crucial scenes in the play in which allegory controls the significance of physical interaction, and they both involve the use of weapons. The first occurs just after Mercy leaves Mankind to his farming. As Mankind begins to plant his corn, the three Ns enter and lead the audience in a bawdy Christmas song (ll. 331-43). Then they begin teasing Mankind about the small size of his field, attempting to distract him from his labour (ll. 344- 75). Heedless of his protestations, the three Ns finally irritate Mankind to the point of using physical violence:

> Go and do yowr labur! Gode lett yow neuer the!
> Or wyth my spade I xall yow dynge, by þe Holy Trinyte!
> Haue ȝe non other man to moke, but euer me?
> [...] Hye yow forth lyuely, for hens I wyll yow dryffe![105]

Viewing the play in its entirety, it is apparent that Mankind is not presented as a mere bumpkin, as "an earnest dullard,"[106] an "honest, well-spoken yeoman,"[107] or as a representative of any particular social class. I agree with Stephen May's observation concerning Mankind's spade in this scene, that "an awareness of all the iconographic and dynamic possibilities [...] is necessary to fully realise its funtion."[108] May goes on to explicate the iconographic relationship between the spade and Adam in particular, finally contending:

> Mankind is (as his name suggests) an ideal representative of Fallen Man in
> general, not a real representative of a particular social class.[109]

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[105] *Mankind* ll. 376-80.
[106] King 248.
[107] Miyajima 104.
[108] Stephen May, "A Medieval Stage Property: The Spade," *Medieval English Theatre*, 4: 2 (1982) 86.
[109] May, "A Medieval Stage Property: The Spade," 88.

More than this, Mankind's use of the "demonstrative mode" of presentation (discussed earlier) reinforces his universality: he uses Latinate diction to describe complex theological concepts in one scene (ll. 186-216), and yet he becomes relatively naive when the vices are around him. In other words, despite his spade and his farming, we should not confuse Mankind with a mere representation of an individual element of society. He is a representation of all mankind, and his spade links him with the original Fallen Man.

Ashley places even greater emphasis on the iconography of the spade in the scene:

> [...] he picks up his spade and beats them off. In the very old tradition of the *Psychomachia*, virtue here triumphs over vice. I would argue further that the spade represents the word of God which is invariably in medieval texts described as a defense against temptation.[110]

What Ashley fails to recognize is that Mankind's apparent "triumph" over the vices in this scene is really just a momentary abatement. Despite the rich iconography associated with Mankind's weapon, Mankind himself understands that its physical nature renders it powerless against the abstract vices. For this, he cites biblical precedent:

> By þe subsyde of hys grace þat he hath sente me
> Thre of myn enmys I haue putt to flyght.
> 3yt þis instrument, souerens, ys not made to defende.
> Dauide seyth, 'Nec in hasta nec in gladio saluat Dominus.'[111]

As a means of fending off idleness, the spade is a useful tool for Mankind's moral maintenance, and for this reason he brings it with him when he departs: "Wyth my spade I wyll departe, my worschyppull souerence, / Ande lyue euer wyth labure to corecte my insolence" (ll. 409-10). But its use as a *physical* weapon, by Mankind, against the abstractions represented by the three Ns, is ultimately an allegorical impossibility -- and for this reason Mankind points out its uselessness to the audience. Mankind's position as the personified "battlefield" for which the vices and virtues contend assures that any physical interaction he may have with the other characters cannot have any ultimate symbolic significance. His presence on the stage confounds this allegorical necessity from time-to-time, but -- like Humanum Genus in *The Castle of Perseverance* or Mary in the Digby *Mary Magdalen* -- his physical interaction with the personified abstractions is almost non-existent. If he is allowed to direct action towards the vices on a physical

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[110] Ashley 138.

[111] The reference, from I Samuel, 17:47, reads "the Lord saves not with sword and spear."

level, the allegory is momentarily disrupted. When it does occur (as we have just seen), it is an element of magic (in the case of Titivillus), or Mankind apologizes for it.

A character who *is* allowed to direct physical action against the vices is their moral and allegorical opposition: Mercy. As we have seen, his mere presence with Mankind in the earlier scenes is enough to keep the three Ns at bay. After Mankind awakes, thinking Mercy is dead, Mankind seeks out the three Ns in order to ask for their "mercy" (l. 650). The vices place Mankind on trial, and make him promise to engage in acts of viciousness (ll. 664-717). His cloak is shortened into a "fresch jakett" (l. 675 and following), and he and the vices call for a tapster (l. 729).

When Mercy re-enters, realizing that Mankind is now in a state of sin, his lament is intense and moving:

> My mynde ys dyspersyde, my body trymmelyth as þe aspen leffe.
> The terys xuld trekyll down by my chekys, were not yowr reuerrence.
> [...] My inwarde afflixcyon ȝeldyth me tedyouse wnto yowr presens.
> I kan not bere yt ewynly þat Mankynde ys so flexybull.[112]

Mercy's severe mourning does seem somewhat melodramatic and out-of-character, given the confidence expressed in his earlier admonitions to the audience. Moreover, his solicitation to the "good Lady and Moþer of mercy" (l. 756) seems to bring his own allegorical position into question:

> Lett mercy excede justyce, dere Moþer, amytt þis supplycacyon,
> Equyte to be leyde onparty and mercy to prevayll.[113]

Less than a hundred lines later, after he has saved Mankind, Mercy is again confident about the prevalence of his position:

> Justyce and Equite xall be fortyfyid, I will not deny.
> Trowthe may not so cruelly procede in hys streyt argument
> But þat Mercy schall rewle þe mater wythowte contauersye.[114]

Despite this later, more assured assertion, the previous example shows us that -- for himself, at least -- Mercy's position has *not* ruled the matter "wythowte contrauersye." Mercy is reduced to asking for mercy, "which is, strictly speaking, allegorical nonsense."[115]

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[112] *Mankind* ll. 734-5 and 740-1.
[113] *Mankind* ll. 758-9.
[114] *Mankind* ll. 840-3.
[115] King 248.

The lament, however, serves two purposes: it allows for a brief explication of the old debate between the four daughters of God (here described as male), and it has the effect of painting the character Mercy in a more realistic, human way. He is allowed to show emotion, to feel doubt, and thus to heighten both emotion and suspense in the watching audience. Any allegorical discrepancy we might feel with Mercy's questioning of the quality which he represents must be balanced against the allegorical impossibility placed in Mankind's mind by Titivillus earlier in the play.

Neuss suggests that the severity of the situation brings about Mercy's apparent change in character, as the audience is supposed to realize at this point that they have been participating in more than just a "game":

> The audience would have a distinctly uncomfortable feeling at this point. [...] They now find they have been playing a 'game' in which someone has actually been hurt: a soul is in danger of being lost.[116]

So, Mercy's lament causes the audience to reflect on their own participation in the vices' seductive dissimulation, with the knowledge that Mankind's sin will lead to despair, which may eventually lead to his suicide and damnation. Moreover, his intense lamentation for Mankind's plight gives rise to the following scene, in which Mercy -- for the first and only time in the play -- engages in physical *action*.

Concluding his soliloquy, Mercy states that:

> A, wyth þes cursyde caytyfs, and I may, he xall not long indure.
> I, Mercy, hys father gostly, wyll procede forth and do my
> propyrte.[117]

Following this, the vices enter and taunt Mercy, suggesting that it is useless for Mercy to try and find Mankind (ll. 772-82). They call a "parlement" and decide to tell Mankind that Mercy is *not* dead, knowing that he will regret his sinfulness and be driven to despair (ll. 787-98). Mischief produces a tree with a rope hanging from it, and New Guise comically attempts to show Mankind how to hang himself, choking in the process (ll. 800-10).

In the midst of this stage business, Mercy rushes in to save Mankind. As New Guise struggles ridiculously with the noose, Mischief exclaims:

> Helpe þisylff, Nought! Lo, Mercy ys here!

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[116] Neuss, "Active and Idle Language: Dramatic Images in *Mankind*," 65.
[117] *Mankind* ll. 764-5.

He skaryth ws wyth a bales; we may no longer tary.[118]

In the EETS edition of the play, Eccles translates "bales" as a rod or a scourge.[119]
Greg Walker's translation is a bit more specific, suggesting it is scourges or a whip.[120]
It is important that the nature of Mercy's weapon in this scene be properly represented,
and it is insufficient to use a property such as a staff or walking stick.

One definition offered for bales in the OED is "A rod; also a bundle of twigs used in
flogging, [...] a scourge." I think it is important to emphasize the flogging or scourge aspect
of "bales" as an instrument to shrive oneself and to drive out sin. In this way, Mercy's
weapon serves a similar purpose to Penitence's lance in *The Castle of Perseverance*. Mercy
here is acting in that now traditional role of active agent of conversion. Like Confession
and Penitence in *The Castle of Perseverance*, and to a less extent the Virgin Mary in *The
Pride of Life*, Mercy here represents the aggressive, usually physical intercession of God's
grace. If this scene is played with Mercy advancing, brandishing a scourge with which to
flog away the vices, his weapon takes on allegorical significance that a staff or cane could
not.

Forced to take action -- to "procede forth and do [his] propyrte" – Mercy enacts a
brief pseudo-psychomachia. Brought on by Titivillus' trickery and attempts at
allegorical deconstruction, Mercy's previous lament over the state of Mankind suggests a
certain reluctance on his part to engage in this sort of allegorically charged, physical
violence. We know, furthermore, that Titivillus was initially brought on by the audience
– the other "mankind" participating in the action of the play. In the vices' money-raising
scene, the audience is lured into actively seeking their dramatic representative's ultimate
downfall, and Mercy's lament is just as much for their depravity as it is for Mankind's. As
he addressed the audience earlier, he complained:

> Man onkynde, whereuer þou be! [...].
>> To euery creature þou art dyspectuose and odyble.
>> Why art þou so oncurtess, so inconsyderatt? Alasse, who ys me!
>> As þe fane þat turnyth wyth þe wynde, so þou art conuertyble.[121]

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[118] *Mankind* ll. 806-7.
[119] Eccles 231.
[120] Greg Walker, ed., *Medieval Drama: An Anthology* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, Publishers, 2000) 276.
[121] *Mankind* ll. 742-49.

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Thus, the audience has brought on Mankind's ultimate fall, resulting in Mercy's lamentations and his later, reluctant physical intercession.

After the vices have departed, Mercy asks Mankind to ask for "mercy" (l. 816). Yet Mercy berates him for ignoring his earlier admonitions – the same admonitions that the *audience* received, but chose to ignore by giving money over to see Titivillus:

> Mankend, ȝe were obliuyows of my doctrine monytory.
> I seyd before, Titiuillus wold asay ȝow a bronte.
> Be ware fro hensforth of hys fablys delusory.[122]

The audience did not take Mercy's warning to heart, and, instead, caused the subsequent downfall of their allegorical representative. Mercy is forced to stir from the passive stance he held at the beginning of the play, as his previous confidence in the audience's judgment ("I dyscomende þe vycyouse gyse; I prey haue me excusyde, / I nede not to speke of yt, yowr reson wyll tell it yow") has proven incorrect, forcing him into action.

It is apparent, then, that Mankind has much more free will than the protagonists of *The Castle of Perseverance* and the Digby *Mary Magdalen*. This is not wholly expressed through the character of Mankind himself, but rather through the 'mankind' represented by the audience. Unlike the allegory in the other two plays (and to an extent in *The Pride of Life*), the allegory in *Mankind* is not structured around an impending psychomachia. Mankind is taught by Mercy and allowed to go about his business, unimpeded by a direct confrontation of morally opposed personifications. Like the three evil kings in *The Castle of Perseverance* and in the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, it is Titivillus – through his trickery -- who will set the eventual confrontation into motion. But unlike these other evil characters, Titivillus is powerless without the direct impetus the audience. Free will, then, is given to the audience, and their failure to use it responsibly initiates the need for Mercy's physical intercession in the allegory.

Ultimately, then, *Mankind* attempts to construct its psychomachia around the audience, rather than around its protagonist. Its allegory works verbally, through temptation, buffoonery, and by building suspense (especially with Titivillus' entrance). In the rare occasions when allegory is expressed on a physical level, it usually does not relate in a shift of power or of significance (such as Titivillus' attempts to disrupt Mankind

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[122] *Mankind* ll. 879-81.

physically and Mankind's attempts to drive the vices off with his spade). Titivillus himself, despite his magic, is only able to initiate Mankind's change of heart verbally, by attempting to explode the allegorical relationship previously established by Mercy. It is only when the pseudo-psychomachia is forced into action – when Mercy scares away the vices with a scourge – that physicality succeeds in shifting the development of the protagonist. Despite the seductiveness of the vices, the play's allegory ultimately reinforces the primacy of God's mercy: "Wyrschepyll sofereyns, I hawe do my propirte: / Mankynd ys deliueryd by my fauerall patrocynye" (ll. 903-4).

The play focuses on Mankind's life, rather than his death and afterlife, and he is still free to save or damn himself when the play ends. In this way, the play expresses a difference in dramatic focus rather than in theology from its counterparts in the genre. I think it is precarious to see Mankind as a developmental link in the "evolution" of early modern drama, but it is certainly unique. It draws a sharper picture of the Mankind figure and his direct allegorical relationship to the audience -- exploiting the medium itself -- both for subtle theoretical analysis and in order to invigorate the orthodox moral at the play's core. In other words, it is difficult to confidently deem *Mankind* "a move nearer to the interludes,"[123] as this tends to push the play's moral into irrelevancy and to underscore the ingenious way it uses allegory to draw out that moral. *Mankind* is a fabulous late-medieval morality play, exploiting its genre's didacticism and allegorical presentation to the fullest. In constructing his play, the playwright himself is analogous with his protagonist: ground in tradition, given free license to experiment -- with the tentative but lingering belief that allegory will work to save him.

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[123] Miyajima 82.

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[123] Miyajima 82.

CONCLUSION

In this examination, I have concentrated on the action of physical and allegorical violence in the late medieval English morality plays, attempting to demonstrate that character relationships and physicality are either necessitated or prohibited by the particular allegorical relationships employed by each playwright. In the opening chapter, after defining my terms, I attempted to view the *Psychomachia* as a broad and far-reaching ancestor of the kind of allegorical violence generally used in the morality plays – an idea most notably (and perhaps over-enthusiastically) examined by Spivack.[1]

In the second chapter, I discussed the complex but pronounced geographical framework of *The Castle of Perseverance*, with its stage plan of determined relationships. In it, staging is paramount, as the three enemies of Humanum Genus focus their pernicious assault on the central castle, culminating in an all-out psychomachia between vaunting vices and defending virtues. While the details of the play's grandiose allegorical scheme are played out in extravagant physical terms (with the massive set, playing time, costume, gesture, and cast required by the text), the pageantry of this psychomachia both elaborates on and distracts from the true allegorical ramifications of the play. The ferocity the evil characters display towards Humanum Genus, the sheer number of personifications mobilized against him, and the lengths to which the seven virtues and their allegorical defences attempt to defend him, all draw our initial attention away from Humanum Genus' position in the play. But by the play's conclusion, we are increasingly aware of his free will. His physical appearance at all within a pschomachia merits this awareness, but the initiating actions of his Good and Bad Angels – representatives of his own divided impulses – explicate his power to enact his own salvation or damnation. Finally, it is only God's grace – represented by Penitence and Confession – which is allowed to interact *physically* with Humanum Genus, momentarily disrupting the play's allegory. By striking Humanum Genus with their lance of contrition, they exert violence on the protagonist that crosses the line between personification and representative type. Echoed after death by the actions of the Four Daughters, the primacy of God's ability to

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[1] Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil.*

intercede on man's behalf (the play's ultimate moral) dictates the play's allegorical relationships.

In the Digby play of *Mary Magdalen*, we saw how allegory affects the play's historical narrative, or, rather, how allegory is used to augment the play's venerating hagiographic intent. Mary Magdalen's fall into sin is depicted with the same personified mechanisms used in *The Castle of Perseverance*, where the three evil kings direct the assault against Mary's virtue. But her free will is limited to her conversion to Christ -- after the adapted psychomachia -- and her Good and Bad Angels are left only to comment on the allegorical action. The allegory (specifically the World, the Flesh, and the Devil) is held responsible for Mary's fall into sin, and her turn towards Christ – initially implied by the Good Angel – is enacted by Mary herself upon her waking in the garden. The allegory's attempt to interact with Mary verbally and physically is ultimately subsumed by her historically dictated conversion and sainthood, and this effect is directed towards Mary's veneration.

The early play-fragment *The Pride of Life* is the only play discussed which does not employ any recognizable variation of the psychomachia. In it, the protagonist is both a Mankind figure and a negative moral force, as he is responsible for his own eventual downfall. The allegorical figures around him are consequentially powerless, and his two retainers Strength and Health – as extensions of the King of Life's earthly self in its vanity – are denied any verbal or physical motivation towards their king. Nuncius does establish a first-person relationship with the audience, but he is in no way a vice or an instigator of action,[2] and serves more to transform changes of scene. The Queen and the Bishop do attempt to convert the King, but their words are left unheeded. We know, of course, that Death does eventually exert violence on the King of Life, and that the King is rescued after death by the Virgin Mary's intercession.

Physical allegory in *The Pride of Life*, then, is reserved to the battle between Life and Death, when word and deed meet to an end. The King of Life's implied allegorical position as *life itself* at the play's outset is consequentially called into question when he challenged Death to a fight to the death. His mortality proven by Death, he becomes a

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[2] In the manor of the audience-charming Vice of later tudor comedy, such as a Jack Juggeler or a Roister Doister.

pseudo-Mankind figure during the missing section of the play, with the details of the Virgin's intercession offering an ultimate message of hope.

Finally, the discussion of the play of *Mankind* focused on the fruitlessness of deriving significance from the physical exchanges between Mankind and the play's personifications, and on the play's ingenious use of the audience as an active participant in the allegory. The three Ns – distinct but subtle personifications of worldly vices – and their leader Mischief are not allowed any allegorically effective physical interaction with Mankind, nor is Mankind able to fend them off for long with physical violence (by swinging his spade). The devil Titivillus, as a representative of Satan, is able to use his magic to disrupt Mankind's physical person and environment. But he must resort to persuasion and verbal trickery (convincing Mankind that Mercy is dead) in order to assure Mankind's moral reversal. In fact, the only significance given to physicality in the play's allegory involves Mercy's thundering entrance and attack on the vices with a 'bales', instigating a brief pseudo-psychomachia in which virtue ousts vice. His violence underlines the play's ultimate moral, the primacy of God's grace, and it reverses the declining chain of events haphazardly initiated by the audience itself.

The two remaining late-medieval English morality plays of *Wisdom* and *Everyman* have not been examined at length, primarily because they do not exploit the physical significances of dramatic allegorical violence. Eccles condemns *Wisdom* for being "too intent on teaching moral virtue to have much concern with dramatic virtues,"[3] and his description of the characters' allegorical relationships takes this condemnation further:

> The play lacks the focus of a single character representing Mankind: Anima is a puppet who suffers rather than acts, the Five Wits do not even speak, while the choices between good and evil are made by Mind and accepted by Understanding and Will. This committee of three is all too unanimous, […] and it is hard to share the emotions of such abstract personifications.[4]

Wisdom is a wealth of allegorical pageantry, and its message is conveyed primarily through lengthy soliloquy, costume, gesture, and indicative blocking. Lucifer, the play's agent of evil motivation, resorts to disguise and persuasion, and the only physical exchange played occurs when Mind, Will, and Understanding come to blows in

[3] Eccles xxxvi.
[4] Eccles xxxvi.

lines 761-88. Anima remains relatively static throughout, changing visibly with the moral transformations of the three personifications. What results is a lengthy theological argument, illustrated by pageantry, rather than a narrative dramatic allegory.

Everyman tightens its dramatic focus to the moment of Everyman's death, narrowing its narrative core even further than *Mankind*. Death sends Everyman off to prepare his "rekenynge" (l. 99), and Everyman meets a series of personifications representing different elements of his life. The personifications do not initiate action, nor do they interact significantly with one another. Instead, they define themselves both on what they represent and on their relationship with Everyman himself, so that the personifications of Everyman's external mortal life (Fellowship, Cousin, Kindred, and Goods) each refuse to accompany him, while his internal attributes and qualities (Good Deeds, Knowledge, Five Wits, Beauty, Strength, and Discretion) each accompany him in differing degrees until his eventual death. The character Confession does take Everyman through the four stages of the sacrament of penance (auricular confession, contrition, absolution, and extreme unction), but this is less an act of moral conversion as it is a dramatic portrayal of the *ars moriendi*. The play's cropped and magnified focus precludes any sort of psychomachia or allegorical violence. More than this, its overt insistence on salvation by works and on the necessity of penance precludes the intercession of a divinely sanctioned allegorical motivator (such as Penitence and Confession in *The Castle of Perseverance* and Mercy in *Mankind*).

Physical allegory continues and transforms itself in many of the Tudor interludes and moral plays, as didactic moral allegory is employed towards ends beyond the purely religious auspices of the late medieval morality plays. Their employment of dramatic allegory lies outside the scope of this investigation, but their particular mixture of allegory and physicality remains a fascinating area for future study.

The early English morality plays continually display a zealous attraction to that dynamic interplay between moral allegory and physical stage violence. They are conspicuous examples of a mode of dramatic thought that ran throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when drama not only informed and entertained: it attempted to save souls as well. Armoured in allegory and sent out onto the corporeal stage of Everyman, the

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medieval morality plays remind us that, ultimately, *"Vita hominis est milicia super terram."*[5]

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[5] *Mankind* l. 228 (from Job 7: 1).

APPENDIX A: My adaptation of the Stage Plan of *The Castle of Perseverance* (Folger MS. V. a. 354, f. 191):

þis is þe watyr abowte þe place, if any
dyche may be mad þer it schal be pleyed, oꝛ
ellys þat it be strongely barryd al abowt, and lete
nowth ouyrmany stytelerys be withinne þe plase. *

SOWTH
Caro
skafold

þis is þe castel of perseueraunse þat stodyth
In þe myddys of þe place, but lete no men sytte þer,
for lettynge of syt, for þer schal be þe best of all.

Coveytyse copbord be þe
beddys feet

schal be at þe ende of þe
castel.

EST
deus
skafold

WEST
mundus
skaffold

Mankydeis bed schal be vndyr þe castel and þer schal þe sowle
lye vndyr þe bed tyl he schal ryse and pleye.

NORTHE EST
Coveytyse
skaffold

NORTHE
Belyal
skaffold

and he þat schal pley belyal loke þat he
haue gunnepowdyr brennynge In pypys
in hys handys and in hys erys and in
hys ars whanne he gothe to batayl.

þe iiij dowterys schul be clad in mentelys, Mercy in wyth, rythwys-
nesse in red altogedyr, Trewthe in sad grene, and Pes al in blake,
and þei schul pleye in þe place altogedyr tyl þey brynge up þe
sowle.

* (In the manuscript, this text is written in the space between the two circles --
within the "dyche".)

Taken from Folger MS. V. a. 354, f. 191ᵛ [reprinted as the frontispiece of

The Macro Plays (EETS, OS 262), ed. Mark Eccles (London, New York,

Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969)].

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