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Greek Tragedy

Notes on Greek Tragedy

The origin of Greek tragedy:

According to Aristotle, Greek tragedy developed out of the improvised speeches of the dithyramb* with the satyric drama** as an intermediate stage. It is probable, according to this view, that dithyramb, satyric drama, and tragedy each followed its own line of development, and that the, origin of tragedy is to be sought in an elementary choral and rustic form of drama in use in the villages of Attica; that Thespis introduced into this an actor's part, and that it was adopted in the second half of the sixth century B.C. at the Great Dionysia at Athens. With this rustic drama was probably combined a solemn lyric element from the choral Dionysia songs. The subjects of tragedy, as of the dithyramb, were probably at first connected with the story of Dionysus; later their

range was extended to include the stories of heroes; they were only rarely drawn from history.

The word tragedy appears to be derived from tragodoi meaning probably a chorus who personated goats, or danced either for a goat as the prize or around a sacrificed goat. The later sense of the word "tragedy" resulted from the sorrowful character of the legends dealt with in plays thus described.

*The word "dithyramb" refers to the Greek choral lyric originally connected with the worship of Dionysus, sung by a choir probably of fifty singers. it is thought that the members of the chorus were dressed as satyrs). The dithyramb was in its origin a revel song led off by the leader of a band of revellers either in traditional or improvised words, and answered by the others in a traditional refrain.

**A satyric drama was a play dealing with the grotesque portions of ancient legends, or dealing with ancient legends grotesquely. The chorus in these plays were dressed to represent satyrs with horses' tails and ears; the language and gestures were often obscene.

Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides all wrote satyric dramas. The satyric drama continued to the Roman period. Rules for it are given by Horace in his ArsPoetica.

The representation of tragedies:

The representation of tragedies in Attica was an incident of public worship and, until the Alexandrian period, appears to have been confined to the festivals of Dionysus. They were performed, that is, in winter and early spring, "the season when the world is budding but there is not enough to eat," a period of anxiety. in a primitive community, of longing that the spirit of vegetation may duly be reborn. The altar of the god stood in the centre of the orchestra. The principal production of new tragedies was at the Great Dion Nrsia on which occasion, during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., three poets were allowed to compete, each poet presenting three tragedies and one satyric play. These four plays (tetralogies) might be connected by community of subject but rarely were so. The contests were decided at first by popular

acclamation, later by judges chosen by lot from an elected list. The winner of the contest was rewarded with a crown. The best actor among the protagonists also received a prize.

Choral and dramatic elements:

Greek tragedy, as its history indicates,. contained two elements, choral and dramatic. The former was expressed in a variety of lyric metres, arranged in strophes and antistrophes, occasionally with epodes added. The chorus was drawn up in a rectangular form (as distinguished from the circular chorus of the dithyramb) and its movements were based on this arrangement. It was accompanied on the flute. Its principal dance was of a dignified character. The number of persons in the chorus was probably twelve in most of the plays of Aeschylus, and was increased to fifteen by Sophocles. Choruses continued to form a part of tragedies through the fifth century and part at least of the fourth century B.C. after choruses in comedy had been discontinued.

Principal parts of a Greek tragedy:

A Greek tragedy normally contained the following parts :

(a) The prologue*, the part before the entrance of the chorus, in monologue or dialogue setting forth the subject of the drama and the situation from which it starts. In the earliest tragedies the play begins with the entrance of the chorus, who set forth the subject.

(b) The song accompanying the entrance of the chorus.

(c) The episodes, scenes in which one or more actors took part, with the chorus. The episodes might contain lyrical passages, lamentations, incidental songs by the chorus, etc.

(d) Songs** of the chorus in one place, i.e., in the orchestra as opposed to the first song which accompanied the entrance of the chorus. These songs were originally reflections or expressions of emotion evoked by the preceding episode. But this connection was gradually severed, until Agathon finally

substituted mere musical interludes between the episodes.

(e) After the last choral song came the final scene*.

Divine will and human will:

Greek tragedy had always a religious background, in keeping with its religious character. The choruses in some cases show the survival of magic dances, intended to avert pestilence, bring rain, etc. A tragedy was originally the presentation of a single pathetic situation, with little action. Aeschylus introduced the idea of the divine will shaping the course of events. Sophocles added the further element of the human will, less powerful than the divine will, working in harmony with or in opposition to it, more at the mercy of circumstances. Hence developed the peripeteia,** the moment when the action of the tragedy changes its course, a knot or complication having arisen in the relations of the characters which has to be resolved. With Euripides, the peripeteia became more complicated, striking, and abrupt. The anagnorisis or "recognition" (occasionally

used by Sophocles) frequently provided in the tragedies of Euripides the turning-point in question.

Dramatic contests:

Tragedies were prevented in the Athenian theatre at certain annual festivals. At the principal festival held in the spring, the whole population assembled on a number of successive days in an open-air theatre accommodating thousands of spectators to witness a cycle of dramatic performances presented amid high civic splendour and religious ritual. On the practitioners of the dramatic art, therefore, rested a solemn responsibility. Competition was the order of the day and was not felt to be inconsistent with the religious dignity of the occasion. Before a tragedy could be performed at all, it had to pass the scrutiny of a selection board. In performance it competed with the work of two other chosen authors. The victory in the whole contest was awarded by the votes of a committee of judges who were influenced to some extent by the reactions of the audience. For the purposes of this contest, the work of

each author consisted of a group of four plays—three tragedies and a satyr play in lighter vein. Such were the basic conditions of the dramatist's art and within them was established a code of technique and convention.

"The encounters of man with more than man":

The origins of the art of drama lay-not only in the human instinct for narrative-and for impersonation but also in the instinct for the ritualistic expression and interpretation of the power of natural forces, the cycle of life and death, and the nexus of past, pre3ent and future. The elements of dance and song were essential to the nature of this art. Its prime function was the expression of the feelings and reasonings aroused by man's struggle with the eternal forces that appear to govern his life. Sophocles calls this struggle "the encounters of man with more than man*". These two characteristics—namely, the choric element and the religious note—survive throughout the great period of Greek tragedy. In the earliest plays of Aeschylus the strictly dramatic element is scanty; the

play is more or less a poem recited or sung by a chorus with one or two characters to personify its leading themes. Even with Euripides. the chorus is still the unifying and commenting interpreter of the drama.

The role of the chorus:

Sophocles stands midway between Euripides and Aeschylus in this respect. For him the dramatic action is vital and to a great extent realistic; but the chorus is also essential to the play both in its capacity as actor in the events of the drama and as presenter of its dominating theme in lyric terms. A subtle and interesting feature of his technique is the way in which the chorus, clearly described as "elders of Thebes", "people of Colonus", etc. bridge the footlights, as it were. between spectator and stage. The persons of the chorus and their participation in the acted events increase the vividness and urgency of the action. With them we, the audience,are citizens of Thebes, witnesses of the passion of Oedipus, the martyrdom of Antigone, etc. The conflict of these characters was not only to be fought out but had to

be fought out in public and submitted to the scrutiny and judgment of their fellowmen. Sometimes, indeed, this double function of the chorus; as actors and as commentators leads to a glaring inconsistency. The chorus •of Antigone, in their dramatic character, must express a submissive, if rather unenthusiastic, loyalty to King Creon, and are heard to rebuke Antigone as having gone to the farthest limit of daring and stumbled against the "enthroned law". But in the greater detachment of their lyric utterances they are instinctively aware that the truth of the situation, and of the tragedy, lies deeper than that, for it is here a question of two obstinate wills, each loyal to a principle good in itself, but each pressing that loyalty to the point at which it breaks against the other, and on both the disaster falls. Yet there is plausibility and a dramatic necessity in this convention.

The tragedy, whatever its subject, is the tragedy of all of us. We, like the chorus, are both in it and spectators of it. And while the tragedy is being

enacted, we identify ourselves now with this character and now with that—inconsistent, wavering mortals that we are. But the tragedy is not fully enacted and the story is not fully told until we have looked the whole matter squarely in the face and commented on it impartially. It is thus in the chorus as persons, and in their more impersonal lyric interludes, that we chiefly observe that religious approach to the dramatic theme which is an essential characteristic of Greek tragedy.

*The phrase occurs in the very opening scene of Oedipus Rex.

GREEK TRAGEDY AND RELIGION:

Prior knowledge of the story: Another consequence of this religious approach is noteworthy. The Greek dramatists could, no doubt, have written plays of ordinary life depicting the tragic aspects of human ambition or perversity against a contemporary background. But it was at that time taken for granted that the play should tell some already established story of the legendary and heroic past.

In fact, it was not necessary that the play should tell a complete and self-contained story. Since the audience was already aware of the main facts of the story, the dramatist could rapidly come to whatever situation in it he had selected for the exposition of his theme. Some element of narrative, of course, remained as well as much scope for originality in the design of the incidents within the selected field. But the attention of the audience was not chiefly to be held by the element of suspense or the desire to know what happened next. And this was the most fitting condition for an art-form which was to attract not a passing curiosity but a profound contemplation of eternal truths. On the

technical side, it gave the dramatist that powerful and subtle weapon of dramatic irony which Sophocles used with skill. Because of the use of this weapon, the audience could judge every speech and action of the play in the light of their prior knowledge of the situation. In other words, the audience all the time listened to a tragedy somewhat in the manner of a Christian audience of today listening to a play dealing with a Biblical theme with which it is already familiar. In this way the audience was better equipped to understand and to criticise the particular interpretation offered by the author and to be impressed by any out-of-the-way incident or a new emphasis in his treatment of the subject. It is also reasonable to suppose that part of the function of the drama was to keep alive the old stories. The younger members of the audience often found in the theatre their first introduction to those old stories presented in a clear and exciting manner.

As is generally the case in Greek tragedy, Oedipus the King is based on a Greek myth. The myth which underlies Sophocle's play is known as the "Theban Legend". The first question to be raised is: How did Sophocles bridge the gap

between the original myth and his own vision as embodied in the play? In other words, how did Sophocles appropriate the myth? Myth is thought to express the absolute truth because it narrates a sacred history that is a transhuman revelation which took place in the holy time of the beginnings. Being sacred, the myth becomes exemplary and, consequently, repeatable. For it serves as a model and by the same token, as a justification for all human actions. In other words, a myth is a true history of what came to pass at the beginning of time and one which provides the pattern of the human behaviour. In imitating the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythic hero, or simply by recounting their adventures, the man of an archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically reenters Great Time, the sacred time.

Myth, in this case, played the essential role in the formulation of consciousness in ancient Greece as it constituted a cosmological Weltanschaung corresponded to the rise of scientific thought in the sense of primitive knowledge which originated from labour as a means of mastering the world. At this early phase of human

civilisation man's primitive scientific thought – in the core of this mythical thinking was man's belief in the power of fate over man that deeply penetrated man's unconsciousness. And that is why myth could be interpreted as the major component of unconsciousness. Consequently, belief in fate be considered as a major obstacle to consciousness.

In this sense, Oedipus the King can be regarded as Sophocles' response to the myth or, in broader terms, as the response of tragedy to unconsciousness as incorporated in the myth, by presenting man's confrontation with fate. In this sense, the pivotal theme of Oedipus the King can be interpreted as that of transcendence, that is, the possibility of surpassing the existing social order as an illusion. This is made clear in the words of the Chorus at the end of the play:

> Show me the man whose happiness
> was anything more than illusion.
> Followed by disillusion.

The illusory nature of the quest for transcendence as presented by Sophocles in Oedipus the King is emphasized through the conflict between consciousness (i.e. logos and

unconsciousness i.e. mythos), or free will and determinism incorporated in fate. This conflict is dramatically represented by the character's challenge of fate as mediated by the oracle, Oedipus, and before him Lauis and Jocasta. This conflict is settled with the triumph of unconsciousness over consciousness, that is, triumph of myth and fate over logos and free will. This solution of the conflict is a clear denial of man's ability to master his fate. It also demonstrates the unity of nature and society through the myth. This is generally exemplified in Greek poetry and more particularly in Greek tragedy:

The first religious poet, Hesiod, states in simple form his conviction that the course of Nature is anything but careless of right and wrong. He tells us that men do justice, and do not go aside from the straight path of right, their city flourishes, and they are free from war and famine. For them earth brings forth food in plenty, and on the hills the oak bears acorns at the top and bees in the middle. This is a clear statement that there is a sympathetic relation between human conduct and the behaviour of Nature: if man keeps straight upon his path of right, then her orderly

processes of seedtime and harvest will go forward too, and reward justice with the fruits of the earth. So, on the other hand, when a sin has been committed – such as the unconscious incest of Oedipus – all Nature is poisoned by the offence of man.

The unity of nature and society is governed by the natural law of fate. The violation of this natural law, however, is a moral issue which deserves a moral punishment. Though the violation is moral, it has natural consequences, that is physical as well as environmental results, e.g. Oedipus' blinding and Jocasta's suicide, on one hand, and barrenness and sickness in the town. Expulsion from society in fourth-century Athens was reserved for three crimes, murder, sacrilege and incest. These social and religious attitudes are fundamental too, are indeed given their most concentrated expression in, the long concluding section of the play (King Oedipus). The triumph of this last section is that each of them (Jocasta) and Oedipus) asserts their own personal, individual moral feelings …Sophocles' Oedipus needs not external moral evaluation of his acts: he is both judge and executioner.

The fact remains that what Sophocles is so careful to assert through his tragedy is the unified idea of determinism and free will in relation to fate.

Sophocles-Life And Works

Life (496—406 B.C)

Witness to great events:

Sophocles was a native of Colonus on the outskirts of Athens. He was born in 496 B.C. and died in 406 B.C. Living through most of the fifth century B.C., he was a witness to such important events as the Persian invasions of Greece and their defeat, the growth of Athens as an imperial power and a centre of culture, and the long and ruinous war with Sparta and her allies. His father Sophillus was the owner of an arms factory. Sophocles took no active part in politics and had no special military gifts. In spite of that he was twice elected “Strategus” (a sort of military commander), and after the Sicilian disaster of 413 B.C., he was made one of the “Probouloi” (or special commissioners), no doubt by reason of his general fame and popularity.

A lovable person:

Sophocles was a man of great charm, handsome, and well-to-do. Herodotus was one of his friends. Sophocles is regarded as having been a figure of ideal serenity and success. His life lay through the period of his country's highest prosperity. He was loved by everybody wherever he went. After his death he was worshipped as a hero. Aristophanes sums up his character in the words: "contented among the living, contented among the dead." He was always comfortable in Athens and had no temptation to seek his fortune at foreign courts as some of his colleagues did.

His contribution to Greek Tragedy:

Sophocles was an innovator in tragedy. He introduced the third actor; he introduced or at least greatly developed stage scenery ; he increased the number of chorus from twelve to fifteen ; and he abandoned the practice of connected tetralogies, making each play an artistic whole in itself. In his tragedies man's will plays a greater, and that of the gods a lesser, part than in those of Aeschylus. The course of his dramas is determined by the characters of the protagonists, the influence they undergo, the penalties they

suffer not by external incidents. Sophocles is no philosopher or speculator on the deeper problems of life; he accepts the conventional religion without criticism. His principal characters, though subject to human defects, are in a general way heroic and actuated by lofty motives. This is perhaps what Sophocles - meant by saying that he portrayed people as they ought to be while Euripides portrayed them as they were. Among his notable achievements are his great heroines, Antigone and Electra, in whom he depicts a combination of womanly gentleness and superb courage. His lyrics form a less important element in the plays than do those of Aeschylus; they combine charm with grandeur, without the mystery and terror of Aeschylus, or the “descriptive embroidery” of Euripides. The dialogue of Sophocles is dignified, appropriate to his idealised characters. The whole is marked by a powerful simplicity. According to his own account of his poetic development, he abandoned the magniloquence of Aeschylus and passed to his own harsh and artificial period of style (as exemplified perhaps in the Electra), and finally attained greater ease and simplicity.

Disaster without justification:

The Aeschylean universe is governed by moral laws, a violation of which is sure to bring disaster. In the world of Sophocles wrong-doing does indeed lead to its punishment, but disaster may come without justification and, at the most, with contributory negligence. Oedipus would not have done what he did, had he been a little more cautious and a little less self-confident. But this does not explain why, in a given case, a comparatively small fault should have such consequences. Still less does it explain why a woman like Deianeira should be at one moment a loving, anxious but hopeful wife, and at the next a hanging corpse. Does Sophocles have any comfort to offer to his readers or any advice to give?

Need of piety and wisdom:

Of this pattern, which mankind describes as the will of the gods, a great part is piety and purity. Accordingly, no poet speaks more than Sophocles of the need for reverence. But part of it lies beyond morality and is incalculable. Accordingly, no poet speaks so much as Sophocles of the need for wisdom. A man should know what he is ; he should

know his place in the world ; he should be able to take the wide view, with a due sense of proportion-unlike Creon in Antigone, who could see only that Polynices was a dead traitor, and could not see the more important fact that he was a dead man.

The dignity of being a man:

But no piety and no wisdom can protect a man against the blows of fate. And as for consolation, the suffering of Oedipus is beyond any possibility of relief. And yet Sophocles does have something to offer to his readers. He certainly offers no hope of a better world. But the grave beauty and dignity of his plays surely reflect the beauty and dignity that he found in human life. Man may be an insubstantial shade; but for all that, Sophocles leaves us with a great sense of the dignity of being a man. To be great and noble of soul is everything. Ajax faces death proudly. Antigone knows that she has done her duty and will be welcomed by her kin among the dead. As for Oedipus, his essential greatness is beyond any shadow of doubt.

The "complex" Sophoclean hero:

The Sophoclean hero is complex, not single-minded; he must, therefore, be seen from more than one point of view. We cannot understand Creon's tragedy or the tragedy to a diversity of people, and how different people behave to them Oedipus's consideration for his people, his courtesy to Creon and Teiresias which quickly passes to suspicion and rage, Creon's attitude to Haemon--these are not decorations or improvements it is essential to the tragedy that we should know our heroes in this light. . Similarly the Watchman's reluctance to face Creon is important as a side-light on the King's character, not only subcomic relief. This is not “progress", it is plain logic. This art of “undercutting” is used in Oedipus Rex as it has rarely been used since, when the supreme eminence of Oedipus is shown by the collapse of Jocasta's bold scepticism.

The need for the third actor:

Here most probably we have the origin of the third actor, but there was an accessory cause and a development. No catastrophe can be self-contained; others besides the sinner are involved. To Aeschylus this necessary aspect of tragedy presented itself as a lienear movement, hence the

trilogy; either the tragic event is the result of inherited character, or it leaves a legacy of tragedy for the next generation. To Sophocles this idea presents itself in a complex way, as one immediate situation which involves others at once. The vanity of Ajax ruins Ajax, but it also endangers his sailors, Creon's stubbornness threatens the Watchman and destroys Antigone before it involves Creon himself through Haemon and Eurydice. Thus again more actors are wanted. Finally, Sophocles began to lay more weight on the tragic inter-working of circumstance with character, so that the situation becomes more complex. The more complex situation brings the use of the three actors to its highest degree of fluidity.

In the two great discovery scenes of Oedipus Rex, the situation is not presented practically complete before our eyes ; not only does it grow but it grows in opposite directions for the two chief actors. The conversation between Oedipus and the Corinthian messenger is itself painfully dramatic, but the addition of Jocasta more than doubles the power of the scene. The progress of Jocasta from hope, through confidence, to frozen horror, and the progress of

Oedipus from terror to a sublime resolution and assurance, the two connected by the commonplace cheerfulness of the Corinthians make a really excellent combination of cross-rhythms.

His development as a dramatist:

Sophocles wrote pretty continuously for sixty years and he is believed to have given his own account of his development. Perhaps, the most important change due to Sophocles took place in what the Greeks called the economy of the drama. Sophocles worked as a conscious artist improving details, demanding more and smoother tools, and making up, by skilful construction, tactful scenic arrangement, and entire avoidance of exaggeration or grotesqueness, for his inability to walk quite so near the heavens as his great predecessor, Aeschylus. The stern and artificial period is best represented by the play, Electra. This play is artificial in a good sense through skill of plot, its clear characterisation, and its uniform good writing. It is also artificial in a bad sense. For instance, in the messenger's speech where all that is wanted is a false report of the death of Orestes, the dramatist has inserted a

brilliant, lengthy, and quite undramatic description of the Pythian Games. This play is also stern because of some coldness and a natural taste for severity and dislike of sentiment.

A certain bluntness of moral imagination:

There is in Sophocles a lack of speculative freedom. There is also in him a certain bluntness of moral imagination which leads, for instance, to one structural defect in Oedipus Rex. That piece is a marvel of construction ; every detail follows naturally, and yet every detail depends on the characters being exactly what they were, and makes us understand them. The one flaw, perhaps, is in Teiresias. That aged prophet comes to the King absolutely determined not to tell the secret which he has kept for sixteen years, and then tells it. Why ? He tells it because of his uncontrollable anger at having been insulted by the King. An aged prophet, who does that, is a disgrace to his profession ; but Sophocles does not seem to feel it.

Worthy of admiration:

Sophocles is subject to a certain conventional idealism. He lacks the elemental fire of Aeschylus, the speculative

courage and subtle sympathy of Euripides. Otherwise there can be nothing but admiration for him. Plot, characters, and atmosphere are dignified and Homeric ; his analysis, as far as it goes, is wonderfully sure and true ; his language is a marvel of subtle power ; his lyrics are uniformally skilful and fine. Sophocles also shows at times one high power which only a few of the world's poets share with him. He feels, as Wordsworth does, the majesty of order and well-being ; he sees the greatness of God, as it were, in the untroubled things of life. Few poets, besides him, could have shaped the great ode in Antigone upon the rise of man or the description in Ajax of the “Give and Take” in Nature. And even in the famous verdict of despair which he pronounces upon life in Oedipus at Colonus, there is a certain depth of calm feeling, unfretted by any movement of mere intellect.

Conclusion:

A critic writes : “Sophocles was a prolific writer and one highly acclaimed during his own life-time. Several technical innovations in theatrical arts are attributed to him, including the introduction of scene-painting and the

use of scenes involving three speaking parts ; and he is said to have written a treatise on his art. He found time as well to hold several high public offices and to serve as a priest of a minor healing-god. He was honoured by those who knew him for his charm and his good temper. Aristotle regards Oedipus the King as a masterpiece and uses it throughout his Poetics lies in the link between philosophy and tragedy, or, in Aristotle's own philosophy, the keywords to this link are 'essence' and 'imitation'.

The Plays Of Sophocles:

“ .١ OEDIPUS REX” (OR, “OEDIPUS TYRANNUS(”

Synopsis:

Oedipus Rex, also called Oedipus Tyrannus, is regarded by many as Sophocles's masterpiece. It was particularly admired by Aristotle in the Poetics. It deals with that portion of the story of Oedipus in which he is the king of Thebes and husband of Jocasta, when the discovery that he is the son and murderer of Liaus and son of Jocasta leads him to blind himself, and Jocasta to take her own life. This play illustrates the Greek conception of human impotence in the presence of destiny which may hurl a man,

for no fault of his own, from the height of prosperity to a terrible misery. A striking feature of the play is the eagerness with which Oedipus himself pursues the inquiry that is to bring about his ruin. He learns from the Delphic oracle that a plague which has fallen on the city of Thebes is due to the presence there of the murderer of King Laius. Oedipus calls upon all those who have any knowledge of the matter to come forward. Teiresias, the blind prophet, is first summoned. He knows the dreadful truth but at first refuses to disclose it. Accused by Oedipus of plotting with Creon against him, he partly reveals the facts: it was Oedipus himself who murdered Laius. Still utterly unsuspicious of his own guilt, Oedipus next turns against Creon whom he charges with trying to oust him from the kingship. He is deeply disturbed by Jocasta's description of the scene of Laius's death and of the persons who were accompanying Laius at that time. Jocasta's description tallies with the circumstances of a fight in which Oedipus had once killed a man. On one point light now comes to him: he is not, as he is supposed to be, the son of Polybus, the King of Corinth.

A messenger comes from Corinth to announce the death of Polybus and the election of Oedipus to succeed him. Oedipus, dreading the oracle that he is to marry his own mother, shrinks from returning to Corinth but the messenger reveals that he himself had brought the infant Oedipus, given to him by a shepherd of Mt. Cithaeron, to Polybus and Merope. Whose son then is he? An old shepherd, who has been sent for, as the only survivor present at the death of Laius, now completes the disclosure. It was he who had carried the infant Oedipus, son of Laius and Jocasta, to Mt. Cithaeron and had from pity given it to the Corinthian. Oedipus rushes into the palace, to find that Jocasta has hanged herself, and he then blinds himself.

Critical comments:

The outstanding feature of this play is its skilful construction. From the very first scene the action moves straight and undistracted towards the catastrophe. The interest turns, not on what the characters do but on their finding out what they have done, and one of the most powerful scenes is made by the husband and the wife deliberately and painfully confessing to each other certain

dark events of their lives which they had hitherto kept concealed. The plot has the immense advantage of providing a deed in the past-unintentional murder of the father and equally unintentional marriage with the mother--which explains the hero's self-horror without making him lose our sympathies. And, as a matter of fact, the character of Oedipus, his determination to have the truth at any cost, his utter disregard of his own suffering, is heroic in itself and comes naturally from the plot. Jocasta's was difficult to portray; the mere fact of her being twice as old as her husband was an awkwardness but there is a stately sadness, a power of quiet authority, and a certain stern outlook on life which seem to belong to a woman of hard experiences.

Of course, there are glaring improbabilities about the original story but, as Aristotle points out, they fall outside the action of the play. In the action everything is natural except the very end. Why does Oedipus blind himself? Jocasta realises that she must die, and she hangs herself. Oedipus himself meant to kill her if she had not anticipated him. Why did he not follow her? Any free composition would

have made him do so; but Sophocles was bound by the original story, and the original story required Oedipus to remain alive and blind a long time afterwards. As a mere piece of technique, this play deserves the position given to it by Aristotle as being a typical example of the highest Greek tragedy.

There is deep truth of emotion and high thought. There is a wonderful grasp of character, and an equally wonderful imaginative power. For pure dramatic strength and skill, there are few things in any drama so profoundly tragic as the silent exit of Jocasta, when she alone sees the end that is coming.

Oedipus Rex, produced by Sophocles in the maturity of his powers, is his masterpiece. Aristotle also regarded this play as Sophocles's best and he frequently referred to it as the perfect type of tragic composition. Its greatness lies in the combination of a faultlessly-constructed plot with the profoundest insight into human motive and circumstance. It is the story of the impact of a totally undeserved misfortune upon a man of no exceptional faults or virtues. It reveals, with a merciless sincerity, the pitfalls lying about the path

of a man into which those very unexceptional faults or virtues may at a touch overbalance him, at the bidding of some incalculable chance, and out of which he must raise himself by the greatness of his soul which alone makes him a match for the eternal powers. The story has its religious and anthropological implications. But the average reader is more interested in the more universal human issues of the drama. Oedipus is too complacent in his prosperity, too confident of his sufficiency, too ready to take offence or to impute blame when upset by the approach of trouble. Oedipus is unshrinking in the performance of a self-appointed unpleasant task, and he is unflinching in quest of the truth at whatever cost of terrible self-revelation. Oedipus is driven to the summit of passion by the agony of body and soul, and returns at last to humility and selfless resignation. This vast and living portrait of a man, surrounded by a group of subsidiary figures no less vital, has no equal in the Greek, or in any other theatre.

The Myth of Oedipus

Oedipus, son of Laius and Jocasta. Oedipus is one of the most important and famous figures in Greek mythology. He was the son of Laius, King of Thebes. When Amphion and Zethus* gained possession of Thebes, Laius had taken refuge with Pelops, but had repaid his kindness by kidnapping his son Chrysippus, thereby bringing a curse on his own family. Laius recovered his kingdom after the death of Amphion and Zethus, and married Jocasta, but was warned by Apollo that his own son by Jocasta would kill him. In order to escape death at the hands of his son, Laius had the child, Oedipus, exposed on Mt. Cithaeron with a spike driven through the child's feet. There the child was discovered by a shepherd who took it to Polybus, King of Corinth, and Merope his Queen, who brought up the child as their own son. Later, being taunted with being no true son of Polybus, Oedipus enquired of the Delphic Oracle about his parentage, but was only told that he would kill his own father and get married to his own mother. Thinking that this prophecy referred to Polybus and Merope, Oedipus determined never to see Corinth again. At a place where three roads met, he encountered Laius whom he did not

know, and was ordered to make way. A quarrel followed, in which Oedipus killed Laius, thus fulfilling the first part of the prophecy but without realising the identity of the man he had killed. He then went on to Thebes, which was at that time suffering great misfortunes at the hands of a monster called the Sphinx who asked people riddles and killed those who could not give the correct answers. As the monster's riddles could not be answered by anyone, all those entering the city were being killed by it. Creon, brother *Amphion and Zethus were sons of Antiope by Zeus On becoming rulers of Thebes, they built the walls of the city, Amphion using his musical powers to draw stones into their places. Amphion married Niobe, while Zethus married the nymph Thebe, whence was derived the name of Thebes. of Jocasta and regent of Thebes, offered the kingdom and Jocasta's hand to whoever should rid the country of the monster. Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx and thus became the King of Thebes and married Jocasta (his own mother) without knowing who she really was.

Oedipus blinded himself. Oedipus and Jocasta had two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, and two daughters, Ismene

and Antigone. At last in a time of famine and pestilence, the Oracle announced that these disasters could be averted only if the slayer of Laius were expelled from the city. Oedipus thereupon started a search for the man who had killed Laius. The result was to establish that he himself was Laius's son and also his murderer. On this discovery, Jocasta, finding that she had been married to her own son, hanged herself* while Oedipus blinded himself. Oedipus was removed from the throne and banished. Too

His two sons and how they died. Attended by his daughter Antigone, he wandered to Colonus in Attica, where he was protected by Theseus and where he met his end. According to another version, Oedipus remained shut up in Thebes. His sons having given him cause for displeasure, he put a curse on them that they should die by each other's hand. When they succeeded to the throne, on the deposition of Oedipus, they agreed to divide the inheritance, ruling in alternate years. But Eteocles, who ruled first, refused to make way for Polynices when his year of kingship ended. Polynices had spent his year of absence from Thebes at the court of Adrastus, King of Argos, and had married his

daughter. Adrastus now assembled an army to support the claims of his sonin-law. The army was headed by seven champions, the famous "Seven against Thebes". To each of the seven champions was allotted one of the gates of Thebes to attack, while Eteocles likewise entrusted a Theban warrior to defend each gate. The invading army suffered a heavy defeat. Eteocles engaged in a combat with his brother Polynices, and the two killed each other. Creon, now King of Thebes, ordered that the bodies of the enemies and particularly that of Polynices should be refused burial. (This was a grave punishment, for unless buried, the dead could not enter Hades, the kingdom of death).

The tragedy of Antigone, a daughter of Oedipus. What followed is variously told. One version is that given by Euripides in his play, the Suppliants. Another version is that Antigone, rebelling against Creon's decree, managed secretly to perform the rites of burial over her brother. For this she was placed alive by Creon's order in a sepulchre, even though she was betrothed to his son Haemon, and there she killed herself while Haemon stabbed himself beside her dead body. This is the version in the Antigone of

Sophocles. (According to yet another version, Antigone, detected in the act of cremating her brother's dead body at night, was handed over by Creon to Haemon to be killed. But Haemon hid her in a shepherd's hut and pretended that he had killed her. Later, their son, having come to Thebes for a festival, was recognised by a birthmark common to all his family. To escape from Creon's vengeance, Haemon and Antigone killed themselves or perhaps were saved by divine intervention).

Oedipus Rex, produced by Sophocles in the maturity of his powers, is his masterpiece. Aristotle also regarded this play as Sophocles's best and he frequently referred to it as the perfect type of tragic composition. Its greatness lies in the combination of a faultlessly-constructed plot with the profoundest insight into human motive and circumstance. It is the story of the impact of a totally undeserved misfortune upon a man of no exceptional faults or virtues. It reveals, with a merciless sincerity, the pitfalls lying about the path of a man into which those very unexceptional faults or virtues may at a touch overbalance him, at the bidding of some incalculable chance, and out of which he must raise

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A play about human greatness as well as about the insecurity of the human condition. Oedipus Rex is undoubtedly a play about the blindness of man and the desperate insecurity of the human condition. In a sense every man must grope in the dark as Oedipus gropes, not knowing who he is or what he has to suffer. We all live in a world of appearances which hide from us. dreadful realities which we know not of. But surely Oedipus Rex is also a play about human greatness. Oedipus is great, not because of a great worldly position but because of his inner strength. He has the strength to pursue the truth at whatever personal cost, and he has the strength to accept and endure it when found. “This horror is mine," he cries, “and none but I is

strong enough to bear it". Oedipus is great because he accepts the responsibility for all his acts, including those which are objectively most horrible, though subjectively innocent.

Oedipus, a symbol of the human intelligence. Oedipus is a kind of symbol of the human intelligence which cannot rest until it has solved all the riddles, even the last riddle to which the answer is that human happiness is built on an illusion. Sophocles does seem, in the last lines of the play, to generalize the case ; he does appear to suggest that in some sense Oedipus is every man and that every man is potentially Oedipus. In this matter Sophocles's view did not change. Whether this vision of man's condition (namely that all men living are but appearance or unsubstantial shadow) is true or false, it ought to be comprehensible to a generation which relishes the plays of Samuel Beckett. This view may not be a "message" but it certainly tends to an "enlargement of our sensibility".

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because the oracle laid upon us before birth the very curse which rested upon him. It may be that we were all destined to direct our first sexual impulses towards our mothers, and our first impulses of hatred and violence towards our fathers; our dreams convince us that we were.'

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CRITICAL COMMENTS ON PLOT DEVELOPMENT

The disclosure by the Corinthian shepherd. Then comes The Corinthian shepherd with what is, from his point of view, a great news. The arrival of the Corinthian shepherd is a purely accidental occurrence. The news brought by him, namely that Polybus has died not at the hands of his son but of old age and illness, revives Jocasta's scepticism regarding prophecies. The news is also a source of much comfort to Oedipus who has no further ground to fieel afraid of the possibility of killing his own father ; but the other half of the prophecy, namely that he would marry his own mother, still remains to perturb him. Jocasta tries to allay

the remaining part of her husband's fear also. Her philosophy is that man is ruled by chance and that there is no room for any prophecies. Men do marry their mothers sometimes, but only in dreams, says Jocasta. Oedipus, however, continues to feel apprehensive on this score. The Corinthian's disclosure that Oedipus is not the son of Polybus and Merope marks a further step in the development of the plot and carries the process of discovery a little further. The dramatic irony of this scene is also noteworthy. The Corinthian thinks that by his disclosure he is relieving Oedipus of a great fear (namely the fear of marrying Merope whom

he thinks to be his mother), but in actual fact this disclosure takes Oedipus further towards his doom Jocasta's discovery of the truth. The account given by the Corinthian of the circumstances in

which Oedipus as a child had been handed over to him comes as a great shock to Jocasta who can now see clearly her predicament. Jocasta now knows that Oedipus is her own son, and it is natural for her to try to spare Oedipus the agony which he will experience on

learning the truth. She entreats him not to pursue his investigation into his parentage, but he misunderstands her intention in making the entreaty. The misunderstanding on his part is another example of dramatic irony because we know that, far from being low - born, he has a royal background .

An example of tragic irony. The next song of the Chorus is remarkable for its tragic irony because, while the Chorus sings rapturously regarding Oedipus being the offspring of the union of some god with a mountain - nymph, actually Oedipus is moving rapidly and surely Towards his doom. The terrible disclosure by the Theban shepherd. Then come the disclosures which the Theban shepherd makes, though most unwillingly. This scene marks the climax of the main plot of the play. This is the scene of discovery, and of the reversal in the fortunes of Oedipus. What Jocasta had come to know from the statements of the Corinthian shepherd, Oedipus now comes to know from the answers given by the Theban shepherd to the questions put to him by the Corinthian and by Oedipus himself. Oedipus finds, to his indescribable grief and

humiliation, that both the prophecies made by the Delphic oracle have already proved to be true, in spite of his life -long efforts to prevent their fulfilment. This is, from Oedipus's point of view, the most horrible moment of his life.

The role of the Chorus:

The comment of the Chorus on Oedipus's sad fate. The song sung by the Chorus at this point is an appropriate commentary on the fate which Oedipus has met and it is also an apt summing up of human life in general. This song of the Chorus lends an even greater pathos to the situation that we have just witnessed. We have here a generalization made by the Chorus on the basis of the particular fate of Oedipus

The self-murder and the self-blinding. The real tragedy, however, comes with the next scene in which we are given an extremely painful account of Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus's selfblinding. There would hardly be a member of the audience witnessing this play in a theatre who can control his tears while listening to this sad account. The dramatist has done well in not presenting these two scenes

of horror (self-murder and self-blinding) on the stage and in conveying this information to us through the speech of a messenger. These scenes would have been intolerable on the stage and would have made the play unduly melodramatic.

The tragic effect of the messenger's speech is in itself very deep.Reasons for the self-blinding, and the desire for banishment. Then follows the conversation between Oedipus and the Chorus -

Leader. Oedipus appreciates the sympathy shown to him by the Chorus –

Leader in his misery. Oedipus's explanation as to why he has blinded himself is quite convincing, especially in view of the feeling of perplexity experienced by some

critics as to the reasons for Oedipus's self-blinding. After giving his reasons, Oedipus laments the course which his life has taken. In view of his own proclamation, made by him when he was totally ignorant of the facts, Oedipus would now like to be banished from Thebes.

The pathos of the last scene, and the re-assertion of Oedipus's greatness. The final scene is intensely pathetic, almost heart-rending. Oedipus's natural love for his

daughters finds a very touching expression. He laments the fact that his daughters will remain unwedded and unfruitful. His appeal to Creon that he be immediately exiled from Thebes is also very moving.

Creon appears, once again, a man moderate and balanced in his views and in his judgment. Creon would like to do nothing without consulting the Delphic oracle. He does not gloat over Oedipus's misfortunes. On the contrary, he shows a lot of consideration to Oedipus in providing an opportunity to him to have a meeting with his daughters. However, Creon does not show himself to be a weak man. We see him asserting his authority as a King in refusing to grant Oedipus's request to be allowed to keep his daughters with him.

It has been said that this last scene comes as an anti-climax, because Oedipus is shown no longer to be an active force but as a purely passive person, almost a zero.

As against this there is the view that the last scene shows t he recovery of Oedipus, the reintegration of the hero, and the reconstitution of the dominating, dynamic, and intelligent figure of the opening scenes *.

II The opening scene (or, the prologue). The opening scene shows us a deputation of suppliants appealing to Oedipus for help against the plague. We see Oedipus, a grand figure towering godlike above the afflicted city. But in the background of this picture is our knowledge that he to whom they appeal is the cause of their plight, so that we at the same time see him as a doomed man. All the dramatic elements in the situation are presented there in a kind of tableau. The words spoken emphasize and point the moral of what we see with the eyes.

The element of suspense. Then we hear that Oedipus has already sent Creon to the oracle at Delphi to find out the cause of the plague, and is impatiently waiting for his return. The question at once arises in our minds as to what Apollo will say. Is Oedipus to learn the truth by this method ? Will Creon bring the terrible news ? So, when we hear that he is approaching, we wait excitedly for what he will say. The moment passes, and we see our knowledge being moved further away from Oedipus. We hear the story of Laius's murder being wrongly told to Oedipus. (By “we'' is meant the

original audience who, though they knew the story of Oedipus, had no idea how Sophocles was going to unfold it.)

The dramatic value of Oedipus's scenes with Teiresias and Creon. After Oedipus's proclamation** to the people of his resolve to search out the murderer of Laius, the coming of Teiresias is announced. Teiresias we know to be the true prophet, as soon as he speaks. The truth is on the brink of being told, we feel. We experience here the height of excitement. We see our own knowledge being put before the persons of the play and being rejected. We come as close to the revelation as it is possible to get, and yet it is still to be made. The scene is a triumph of dramatic understanding.

The most important persons in a play are not the dramatis personae but the audience. The dramatis personae are but instruments for satisfying the needs of the audience. We today are apt to find Oedipus's two scenes with Teiresias and Creon to be long - drawn and over - elaborated. The lengthy speech here gives us time to review and taste the full irony of Oedipus's position something that had a value for Sophocles's audience which it has not for us. For them it

intensified the impression of coming doom. We, knowing to start with, as they say, that Oedipus is doomed, may feel no emotional value in these scenes except that of suspense, the holding back of the inevitable moment through Oedipus being delayed in his discovery by suspecting the wrong person, following up a false clue. But for the Athenian spectators there was more in it than that, through these scenes they were not just waiting for his doom to come ; they were seeing it coming, seeing him going to meet it, helping it along; for he is behaving, or apparently behaving, as the man of hubris proverbially behaves, and hubris is in Greek story the sure precursor of ruin. This is the general effect. At the point when Jocasta comes between her husband and her brother, Oedipus is on the verge of the violent act which brings "the hubristic man to disaster, and the play marks the apparent crisis by raising the dialogue into music and singing Oedipus's essential inocence. Of course Oedipus is not guilty of hubris. Oedipus is

essentially innocent* The dramatist deliberately, obscures the thought of his innocence. He confuses the hearers' minds by setting them running on the familiar hubris

theme, so that the calamity acquires a seeming appropriateness, sufficient to diminish the immediate moral shock (the shock that an innocent man has been made to suffer). In the final effect, however, the contrast between this and the facts as otherwise shown increases enormously the pathos and irony of Oedipus's fate.

The revelation. The central scenes of the play contain the heart of the drama, the drama of the revelation. This drama extends over five hundred lines or so. The excitement increases, rather than diminishes, by being spread out. We have here a threefold revelation rising to a

climax. The incidents are manipulated with supreme dramatic skill. By the end of the first of these scenes Oedipus knows almost for certain that he is the killer of Laius. The dramatist's next step therefore is to reveal that Laius was Oedipus's father. If we leave out Teiresias, as Sophocles does henceforth, nobody in the world of the play knows that. One fact known by

one man (the Theban Shepherd) must be added to another fact known by another (the Corinthian messenger) before the revelation can come. Sophocles has made sure of the

coming of the first of these men through the one ray of hope in Oedipus's mind in regard to the identity of the man he killed. As, for the audience, the effect of Oedipus's learning that he had himself killed Laius is attained fully enough in this scene, the dramatist brings in the Corinthian first, in order that the coming of the Theban Shepherd may be the culmination of a new revelation, not a confirmation of the one whose effect we have already seen. By the time he arrives, Oedipus's interest has been shifted to coincide with ours. It is the interest of the audience that determines the way the action is developed, and the motives and acts of the dramatis personae must be directed accordingly. So Sophocles interrupts the orderly progress of events by forcing in here the coming of the messenger from Corinth, the only accidental occurrence in the play. It is really a pure coincidence that he should arrive at this juncture. His coming looks on the face of it like an answer to Jocasta's prayer to Apollo to grant peace to her husband -an ironical answer as of course we must know it must be.

Moral innocence of Oedipus. A suggestion is sometimes made that Oedipus should have taken every possible

precaution to avoid his fate. But the oracle's prediction was unconditional ; it did not say that if Oedipus did such and such a thing he would kill his father and marry his mother. The oracle simply said that Oedipus would kill his father and marry his mother. What an oracle said, was bound to happen. Oedipus does what he can to evade his fate : he resolves never to see his (supposed) parents again. But it is quite certain from the first that his best efforts would be unavailing. What should be emphasized is Oedipus's essential moral innocence.

Oedipus as a tragic hero:

Oedipus, no puppet but a free agent. If Oedipus is the innocent victim of a doom which he cannot avoid, is he a mere puppet ? Is the whole play a "tragedy of destiny" which denies human freedom ? Such a view would be wrong, too. Sophocles did not intend that we should treat Oedipus as a puppet and not a free agent. Neither in Homer nor in Sophocles does divine foreknowledge of certain events imply that all human actions are predetermined . The Messenger* in the present play emphatically distinguishes Oedipus's self-blinding as voluntary and self - chosen from the

involuntary parricide and incest. Certain of Oedipus's actions were fate - bound ; but everything that he does on the stage from first to last he does as a free agent .

OJE Even the major sins not fate bound. Even in calling the parricide and the incest fate - bound we perhaps go too far. The average citizen of Sophocles's day would not perhaps have thought so. As has been said, the gods know the future but they do not order it. This view

may not satisfy the analytical philosopher, but it seems to have satisfied the ordinary man at all periods.

The chorus, fellow-citizens desperately concerned in the awful happenings, are closely tied to the action and their moods move swiftly with the march of events. Bewildered and apprehensive, they have little respite for calm reflection or reasoned judgment, and even their final words seem only to deepen the hopeless gloom. The moral they would draw for us is implied rather than stated in their moods of apprehension lest divine law should after all be found wanting, and a lurking spirit of defiance be justified by the event. This worst calamity at least is averted.

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The opening scene shows us a deputation of suppliants appealing to Oedipus for help against the plague. We see Oedipus, a grand figure towering godlike above the afflicted city. But in the background of this picture is our knowledge that he to whom they appeal is the cause of their plight, so that we at the same time see him as a doomed man. All the dramatic elements in the situation are presented there in a kind of tableau. The words spoken emphasize and point the moral of what we see with the eyes.

The element of suspense:

Then we hear that Oedipus has already sent Creon to the oracle at Delphi to find out the cause of the plague, and is impatiently waiting for his return. The question at once arises in our minds as to what Apollo will say. Is Oedipus to learn the truth by this method ? Will Creon bring the terrible news ? So, when we hear that he is approaching, we wait excitedly for what he will say. The moment passes, and we see our knowledge being moved further away from Oedipus. We hear the story of Laius's murder being wrongly told to Oedipus. (By “we'' is meant the original audience who, though they knew the story of Oedipus, had no idea how Sophocles was going to unfold it.) The dramatic value of Oedipus's scenes with Teiresias and Creon. After Oedipus's proclamation** to the people of his resolve to search out the murderer of Laius, the coming of Teiresias is announced. Teiresias we know to be the true prophet, as soon as he speaks. The truth is on the brink of being told, we feel. We experience here the height of excitement. We see our own knowledge being put before the persons of the play and being rejected. We come as close to the revelation as it is possible to get, and yet it is still to be made. The scene is a

triumph of dramatic understanding. The most important persons in a play are not the dramatis personae but the audience.

The dramatis personae are but instruments for satisfying the needs of the audience. We today are apt to find Oedipus's two scenes with Teiresias and Creon to be long - drawn and over - elaborated. The lengthy speech here gives us time to review and taste the full irony of Oedipus's position something that had a value for Sophocles's audience which it has not for us. For them it
intensified the impression of coming doom. We, knowing to start with, as they say, that Oedipus is doomed, may feel no emotional value in these scenes except that of suspense, the holding back of the inevitable moment through Oedipus being delayed in his discovery by suspecting the wrong person, following up a false clue.

But for the Athenian spectators there was more in it than that, through these scenes they were not just waiting for his doom to come; they were seeing it coming, seeing him going to meet it, helping it along; for he is behaving, or apparently behaving, as the man of hubris proverbially

behaves, and hubris is in Greek story the sure precursor of ruin. This is the general effect. At the point when Jocasta comes between her husband and her brother, Oedipus is on the verge of the violent act which brings "the hubristic man to disaster, and the play marks the apparent crisis by raising the dialogue into music and singing Oedipus's essential innocence.

Of course Oedipus is not guilty of hubris. Oedipus is essentially innocent* The dramatist deliberately, obscures the thought of his innocence. He confuses the hearers' minds by setting them running on the familiar hubris theme, so that the calamity acquires a seeming appropriateness, sufficient to diminish the immediate moral shock (the shock that an innocent man has been made to suffer). In the final effect, however, the contrast between this and the facts as otherwise shown increases enormously the pathos and irony of Oedipus's fate.

The revelation:

The central scenes of the play contain the heart of the drama, the drama of the revelation. This drama extends

over five hundred lines or so. The excitement increases, rather than diminishes, by being spread out. We have here a threefold revelation rising to a climax. The incidents are manipulated with supreme dramatic skill. By the end of the first of these scenes Oedipus knows almost for certain that he is the killer of Laius. The dramatist's next step therefore is to reveal that Laius was Oedipus's father. If we leave out Teiresias, as Sophocles does henceforth, nobody in the world of the play knows that. One fact known by one man (the Theban Shepherd) must be added to another fact known by another (the Corinthian messenger) before the revelation can come. Sophocles has made sure of the coming of the first of these men through the one ray of hope in Oedipus's mind in regard to the identity of the man he killed. As, for the audience, the effect of Oedipus's learning that he had himself killed Laius is attained fully enough in this scene, the dramatist brings in the Corinthian first, in order that the coming of the Theban Shepherd may be the culmination of a new revelation, not a confirmation of the one whose effect we have already seen. By the time he arrives, Oedipus's interest has been shifted to coincide with

ours. It is the interest of the audience that determines the way the action is developed, and the motives and acts of the dramatis personae must be directed accordingly.

So Sophocles interrupts the orderly progress of events by forcing in here the coming of the messenger from Corinth, the only accidental occurrence in the play. It is really a pure coincidence that he should arrive at this juncture. His coming looks on the face of it like an answer to Jocasta's prayer to Apollo to grant peace to her husband - an ironical answer as of course we must know it must be.

Moral innocence of Oedipus:

A suggestion is sometimes made that Oedipus should have taken every possible precaution to avoid his fate. But the oracle's prediction was unconditional ; it did not say that if Oedipus did such and such a thing he would kill his father and marry his mother. The oracle simply said that Oedipus would kill his father and marry his mother. What an oracle said, was bound to happen. Oedipus does what he can to evade his fate: he resolves never to see his (supposed) parents again. But it is quite certain from the first that his best efforts

Oedipus, no puppet but a free agent:

If Oedipus is the innocent victim of a doom which he cannot avoid, is he a mere puppet ? Is the whole play a "tragedy of destiny" which denies human freedom ? Such a view would be wrong, too. Sophocles did not intend that we should treat Oedipus as a puppet and not a free agent. Neither in Homer nor in Sophocles does divine foreknowledge of certain events imply that all human actions are predetermined. The Messenger* in the present play emphatically distinguishes Oedipus's self-blinding as voluntary and self - chosen from the involuntary parricide and incest. Certain of Oedipus's actions were fate - bound ; but everything that he does on the stage from first to last he does as a free agent .

Even the major sins not fate bound. Even in calling the parricide and the incest fate - bound we perhaps go too far. The average citizen of Sophocles's day would not perhaps have thought so. As has been said, the gods know the future but they do not order it. This view may not satisfy the analytical philosopher, but it seems to have satisfied the ordinary man at all periods.

2. OEDIPUS AT COLONUS

Synopsis:

Oedipus, blind and banished, has wandered, attended by his daughter Antigone, to Colonus, a dominion of Attica. He is warned by the inhabitants to depart but, having learnt from an oracle that this is the spot where he is to die, refuses to go. An appeal is made to Theseus, King of Athens. The King assures Oedipus of his protection and of a burial-place on Attic soil; thereby his spirit will be a protection to Athens. Ismene joins Oedipus and tells him of the dispute between his sons Eteocles and Polynices for the throne of Thebes. The news makes Oedipus extremely angry with his sons. Creon arrives to seize Oedipus. Ismene and Antigone are carried off and Creon is about to seize Oedipus himself when Theseus intervenes, rescuing Oedipus and both the maidens, Ismene and Antigone. Meanwhile Polynices has arrived and, with expressions of repentance, asks for his father's favour in his struggle with his brother Eteocles. Oedipus scolds him and invokes on his two sons the curse that they would die by each other's hand. Peals of thunder warn Oedipus that his hour is at hand. He blesses his

daughters; withdraws to a lonely spot; and, in the presence of Theisus alone, is borne away to the gods.

Critical comments:

Oedipus at Colonus is a play of the patriotic-archaeological type. Oedipus learns after his long wanderings in the company of his daughter, Antigone, that his dead body will remain supernaturally pure and will be a divine protection for the country possessing it. Consequently, the Thebans intend to capture him, keep him close to their border till he dies, and then keep control of his grave. Oedipus has in the meantime reached Colonus, in Attica, where he knows that he is doomed to die. This is the only play in which Sophocles has practically dispensed with a plot, and the experiment produces some of his very highest work. However, a mere situation could not be made to fill a whole play. Sophocles had to insert the episodes of Creon and Polynices, and to make the first exciting by a futile attempt to kidnap the princesses, the second by the utterance of the father's curse. The real appeal of the play is to the burning, half-desperate patriotism of the end of the war time. The glory of Athens, the beauty of the spring and

the nightingales at Colonus, the holy Acropolis which can never be conquered, represent the modern ideals of that patriotism; the legendary root of it is given in the figure of Theseus, the law-abiding humane, and religious King; in the eternal reward won by the bold generosity of Athens; in the rejection of Argos and the curse laid for ever on turbulent and cruel Thebes. The spiritual majesty of Oedipus at the end is among the great things of Greek poetry; and the rather harsh contrast, which it offers with the rage of the curse-scene, could perhaps be made grand by sympathetic. acting. Though not one of the most characteristic of Sophocles's plays, it is perhaps the most intimate and personal of them.

Exquisite are the following lines of Oedipus to Theseus : “Fair Aigeus' son, only to gods in heaven Comes no old age nor death of anything ; All else is turmoiled by our master Time. The earth's strength fades and manhood's glory fades, Faith dies, and unfaith blossoms like a flower. And who shall find in the open streets of men Or secret places of his own heart's love One wind blow true for ever”؟

ANTIGONE

Synposis:

Creon, ruler of Thebes, has forbidden the burial of the body of Polynices. Anyone disobeying this command will suffer the penalty of death. Antigone makes up her mind to defy the outrageous command of the King and perform the funeral rites for her brother. She is caught doing this and brought before the indignant King. She defends her action as being in accordance with the higher laws of the gods. Creon, unrelenting, condemns her to be shut alive in a cave without food or water and allowed to die. Her sister, Ismene, who has refused to share in her defiant act, now claims a share in her guilt and in her penalty, but is treated by Creon as insane. Haemon, the son of Creon, who is betrothed to Antigone, pleads in vain with Creon. He goes out, warning his father that he will die with her.

The prophet Teiresias threatens Creon with the fearful consequences of his violation of the divine laws. Creon, at last moved, sets out hurriedly for the cave where Antigone had been imprisoned. He finds Haemon clasping her dead body, for Antigone has hanged herself. Haemon attacks Creon with a sword but misses him and then kills himself.

Creon returns to the palace to lid that his wife Eurydice has taken her own life in despair.

Critical comments.

Antigone is perhaps the most celebrated drama in Greek literature. The plot is built on the eternally interesting idea of martyrdom, the devotion to a higher unseen law, resulting in revolt against and destruction by the lower visible law. Apart from the beauty of detail, one of the marks of daring genius in this play is Antigone's vagueness about the motive or principle of her action ; it is because her guilty brother's cause was just, or because death is enough to wipe away all offences, or because it is not her nature to join in hating though she is ready to join in loving, or because an unburied corpse offends the gods, or because her own heart is really with the dead and she wishes to die. In one passage she explains, in a helpless and false way, that she only buried him because he was her brother and that she would not have buried her husband or son. Another wonderful touch is Antigone's inability to see the glory of her death: she is only a weak girl cruelly punished

for a thing which she was bound to do. She thinks that the almost religious admiration of the elders is mockery.

Creon also is subtly drawn. He is not a mönster though he has to act like one. He has staked his whole authority upon his command. Finding it disobeyed he has taken a position from which it is almost impossible to retreat. Then it appears that his niece Antigone is the culprit. It is hard for him to withdraw his command; and she gives him not the slightest excuse for doing so. She defies him openly and contemptuously. Ismene, bold in the face of a real crisis, joins her sister. Creon's own son, Haemon, at first moderate, soon becomes insubordinate and violent.

Creon seems to be searching for a loophole to escape. After Haemon leaves him, he cries in desperation that he would stick to his decision. Both sisters must die! "Both"! say the chorus, "You never spoke of Ismene !" "Did I not ?" he answers with visible relief, "No, no, ... was only Antigone !" And even on her he will not do the irreparable. With the obvious wish to get breathing time he orders her to be shut

in a cave without food or water. When he repents, it is too late.

II- Mystery and Morality Plays

Mystery Plays

History

Mystery Plays originated in the Middle Ages, during the twelfth century, from the lack of interest from the churchgoers in the typical church services and their ignorance of the Latin language. This problem prompted the elaboration of certain services. It began with subtle changes

to the services for religious holidays such as Easter and Good Friday, that involved bringing down the cross for all to see; and expanded to the Christmas service with the scene of Christ's birth in the manger. One of the first liturgical performances was *Quem Quaeritis* ("Whom Seek Ye") in 925 Citation? . As the theatricals became more popular they were moved out of the church to accommodate the growing audience. During the thirteenth century Mystery plays gained less support from religious figures due to their questionable religious values, they started to be performed in the vernacular and were starting to drift away from being performed in the

The traveling stage of a Mystery Play

church. Once this happened and the performances were free from the church the strong religious themes started to disappear. In 1210 A.D. there was a ban of Mystery Plays by Pope Innocent III, which caused the plays began to performed in small town guilds, this act officially cut ties between the plays and the church and they were exclusively performed by town-guilds. With an ever growing audience to please, the town-guilds found that a perfect opportunity to showcase their works with the introduction of the Corpus Christi festival, in 1311, that takes place 57 days after Easter. The performances were grouped together and consisted

of plays such as, Noah and the Flood, and The Creation of the World and the Fall of Adam. From these small groups came the four most prominent collections of mystery plays. The term “Mystery” did not come from our term and the way it is used in present day. It was derived from the Latin word ministerium, meaning an association of clergy from different religious groups. This was the term used to describe the guilds which performed these plays, which is why is was used to name to describe the actual plays being performed. By the time of the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the Reformation, in England, the Mystery plays started to die down and were replaced in popularity by Morality plays.

Characteristics

Mystery plays were dramatizations of both the Old and New Testament miracles. Another popular topic was Christ and his crucifixion and resurrection. In the beginning of the popularity of Mystery plays the parts in the performance were played by clergymen and other members of the church. During their peak, Mystery plays were moved out of the church and performed on wagons and moved about the different towns. Due to the separation from the church the plays tended to have more of sarcastic tone to them and sometimes even went as far as mocking priests and monks, the people who had a big part in the creation of the plays. Another

change that came with the separation of the church was the switch from clergymen as performers to members of guilds and craftsman. A huge aspect of Mystery plays was that they neglected to utilize the three unities; place, time, and action. Because of this the plays could represent any location or time and were not tied down by each story they were performing and could pose two time periods or locations together that are not cohesive. Also they did not limit their performances, they used technologies, such as trap doors and mechanisms to create the illusion of flying, to get the realest effect and please the audience.

One of the most widely known Mystery plays is *The Second Shepherd's Play*, which puts three shepherds at the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. It emphasizes the everyday life during the middle ages and juxtaposes the shepherd's story with that of Christ's, setting the secular and religious world side by side.

Some common Mystery Plays:

~ Birth of Jesus
~ The Wise Men
~ Flight into Egypt
~ The Second Shepherd's Play

Miracle plays

Engraving depicting a representation of the Mystery Play of Saint Clement of Metz in Metz during the medieval time. Original publication: 20 April 1850 in

Metz Immediate *source:*

http://oliviergoetz.canalblog.com/archives/2008/12/index.html

Miracle Plays, also called Saint's Plays, were plays dedicated to the lives of various saints, rather than Biblical events. Just like Mystery Plays the Miracle play originated to enhance the liturgical services, and were later separated from the church. They were switched to the English language, became less and less religious, and were performed in town festivals in the thirteenth century. Most Miracle plays are performed about either St. Nicholas or the Virgin Mary. The plays about St. Mary regularly involve her in the role of "deus ex machina" (god from the machine), there would usually be a problem that seems unsolvable and the characters call on the Virgin Mary to help. They were performed in Plain-an-gwarny (Cornish Medieval amphitheatre). During the sixteenth century there was a ban on Miracle Plays by King Henry VIII, some were destroyed, and after they soon began to fade away in popularity.

Morality Plays

Ulrike Folkerts (far right) as Death and Peter Simonischek (second from right) as Everyman performing in a dress rehearsal for Jedermann (1911), an adaptation by Hugo von Hofmannsthal of the 15th-century play Everyman, Salzburg, Austria, 2006. Josch—AFP/Getty Images

History

Morality plays stemmed from Mystery and Miracle plays. It is the last in the trilogy of

Vernacular drama. Typically, Morality plays tried to teach through a theatrical point of view. These plays were allegorical dramas that personified the moral values and abstract ideas to teach moral lessons. The plays were used to educate the masses on Christianity. It served better to learn when the information was presented in a theatrical fashion, as opposed to readings of the Bible. Moralities were popular during the fifteenth and sixteenth century in Medieval Europe as didactic, informative or educational, plays. "Quasi-professional groups of actors" (Britannica; Morality Play) generally performed these plays, building off of their public rapport. Morality plays are still around in the 21st century. Many schools still have their students perform these plays during the holiday's as a school pageant.The most common and famous play is *Everyman*, an English version of the Dutch Play about the inevitability of death (Britannic, Middle English). With the wealth gained from the Renaissance, the traveling theaters were not needed due to the building of permanent theaters and the emergence of professional actors. This new era put an end to the Medieval drama, but it served as a great beginning to what we call drama today.

Characteristics

Morality plays are the result of Christian symbolism. Due to their roots, they were quite serious in the beginning but as time wore on the seriousness began to give way, and they began to gain characteristics from popular farce. "They are the intermediate step between liturgical to professional secular drama" (Britannica), while still having elements of each. The characters within the play themselves personify different moral qualities depending on the moral that is being taught. They have a focus primarily on a hero (Protagonist) whose inner weaknesses become the main conflict. Generally, the weaknesses are drawn out and antagonized by the Seven Deadly Sins (Antagonist)

, that make the hero question not only himself but his standing with God. The Seven Deadly Sins for a point of reference are; Lust,Greed,

Everyman fighting Death

Gluttony, Envy, Anger, Pride and Sloth. Each Sin represents a different aspect that, as the Bible states, God will not forgive you for. Morality plays are based highly from a religious stand point in order to teach individuals about proper or true morals; right and wrong. To return back to the basic outline of a Morality play, the Hero then has the choice to take what he says to heart or strive for redemption and ask ” The Four Daughters of God” (Mercy, Justice, Temperance, and Truth) to aid in his quest. The plays could more than likely be performed in under ninety minutes.

Some common Morality Plays:

~ *The Castle of Perseverance* (c. 1425)

~ *Hickscorner*

Everyman

III- The text of Everyman

EVERYMAN. (John Skot, 1521-1537?)

[PDF version]

Note on the e-text: this Renascence Editions text is based on the edition by W.W. Greg, 1904. It was transcribed by Risa S. Bear. Formatting of the speakers has been modified for ease of reading.

Dedicated to Tom Stave.

Here begynneth a treatyse how y^{t} hye fader of heuen sendeth dethe to so-mon euery creature to come and gyue counte of theyr liues in this worlde and is in maner of a morall playe.

Pray you all gyue your audyence
And here this mater with reuerence
By fygure a morall playe
The somonynge of euery man called it is
That of our lyues and endynge shewes
How transytory we be all daye

This mater is wonders precyous
But the entent of it is more gracyous
And swete to bere awaye
The story sayth man in the begynnynge
Loke well and take good heed to the endynge
Be you neuer so gay
Ye thynke synne in the begynnynge full swete
Whiche in the ende causeth the soule to wepe
Whan the body lyeth in claye
Here shall you se how felawshyp and Iolyte
Bothe strengthe pleasure and beaute
Wyll fade from the as floure in maye
For ye shall here how our heuen kynge
Calleth euery man to a generall rekenynge
Gyue audyence and here what he doth saye.

God speketh.

I perceyue here in my maieste
How that all creatures be to me vnkynde
Lyuynge without drede in worldely prosperyte
Of ghostly syght the people be so blynde
Drowned in synne they know me not for theyr god
In worldely ryches is all theyr mynde
They fere not my ryghtwysnes the sharpe rood
My lawe that I shewed whan I for them dyed
They forgete clene and shedynge of my bloderede

I hanged bytwene two it can not be denyed
To gete them lyfe I suffred to be deed
I heled theyr fete with thornes hurt was my heed
I coulde do nomore than I dyde truely
And nowe I se the people do clene for sake me
They vse the seuen deedly synnes damphable
As pryde coueteyse wrathe and lechery
Now in the worlde be made commendable
And thus they leue of aungelles y^{e} heuenly company
Euery man lyueth so after his owne pleasure
And yet of theyr lyfe they be nothinge sure
I se the more that I then forbere
The worse they be fro yere to yere
All that lyueth appayreth faste
Therfore I wyll in all the haste
Haue a rekenynge of euery mannes persone
For and I leue the people thus alone
In theyr lyfe and wycked tempestes
Verly they wyll become moche worse than beestes
For now one wolde by enuy another vp ete
Charyte they do all clene forgete
I hoped well that euery man
In my glory shulde make his mansyon
And therto I had them all electe
But now I se lyke traytours deiecte

They thanke me not for y^{e} pleasure y^{t} to them ment
Nor yet for theyr beynge that I them haue lent
I profered the people grete multytude of mercy
And fewe there be that asketh it hertly
They be so combred with worldly ryches
That nedes on them I must do Iustyce
On euery man lyuynge without fere
Where arte thou deth thou myghty messengere

Dethe.

Almyghty god I am here at your wyll
Your commaundement to fulfyll.

God.

Go thou to euery man
And shewe hym in my name
A pylgrymage he must on him take
Which he in no wyse may escape
And that he brynge with him a sure rekenynge
Without delay or ony taryenge.

Dethe.

Lorde I wyll in the worlde go renne ouer all
And cruelly out searche bothe grete and small
Euery man wyll I beset that lyueth beestly
Out of goddes lawes and dredeth not foly
He that loueth rychesse I wyll stryke w^{t} my darte
His sight to blynde and for heuen to departe

Excepte that almes be his good frende
In hell for to dwell worlde without ende
Loo yonder I se Euery man walkynge
Full lytlell he thynketh on my comynge
His mynde is on flesshely lustes and his treasure
And grete payne it shall cause hym to endure
Before the lorde heuen kinge
Euery man stande styll whyder arte thou goynge
Thus gayly hast thou thy maker forgete.

Euery man.

Why askest thou
Woldest thou wete.

Dethe.

Ye syr I wyll shewe you
In grete haste I am sende to the
From god out of his mageste

Euery man.

What sente to me.

Dethe.

Ye certaynly.
Thoughe thou haue forgete hym here
He thynketh on the in the heauenly spere
As or we departe thou shalte knowe.

Euery man.

What desyreth god of me.

Dethe.

That shall I shewe the.
A rekenynge he wyll nedes haue
Without ony lenger respite.

Euery man.

To gyue a rekenynge longer layser I craue
This blynde mater troubleth my witte.

Dethe.

On the thou must take a longe Iourney
Therefore thy boke of counte w^{t} the thou brynge
For turne agayne thou can not by no waye
And loke thou be sure of thy rekenynge
For before god thou shalt answere and shewe
Thy many badde dedes and good but a fewe
How thou hast spente thy lyfe and in what wyse
Before the chefe lorde of paradyse
Haue I do we were in that waye
For wete thou well y^{u} shalt make none attournay.

Euery man.

Full vnredy I am suche rekenynge to gyue
I knowe the not what messenger arte thou.

Dethe.

I am dethe that no man dredeth
For euery man I rest and no man spareth
For it is gods commaundement

That all to me shold be obedyent.

Euery man.

O deth thou comest whan I had y^{e} least in mynde
In thy power it lyeth me to saue
Yet of my good wyl I gyue y^{e} yf thou wyl be kynde
Ye a thousand pound shalte thou haue
And dyffere this mater tyll an other daye

Dethe.

Euery man it may not be by no waye
I set not by golde syluer nor rychesse
Nor by pope emperour kynge duke ne prynces
For and I wolde receyue gyftes grete
All the worlde I myght gete
But my custome is clene contrary
I gyue the no respyte come hens and not tary.

Euery man.

Alas shall I haue no lenger respyte
I may saye deth geueth no warnynge
To thynke on the it maketh my herte seke
For all vnredy is my boke of rekenynge
But .xii. yere and I myght haue a bydynge
My countynge boke I wolde make so clere
That my rekenynge I sholde not nede to fere
Wherefore deth I praye the for goddes mercy
Spare me tyll I be prouyded of remedy.

Dethe.

The auayleth not to crye wepe and praye
But hast the lyghtly that y^{u} were gone y^{e} Iournaye
And preue thy frendes yf thou can
For wete thou well the tyde abydeth no man
And in the worlde eche lyuynge creature
For Adams synne must dye of nature.

Euery man.

Dethe yf I sholde this pylgrymage take
And my rekenynge suerly make
Shewe me for saynt charyte
Sholde I not come agayne shortly.

Dethe.

No euery man and thou be ones there
Thou mayst neuer more come here
Trust me veryly.

Euery man.

O gracyous god in the hye seat celestyall
Haue mercy on me in this moost nede
Shall I haue no company fro this vale terestryall
Of myne acqueynce that way me to lede.

Dethe.

Ye yf ony be so hardy
That wolde go with the and bere the company
Hye the that y^{u} were gone to goddes magnyfycence

Thy rekenynge to gyue before his presence.
What weenest thou thy lyue is gyuen the
And thy worldely goodes also.

Euery man.

I had wende so verelye.

Dethe.

Nay nay it was but lende the
For as soone as thou arte go
Another a whyle shall haue it and than go ther fro
Euen as thou hast done
Euery man y^{u} arte made thou hast thy wyttes fyue
And here on erthe wyll not amende thy lyue
For sodeynly I do come.

Euery man.

O wretched caytyfe wheder shall I flee
That I myght scape this endles sorowe.
Now gentyll deth spare me tyll to morowe
That I may amende me
With good aduysement

Dethe.

Naye thereto I wyll not consent
Nor no man wyll I respyte
But to the herte sodeynly I shall smyte
Without ony aduyesment
And now out of thy syght I wyll me hy

Se thou make the redy shortely
For thou mayst saye this is the daye
That no man lyuynge may scape a waye

Euery man.

Alas I may well wepe with syghes depe
Now haue I no maner of company
To helpe me in my Iourney and me to kepe
And also my wrytynge is full vnredy
How shall I do now for to excuse me
I wolde to god I had neuer begete
To my soule a full grete profyte it had be
For now I fere paynes huge and grete
The tyme passeth lorde helpe that all wrought
For though I mourne it auayleth nought
The day passeth and is almoost ago
I wote not well what for to do
To whome were I best my complaynt to make
What and I to felawshyp therof spake
And shewed hym of this sodeyne chaunce
For in hym is all myne affyaunce
We haue in the worlde so many a daye
Be good frendes in sporte and playe
I se hym yonder certaynely
I trust that he wyll bere me company
Therfore to hym wyll I speke to ese my sorowe

Well mette good felawshyp and good morowe.

Felawship.

Euery man good morowe by this daye
Syr why lokest thou so pyteously
If ony thynge be a mysse I praye the me saye
That I may helpe to remedy.

Every man.

Ye good felawshyp ye
I am in greate ieoparde.

Felawship.

My true frende shewe to me your mynde
I wyll not forsake the to my lyues ende
In the waye of good company.

Every man.

That was well spoken and louyngly.

Felawship.

Syr I must nedes knowe your heuynesse
I haue pyte to se you in ony dystresse
If ony haue you wronged ye shall reuenged be
Thoughe that I knowe before that I sholde dye.

Every man.

Veryly felawshyp gramercy.

Felawship.

Tusshe by thy thankes I set not a strawe
Shewe me your grefe and saye no more.

Every man.

If I my herte sholde to you breke
And than you to tourne your mynde fro me
And wolde not me comforte whan ye here me speke
Than sholde I tentymes soryer be.

Felawship.

Syr I saye as I will do in dede.

Every man.

Than be you a good frende at nede
I haue found you true here before.

Felawship.

And so ye shall euermore
For in fayth and thou go to hell
I wyll not forsake the by the waye.

Every man.

Ye speke lyke a good frende I byleue you well
I shall deserue it and I may.

Felawship.

I speke of no deseruynge by this daye
For he that wyll saye and nothynge do
Is not worthy with good company to go
Therfore shewe me the grefe of your mynde
As to your frende most louynge and kynde.

Every man.

I shall shewe you how it is

Commaunded I am to go on a iournaye
A longe waye harde and daungerous
And gyue a strayte counte without delaye
Before the hye Iuge adonay
Wherfore I pray you bere me company
As ye haue promysed in this iournaye.

Felawship.

That is mater in dede promyse is duty
But and I sholde take suche a vyage on me
I knowe it well it shulde be to my payne
Also it make me aferde certayne
But let vs take counsell here as well as we can
For your wordes wolde fere a stronge man.

Every man.

Why ye sayd yf I had nede
Ye wolde me neuer forsake quycke ne deed
Thoughe it were to hell truely.

Felawship.

So I sayd certaynely
But such pleasures be set a syde the sothe to saye
And also yf we toke suche a iournaye
Whan sholde we come agayne.

Every man.

Naye neuer agayne tyll the daye of dome.

Felawship.

In fayth than wyll not I come there
who hath you these tydynges brought.

Every man.

In dede death was with me here.

Felawship.

Now by god that all hathe bought
If deth were the messenger
For no man that is lyuynge to daye
I wyll not go that loth iournaye
Not for the fader that bygate me.

Every man.

Ye promysed other wyse parde.

Felawship.

I wote well I say so truely
And yet yf y^{u} wylte ete & drynke & make good chere
Or haunt to women the lusty company
I wolde not forsake you whyle the daye is clere
Truste me veryly

Every man.

Ye therto ye wolde be redy
To go to myrthe solas and playe
Your mynde wyll soner apply
Than to bere me company in my longe iournaye.

Felawship.

Now in good fayth I wyll not that waye

But and thou wyll murder or ony man kyll
In that I wyll helpe the with a good wyll.

Every man.

O that is a symple aduyse in dede
Gentyll felawe helpe me in my necessyte
We haue loued longe and now I nede
And gentyll felawshyp remembre me.

Felawship.

Wheder ye haue loued me or no
By saynt John I wyll not with the go.

Every man.

Yet I pray the take y^{e} labour & do so moche for me
To brynge me forwarde for saynt charyte
And comforte me tyll I come without the towne.

Felawship.

Nay and thou wolde gyue me a newe gowne
I wyll not a fote with the go
But and y^{u} had taryed I wolde not haue lefte the so
And as now god spede the in thy Iournaye
For from the I wyll departe as fast as I maye.

Every man.

Wheder a waye felawshyp wyll y^{u} forsake me.

Felawship.

Ye by my faye to god I be take the.

Every man.

Farewell good felawshyp for y^{e} my herte is sore
A dewe for euer I shall se the no more

Felawship.

In fayth euery man fare well now at the ende
For you I wyll remembre y^{t} ~~þ~~tynge is mournynge.

Every man.

A lacke shall we this departe in dede
A lady helpe without ony more comforte
Lo felawshyp forsaketh me in my most nede
For helpe in this worlde wheder shall I resorte
Felawshyp here before with me wolde mery make
And now lytell sorowe for me dooth he take
It is sayd in prosperyte men frendes may fynde
Whiche in aduersyte be full vnkynde
Now wheder for socoure shall I flee
Syth that felawshyp hath forsaken me
To my kynnesman I wyll truely
Prayenge them to helpe me in my necessyte
I byleue that they wyll do so
For kynde wyll crepe where it may not go
I wyll go saye for yonder I se them go
Where be ye now my frendes and kynnesmen.

Kynrede.

Here we be now at your commaundement
Cosyn I praye you shewe vs your entent

In ony wise and not spare.

Cosyn.

Ye euery man and to vs declare
Yf ye be dysposed to go ony whyder
For wete you well wyll lyue and dye to gyder.

Kynrede.

In welth and wo we wyll with you bolde
For ouer his kynne a man may be holde.

Euery man.

Gramercy my frendes and kynnesmen kynde
Now shall I shewe you the grefe of my mynde
I was commaunded by a messenger
That is a hye kynges chefe offycer
He bad me go a pylgrymage to my payne
And I knowe well I shall neuer come agayne
Also I must gyue a rekenynge strayte
For I haue a grete enemy that hath me in wayte
Whiche entendeth me for to hynder.

Kynrede.

What a counte is that which ye must render
That wolde I knowe.

Euery man.

Of all my workes I must shewe
How I haue lyued and my dayes spent
Also of yll dedes that I haue vsed

In my tyme syth lyfe was me lent
And of all vertues that I haue refused
Therfore I praye you go thyder with me
To helpe to make myn accounte for saynt charyte.

Cosyn.

What to go thyder is that the mater
Nay euery man I had leuer fast brede and water
All this fyue yere and more.

Euery man.

Alas that euer I was bore
For now shall I neuer be mery
If that you forsake me.

Kynrede.

A syr what ye be a mery man
Take good herte to you and make no mone
But one thynge I warne you by saynt Anne
As for me ye shall go alone.

Euery man.

My cosyn wyll you not with me go.

Cosyn.

No by our lady I haue the cramp in my to
Trust not to me for so god me spede
I wyll deceyue you in your moost nede.

Kynrede.

It auayleth not vs to tyse

Ye shall haue my mayde with all my herte
She loueth to go to festes there to be nyse
And to daunce and a brode to sterte
I wyll gyue her leue to helpe you in that Iourney
If that you and she may a gree.

Euery man.

Now shewe me the very effecte of your mynde
Wyll you go with me or abyde be hynde.

Kynrede.

Abide behynde ye that wyll I and maye
Therfore farewell tyll another daye.

Euery man.

Howe sholde I be mery or gladde
For fayre promyses men to me make
But whan I haue moost nede they me forsake
I am deceyued that maketh me sadde.

Cosyn.

Cosyn euery man farewell now
For veryly I wyl not go with you
Also of myne owne an vnredy rekenynge
I haue to accounte therfore I make taryenge
Now god kepe the for now I go.

Euery man.

A Iesus is all come here to
Lo fayre wordes maketh fooles fayne

They promyse and nothynge wyll do certayne
My kynnesmen promysed me faythfully
For to a byde with me stedfastly
And now fast a waye do they flee
Euen so felawshyp promysed me
What frende were best me of to prouyde
I lose my tyme here longer to abyde
Yet in my lyfe I haue loued ryches
If that my good now helpe me myght
He wolde make my herte full lyght
I wyll speke to hym in this dystresse
Where arte thou my gooddes and ryches.

Goodes.

Who calleth me euery man what hast thou haste
I lye here in corners trussed and pyled so hye
And in chestes I am locked so fast
Also sacked in bagges thou mayst se with thyn eye
I can not styre in packes lowe I lye
What wolde ye haue lyghtly me saye.

Euery man.

Come hyder good in al the hast thou may
For of counseyll I must desyre the.

Goodes.

Syr & ye in the worlde haue sorowe or aduersyte
That can I helpe you to remedy shortly.

Euery man.

It is another dysease that greueth me
In this worlde it is not I tell the so
I am sent for an other way to go
To gyue a strayte counte generall
Before the hyest Iupyter of all
And all my lyfe I haue had Ioye & pleasure in the
Therefore I pray the go with me
For parauenture thou mayst before god almyghty
My rekenynge helpe to clene and puryfye
For it is sayd euer amonge
That money maketh all ryght that is wronge.

Goodes.

Nay euery man I synge an other songe
I folowe no man in suche vyages
For and I wente with the
Thou sholdes fare moche the worse for me
For bycause on me thou dyd set thy mynde
Thy rekenynge I haue made blotted and blynde
That thyne accounte thou can not make truly
And that hast thou for the loue of me.

Euery man.

That wolde greue me full sore
Whan I sholde come to that ferefull answere
Vp let vs go thyther to gyder.

Goodes.

Nay not so I am to brytell I may not endure
I wyll folowe man one fote be ye sure.

Euery man.

Alas I haue the loued and had grete pleasure
All my lyfe dayes on good and treasure.

Goodes.

That is to thy dampnacyon without lesynge
For my loue is contrary to the loue euerlastynge
But yf thou had me loued moderately durynge
As to the poore gyue parte of me
Than sholdest thou not in this dolour be
Nor in this grote sorowe and care.

Euery man.

Lo now was I deceyued or I was ware
And all I may wyte my spendynge of tyme.

Goodes.

What wenest thou that I am thyne.

Euery man.

I had went so.

Goodes.

Naye euery man I saye no
As for a whyle I was lente the
A season thou hast had me in prosperyte
My condycyon is mannes soule to kyll

Yf I saue one a thousande I do spyll
Wenest thou that I wyll folowe the
Nay fro this worlde not veryle.

Euery man.

I had wende otherwyse.

Goodes.

Therfore to thy soule good is a thefe
For whan thou arte deed this is my gyse
Another to deceyue in this same wyse
As I haue done the and all to his soules reprefe.

Euery man.

O false good cursed thou hast deceyued me
And caught me in thy snare.

Goodes.

Mary thou brought thy selfe in care
Wherof I am gladde
I must nedes laugh I can not be sadde.

Euery man.

A good thou hast had longe my hertely loue
I gaue the that whiche sholde be the lordes aboue
But wylte thou not go with me in dede
I praye the trouth to saye.

Goodes.

No so god me spede
Therfore fare well and haue good daye.

Euery man.

O to whome shall I make my mone
For to go with me in that heuy Iournaye
Fyrst felawshyp sayd he wolde with me gone
His wordes were very plesaunte and gaye
But afterwarde he lefte me alone
Than spake I to my kynnesmen all in despayre
An also they gaue me wordes fayre
They lacked no fayre spekynge
But all forsake me in the endynge
Then wente I to my goodes that I loued best
In hope to haue comforte but there had I leest
For my goodes sharpely dyd me tell
That he bryngeth many in to hell
Than of my selfe I was ashamed
And so I am worthy to be blamed
Thus may I wel my selfe hate
Of whome shall I now counsell take
I thynke that I shall neuer spede
Tyll that I go to my good dede
But alas she is so weke
That she can neuer go nor speke
Yet wyll I venter on her now
My good dedes where be you.

Good dedes.

Here I lye colde in the grounde
Thy synnes hath me sore bounde
That I can not stere.

Euery man.

O good dedes I stand in fere
I must you pray of counseyll
For helpe now sholde come ryght well.

Good dedes.

Euery man I haue vnderstandynge
That ye be somoned of a counte to make
Before Myssyas of Iherusalem kynge
And you do by me y^{t} Iournay w^{t} you wyll I take.

Euery man.

Therfor I come to you my moone to make
I praye you that ye wyll go with me.

Good dedes.

I wolde full fayne but I can not stande veryly.

Euery man.

Why is there ony thynge on you fall.

Good dedes.

Ye syr I may thanke you of all
Yf ye had parfytely chered me
Your boke of counte full redy had be
Loke how the bokes of your workes and dedes eke
Ase how they lye vnder the fete

To your soules heuynes.

Euery man.

Our lorde Iesus helpe me

For one letter here I can not se.

Good dedes.

There is a blynde rekenynge in tyme of dystres.

Euery man.

Good dedes I praye you helpe me in this nede

Or elles I am for euer dampned in dede

Therfore helpe me to make rekenynge

Before the redemer of all thynge

That kynge is and was and euer shall.

Good dedes.

Euery man I am sory of your fall

And fayne wolde I helpe you and I were able.

Euery man.

Good dedes your counseyll I pray you gyue me.

Good dedes.

That shall I do veryly

Thoughe that on my fete I may not go

I haue a syster that shall with you also

Called knowledge whiche shall with you abyde

To helpe you to make that dredefull rekenynge

Knowlege.

Euery man I wyll go with the and be thy gyde

In thy moost nede to go by thy syde.

Euery man.

In good condycyon I am now in euery thynge
And am hole content with this good thynge
Thanked by god my creature.

Good dedes.

And whan he hath brought you there
Where thou shalte hele the of thy smarte
Than go you w^{t} your rekenynge & your good dedes togyder
For to make you Ioyfull at herte
Before the blessed trynyte.

Euery man.

My good dedes gramercy
I am well content certaynly
With your wordes swete.

Knowlege.

Now go we togyder louyngly
To confessyon that clensyng ryuere.

Euery man.

For Ioy I wepe I wolde we were there
But I pray you gyue me cognycyon
Where dwelleth that holy man confessyon.

Knowlege.

In the hous of saluacyon
We shall fynde hym in that place

That shall vs comforte by goddes grace
Lo this is confessyon knele downe & aske mercy
For he is in good conceyte with god almyghty.

Euery man.

O gloryous fountayne y^{t} all vnclennes doth claryfy
Wasshe from me the spottes of vyce vnclene
That on me no synne may be sene
I come with knowledge for my redempcyon
Redempte with herte and full contrycyon
For I am commaunded a pylgrymage to take
And grete accountes before god to make
Now I praye you shryfte moder of saluacyon
Helpe my good dedes for my pyteous exclamacyon.

Confessyon.

I knowe your sorowe well euery man
Bycause with knowlege ye came to me
I wyll you comforte as well as I can
And a precyous Iewell I will gyue the
Called penaunce voyce voyder of aduersyte
therwith shall your body chastysed be
With abstynence & perseueraunce in goddes seruyce
Here shall you receyue that scourge of me
Whiche is penaunce stronge that ye must endure
To remembre thy sauyour was scourged for the
With sharpe scourges and suffred it pacyently

So must y^{u} or thou scape that paynful pylgrymage
Knowlege kepe hym in this vyage
And hy tyme good dedes wyll be with the
But in ony wyse be seker of mercy
For your tyme draweth fast and ye wyll saued be
Aske god mercy and he wyll graunte truely
Whan w^{t} the scourge of penaunce man doth hym bynde
The oyle of forgyuenes than shall he fynde.

Euery man.

Thanked be god for his gracyous werke
For now I wyll my penaunce begyn
This hath reioysed and lyghted my herte
Though the knottes be paynfull and harde within

Knowlege.

Euery man loke your penaunce that ye fulfyll
What payne that euer it to you be
And knowledge shall gyue you counseyll at wyll
How your accounte ye shall make clerely.

Euery man.

O eternall god O heuenly fygure
O way of ryghtwysnes O goodly vysyon
Whiche descended downe in a vyrgyn pure
Bycause he wolde euery man redeme
Whiche Adam forfayted by his dysobedyence
O blessyd god heed electe and hye deuyne

Forgyve my greuous offence
Here I crye the mercy in this presence
O ghostly treasure. O ransomer and redemer
Of all the worlde hope and conduyter
Myrrour of Ioye foundatour of mercy
Whiche enlumyneth heuen and erth therby
Here my clamorous complaynt though it late be
Receyue my prayers vnworthy in this heuy lyfe
Though I be a synner moost abhomnynable
Yet let my name be wryten in moyses table
O mary praye to the maker of all thynge
Me for to helpe at my endynge
And saue me fro the power of my enemy
For deth assayleth me strongly
And lady that I may by meane of thy prayer
Of your sones glory to be partynere
By the meanes of his passyon I it craue
I beseeche you helpe my soule to saue
Knowlege gyue me the scourge of penaunce
My flesshe therwith shall gyue acqueyntaunce
I wyll now begyn yf god gyue me grace.

Knowlege.

Euery man god gyue you tyme and space
Thus I bequeth you in y^{e} handes of our sauyour
Now may you make your rekenynge sure

Euery man.

In the name of the holy trynyte
My body sore punysshyd shall be
Take this body for the synne of the flesse
Also thou delytest to go gay and fresshe
And in the way of dampnacyon y^{u} dyd me brynge
Therfore suffre now strokes of punysshynge
Now of penaunce I wyll wade the water clere
To saue me from purgatory that sharp fyre.

Good dedes.

I thanke god now I can walke and go
And am delyuered of my sykenesse and wo
Therfore with euery man I wyll go and not spare
His good workes I wyll helpe hym to declare.

Knowlege.

Now euery man be mery and glad
Your good dedes cometh now ye may not be sad
Now is your good dedes hole and sounde
Goynge vpryght vpon the grounde.

Euery man.

My herte is lyght and shalbe euermore
Now will I smite faster than I dyde before.

Good dedes.

Euery man pylgryme my specyall frende
Blessed be thou without ende

For the is preparate the eternall glory
Ye haue me made hole and sounde
Therfore I wyll byde by the in euery stounde.

Euery man.

Welcome my good dedes now I here thy voyce
I wepe for very swetenes of loue.

Knowlege.

Be no more sad but euer reioyce
God seeth thy lyuynge in his trone aboue
Put on this garment to thy behoue
Whiche is wette with your teres
Or elles before god you may it mysse
Whan ye to your iourneys ende come shall.

Euery man.

Gentyll knowlege what do ye it call.

Knowlege.

It is a garmente of sorowe
Fro payne it wyll you borowe
Contrycyon it is
That getteth forgyuenes
He pleasyth god passynge well.

Good dedes.

Euery man wyll you were it for your hele.

Euery man.

Now blessyd be Iesu maryes sone

For now haue I on true contrycyon
And lette vs go now without taryenge
Good dedes haue we clere our rekenynge.

Good dedes.

Ye in dede I haue here.

Euery man.

Than I trust we nede not fere
Now frendes let vs not parte in twayne.

Kynrede.

Nay euery man that wyll we not certayne.

Good dedes.

Yet must thou led with the
Three persones of grete myght.

Euery man.

Who sholde they be.

Good dedes.

Dyscrecyon and strength they hyght
And thy beaute may not abyde behynde.

Knowlege.

Also ye must call to mynde
Your fyue wyttes as for your counseylours.

Good dedes.

You must haue them redy at all houres.

Euery man.

How shall I get them hyder.

Kynrede.

You must call them all togyder
And they wyll here you in contynent.

Euery man.

My frendes come hyder and be present
Dyscrecyon strengthe my fyue wyttes and beaute.

Beaute.

Here at your wyll we be all redy
What wyll ye that we sholde do.

Good dedes.

That ye wolde with euery man go
And helpe hym in his pylgrymage
Aduyse you wyll ye with him or not in that vyage.

Strength.

We wyll brynge hym all thyder
To his helpe and comforte ye may beleue me.

Discrecion.

So wyll we go with him all togyder.

Euery man.

Almyghty god loued myght thou be
I gyue the laude that I haue hyder brought
Strength dyscrecyon beaute & .v. wyttes lack I nought
And my good dedes with knowlege clere
All be in my company at my wyll here
I desyre no more to my besynes.

Strengthe.

And I strength wyll by you stande in dystres
Though thou wolde I batayle fyght in the grounde.

V. wyttes

And though it were thrugh the worlde rounde
We wyll not departe for swete ne soure.

Beaute.

No more wyll I vnto dethes houre
What so euer therof befall.

Discrecion.

Euery man aduyse you fyrst of all
Go with a good aduysement and delyberacyon
We all gyue you vertuous monycyon
That all shall be well.

Euery man.

My frendes harken what what I wyll tell
I praye god rewarde you in his heuen spere
Now herken all that be here
For I wyll make my testament
Here before you all present
In almes halfe my good I wyll gyue w^{t} my handes twayne
In the way of charyte w^{t} good entent
And the other halfe styll shall remayne
In queth to be retourned there it ought to be
This I do in despyte of the fende of hell

To go quyte out of his perell
Euer after and this daye.

Knowlege.

Euery man herken what I saye
Go to presthode I you aduyse
And receyue of him in ony wyse
The holy sacrment and oyntement togyder
Than shortly se ye tourne agayne hyder
We wyll all abyde you here.

V. wittes.

Ye euery man hye you that ye redy were
There is no Emperour Kinge Duke ne Baron
That of god hath commycyon
As hath the leest preest in the worlde beynge
For of the blessyd sacramentes pure and benygne
He bereth the keyes and therof hath the cure
For mannes redempcyon it is euer sure
Whiche god for our soules medycyne
Gaue vs out of his herte with grete payne
Here in this transytory lyfe for the and me
The blessed sacramentes .vii. there be
Baptym confyrmacyon with preesthode good
And y^{e} sacrament of goddes precyous flesshe & blod
Maryage the holy extreme vnccyon and penaunce
These seuen be good to haue in remembraunce

Gracyous sacramentes of hye deuy[n]yte.

Euery man.

Fayne wolde I receyue that holy body
And mekely to my ghostly fader I wyll go.

V. wittes.

Euery man that is the best that ye can do
God wyll you to saluacyon brynge
For preesthode excedeth all other thynge
To vs holy scrypture they do teche
And conuerteth man fro synne heuen to reche
God hath to them more power gyuen
Than to ony aungell that is in heuen
With .v. wordes he may consecrate
Goddes body in flesse and blode to make
And handleth his maker bytwene his hande
The preest byndeth and vnbyndeth all bandes
Both in erthe and in heuen
Thou mynystres all the sacramentes seuen
Though we kysse thy fete thou were worthy
Thou arte surgyon that cureth synne deedly
No remedy we fynde vnder god
Bute all onely preesthode
Euery man god gaue preest that dygnyte
And setteth them in his stede amonge vs to be
Thus be they aboue aungelles in degree.

Knowlege.

If preestes be good it is so surely
But whan Iesu hanged on y^{e} crosse w^{t} grete smarte
There he gaue out of his blessyd herte
The same sacrament in grete tourment
He solde them not to vs that lorde omnypotent
Therefore saynt peter the apostell dothe saye
That Iesus curse hath all they
Whiche god theyr sauyour do by or sell
Or they for ony money do take or tell
Synfull preeste gyueth the synners example bad
Theyr chyldren sytteth by other mennes fyres I haue harde
And some haunteth womens company
With vnclene lyfe as lustes of lechery
These be with synne made blynde.

V. wittes.

I trust to god no suche may we fynde
Therfore let vs preesthode honour
And followe theyr doctryne for our soules socoure
We be theyr shepe and they shepeherdes be
By whome we all be kepte in suerte
Peas for yonder I se euery man come
Whiche hath made true satysfaccyon.

Good dedes.

Me thynke it is he in dede.

Every man.

Now Iesu be your alder spede
I haue receyued the sacrament for my redemcyon
And than myne extreme vnccyon
Blessyd be all they that counseyled me to take it
And now frendes let vs go with out longer respyte
I thanke god that ye haue taryed so longe
Now set eche of you on this rodde your honde
And shortely folowe me
I go before there I wolde be [ ] God be your gyde.

Strength.

Euery man we wyll not fro you go
Tyll ye haue done this vyage longe.

Dyscrecion.

I dyscrecyon wyll byde by you also.

Knowlege.

And though this pylgrymage be neuer so stronge
I wyll neuer parte you fro
Euery man I wyll be as sure by the
As euer I dyde by Iudas Machabee.

Euery man.

Alas I am so faynt I may not stande
My lymmes vnder me doth folde
Frendes let vs not tourne agayne to this lande
Not for all the worldes golde

For in this caue must I crepe
And tourne to erth and there to slepe.

Beaute.

What in this graue alas.

Euery man.

Ye there shall ye consume more and lesse.

Beaute.

And what sholde I smoder here.

Euery man.

Ye by my fayth and neuer more appere
In this worlde lyue no more we shall
But in heuen before the hyest lorde of all.

Beaute.

I crosse out all this adewe by saynt Iohan
I take my tappe in my lappe and am gone.

Euery man.

What beaute whyder wyll ye.

Beaute.

Peas I am defe I loke not behynde me
Not & thou woldest gyue me all y^{e} golde in thy chest.

Euery man.

Alas wherto may I truste
Beaute gothe fast awaye from me
She promysed with me to lyue and dye.

Strength.

Euery man I wyll the also forsake and denye
Thy game lyketh me not at all.

Euery man.

Why than ye wyll forsake me all
Swete strength tary a lytell space.

Strengthe.

Nay syr by the rode of grace
I will hye me from the fast
Though thou wepe to thy herte to brast.

Euery man.

Ye wolde euer byde by me ye sayd.

Strength.

Ye I haue you ferre ynoughe conueyde
Ye be olde ynoughe I vnderstande
Your pylgrymage to take on hande
I repent me that I hyder came.

Euery man.

Strength you to dysplease I am to blame
Wyll ye breke promyse that is dette.

Strength.

In fayth I care not
Thou arte but a foole to complayne
You spende your speche and wast your brayne
Go thryst the in to the grounde.

Euery man.

I had wende surer I shulde you haue founde
He that trusteth in his strength
She hym deceyueth at the length
Bothe strength and beaute forsaketh me
Yet they promysed me fayre and louyngly.

Dyscrecion.

Euery man I will after strength be gone
As for me I will leue you alone.

Euery man.

Why dyscrecyon wyll ye forsake me.

Dyscrecion.

Ye in fayth I wyll go fro the
For whan strength goth before
I folowe after euer more.

Euery man.

Yet I pray the for the loue of the trynyte
Loke in my graue ones pyteously.

Dyscrecyon.

Nay so nye wyll I not come
Fare well euerychone.

Euery man.

O all thynge fayleth saue god alone
Beaute strength and discrecyon
For whan deth bloweth his blast
They all renne fro me full fast.

V. wittes.

Euery man my leue now of the I take
I wyll folowe the other for here I the forsake.

Euery man.

Alas than may I wayle and wepe
For I took you for my best frende.

V. wittes.

I wyll no lenger the kepe
Now fare well and there an ende.

Euery man.

O Iesu helpe all hath forsaken me.

Good dedes.

Nay euey man I will byde with the
I wyll not forsake the in dede
Thou shalte fynde me a good frende at nede.

Euery man.

Gramercy good dedes now may I true frendes se
They haue forsaken me euerychone
I loued them better than my good dedes alone
Knowlege wyll ye forsake me also.

Knowlege.

Ye euery man whan ye to deth shall go
But not yet for no maner of daunger.

Euery man.

Gramercy knowlege with all my herte.

Knowlege.

Nay yet I wyll not from hens departe
Tyll I se where ye shall be come.

Euery man.

Me thynke alas that I must be gone
To make my rekenynge and my dettes paye
For I se my tyme is nye spent awaye
Take example all ye that this do here or se
How they that I loue best do forsake me
Excepte my good dedes that bydeth truely.

Good dedes.

All erthly thynges is but vanyte
Beaute strength and dyscrecyon do man forsake
Folysshe frendes and kynnesmen that fayre spake
All fleeth saue good dedes and that am I.

Euery man.

Haue mercy on me god moost myghty
And stande by me thou moder & mayde holy Mary

Good dedes.

Fere not I wyll speke for the.

Euery man.

Here I crye god mercy.

Good dedes.

Shorte oure ende and mynysshe our payne
Let vs go and neuer come agayne.

Euery man.

In to thy handes lorde my soule I commende
Receyue it lorde that it be not lost
As thou me boughtest so me defende
And saue me from the fendes boost
That I may appere with that blessyd hoost
That shall be saued at the day of dome
(in manus tuas) of myghtes moost
For euer (Commendo spiritum meum.)

Knowlege.

Now hath he suffred that we all shall endure
The good dedes shall make all sure
Now hath he made endynge
Me thynketh that I here aungelles synge
And make grete Ioy and melody
Where euery mannes soule recyued shall be.

The aungell.

Come excellent electe spouse to Iesu
Here aboue thou shalte go
Bycause of thy syngular vertue
Now the soule is taken the body fro
Thy rekenynge is crystall clere
Now shalte thou in to the heuenly spere
Vnto the whiche all ye shall come
That lyueth well before the daye of dome.

Doctour.

This morall men may haue in mynde
Ye hearers take it of worth olde and yonge
And forsake pryde for he deceyueth you in the ende
And remembre beaute .v. wyttes strength & dy[s]crecion
They all at the last do euery man forsake
Saue his good dedes there dothe he take
But be ware and they be small
Before god he hath no helpe at all
None excuse may be there for euery man
Alas how shall he do than
For after dethe amendes may no man make
For than mercy and pyte doth hym forsake
If his rekenynge be not clere whan he doth come
God wyll saye (ite maledicti in ignem eternum)
And he that hath his accounte hole and sounde
Hye in heuen he shall be crounde
Vnto whiche place god brynge vs all thyder
That we may lyue body and soule togyder
Therto helpe the trynyte
Amen saye ye for saynt charyte.

F I N I S.

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