A STUDY OF THE GREEK CHORUS AND THE RENAISSANCE
MASQUE IN VIEW OF TWENTIETH CENTURY
THEATRE RITUAL

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Drama

by

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE GREEK CHORUS AND THE RENAISSANCE
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The chorus of Greek tragedy originated in Dionysian ritual. The Renaissance masque was a sophistication of the social customs of dancing and disguising found in seasonal festivals of the early Renaissance. In the twentieth century, several theatre groups, specifically the Polish Lab Theatre and the Open Theater in the United States, profess a return to myth and ritual in order to reestablish the basis of social art; these groups substitute an invention of ritual elements for the influence of social traditions on theatrical content and form which occurred in the past.

An aspect of ritual in theatre content is shown in the emphasis on basic ideas and social values rather than on dramatic situations that arise from a conflict of values. It might be summarized as an interest in archetypes. One formal element which relates to ritual activity is the use of dance or movement technique as
a means of expression. The directness and emotional appeal of dance complement language and serve to involve an audience in the theatrical spectacle. These characteristics of content and form are derived from the two basic functions of ritual, which are to mediate contradictions and to create social cohesion.

Ritual elements in theatre differ from social customs insofar as theatrical form and content are designed to induce definite reactions in the spectator, whereas ritual exists to bring practical benefits to the community. The chorus of Greek tragedy attempted to alter an audience's perspective on a dramatic action; the masque aimed to ennoble its spectator; while twentieth century "secular ritual" wants to shock and to lift social masks. The chorus and the masque sublimated social life while modern theatre returns to basic experience, and in this respect, it has the most direct affinity with ritual.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this thesis is to trace the relationship between the social ceremony in theatre of the recent decades, particularly Jerzy Grotowski's "secular ritual" developed in the 1960's, and the ritual forms from which Western theatre is thought to have originated. It is a study of the particular types of content and form in the Greek chorus, the Renaissance masque, and Grotowski's Polish Lab Theatre designed to show aspects which differentiate them from Aristotelian drama and define them as theatrical ritual. In the case of the Greek chorus and the masque, a factual relationship between theatre form and content and preceding social traditions explains ritual elements in theatre. In the twentieth century, ritual elements are purely an individual invention. The difference should logically lead to a distinction between authentic and unauthentic theatre ritual. However, the only apparent contrast is the one which exists between social life and social art. In social life authenticity of ritual depends on the efficacy of its magical, practical acts; in social art it depends on the receptiveness of an audience to which performances are addressed and on the artifice which communicates.

The functions of ritual in various cultures and ages are to mediate contradictions and to create social ties.¹ These fundamental qualities are transferred to theatrical ritual. The Greek chorus, the masque, and Grotowski's "secular ritual" focus on the
communication of basic social values, rather than on particular actions involving conflict, and they make special attempts to include the audience in their spectacle. The difference is that ritual only reinforces, while theater reinterprets commonly accepted ideas. Ritual, for instance rites de passage which mark the important transition points in human life and in the seasonal process, is mainly concerned with the perpetuation of the status quo. Theatre is a communicative art, intended to generate a number of very definite psychic reactions in the audience. The chorus comments on an individual action in Greek tragedy in order to integrate particular events with the universal perspective offered by the poetry, and to direct the audience's attention toward this universal view. Gilbert Murray remarks that it is mainly the presence of the chorus which gives Greek tragedy its power of transfiguration. The masque likewise asks its audience to go beyond their immediate reality and to perceive the idealism of masque poetry. The masque is designed to ennoble the spectator. By contrast, twentieth century theatre ritual returns to basic experience. In confronting the audience with myth, Grotowski intends to revive their inner life; to provoke them to cast off every-day, alienated masks, and to partake in a ritualistic experience.

The content and forms of expression characteristic of each of these theatre forms are the means by which the above aims are achieved. Aristotle's criteria for the analysis of drama--object of imitation, manner, and medium of communication--are applicable to some extent, especially in regard to masque poetry and to the
texts used in modern theatre. For the most part, Aristotle's "object" should be thought of simply as content, while his "manner" and "medium" constitute form.

Content tends to consist of a select number of central ideas with which actors and audience can identify. In Greek tragedy these were law, justice, and right conduct--cultural values which appear to have been previously expressed in Dionysian ritual. The main ideas of the masque were courtly virtues such as grace, honor, and order, which showed respect for the monarch and provided for cohesion among the nobility. Masque content was determined by the formal aspects of court entertainment, for example, disguisings and dances which had traditionally expressed the participants' shared identities and interests. In the twentieth century, basic values are usually not as clearly delineated. Consequently, some dramatists of recent decades have reinterpreted classical texts and basic religious myths in order to test their relevance to contemporary life, and to see whether archetypes, "the needs and motives common to various cultures and ages," which have been an impetus for ritual in the past, are still applicable today. Grotowski writes that

the theatre must attack the collective complexes of society, the myths which are not an invention of the mind, but are, so to speak, inherited through one's blood, religion, culture, climate--things that are so elementary and so intimately associated, that it is difficult to submit them to rational analysis, for example, religious myths--the myth of Christ and Mary; biological myths--birth, death, and love symbolism, or in a broader sense, Eros and Thanatos.

The most apparent and consistent link among the three examples of theatre is the use of dance or movement technique.
Dance is the most immediate of the communicative arts, while at the same time it is least amenable to literal recording. Furthermore, it is capable of expressing life experience in its full range from the instinctual to spiritual realms, much of which eludes the discursive process of language. These qualities of the dance make for a directness and wholeness of effect which are the essence of ritual device in theatre.

Dance, like content, can be described in terms of its collective and individual manifestations. Cecil Sharp describes it as being

... originally an instinctive, spontaneous, communal utterance, due to a desire on the part of the tribe or community to give concrete expression to spiritual conceptions, aspirations, and ideals felt and held in common. Later on, as the corporate bond weakened, the community broke up into elements. The development of the dance, hitherto the unconscious concern of the community, gradually fell into the hands of individuals who modified existing communal forms. The basis of the dance is, therefore, unconscious and racial; its superstructure conscious and individual.

Theatrical dance, an individual form which is highly organized for aesthetic and communicative purposes, is nevertheless expressive because it is a superstructure on natural forms and rhythms. The superstructure might be created on the instinctively formed circles and labyrinths and the tension--relaxation rhythm found in ritual dance; in the twentieth century, it might be built on movement made "to express personal, authentic experience" and to explore the basic relationship between the human body and surrounding space.

Dance forms in Greek tragedy and the Renaissance masque clearly show the influence of previous traditional social forms
alongside choreography which was devised exclusively for the expression of text. Theatrical dance in Greece is distinguished by its intricate rhythms, inherited in part from the traditional choral lyric. According to T. B. L. Webster, "much of the art of the choral poet lay in finding new combinations of traditional units of dance movement rather than in inventing new units." Masque dance was characteristically picturesque and architectural in form, a result of the emphasis on geometrical patterns and elaborate figures in the social dances of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By contrast, Grotowski's movement technique, "distillation" of impulse, is wholly an individual invention and appears to be most directly a formalization of instinctive expression. Its intense form is an exaggeration of the tension in dance, the part of the natural rhythmic cycle which suggests the dynamic quality of continuity rather than the repetitive movement most typical of ritual dance.

While each theater is resolutely theatrical and anti-realistic in view of its intended effects on the audience, each attempts to destroy theatrical illusion and to include the audience in its spectacle. This ambivalence, which explains the term "theatrical ritual," is best illustrated by the masque, the form most closely associated with social tradition and most extravagant as theatre. Content in the masque is extremely idealistic, as it is concerned with values of a golden age, and the dance which is used to create metaphors for poetry approximates the precision and formality of ballet, but nevertheless, the entertainment itself concludes with social dancing between actors and audience. For the duration of this concluding
episode, referred to as the revels, spectators are confronted with allegorical characters such as Grace, Harmony, Wonder, Flora, and Peace, 12 with the expectation that they will become assimilated with the stage illusion.

Stephen Orgel, a critic of the Jonsonian masque, remarks that "the end toward which the masque moved was to destroy any sense of theater and to include the whole court in the mimesis—in a sense, what the spectator watched, he ultimately became." 13 In his opinion, the revels are a transformation scene. The more prevalent tendency, however, is to attribute to the masque a refreshing dream effect. Francis Bacon called masques princely "toys." A. M. Nagler refers to court festivals of the Renaissance as "flights into the most fanciful unrealities of the baroque theatre." 14 Although the specific effects cannot be ascertained, diversion seems to have been the more plausible objective, in view of the fact that masques were most often staged to celebrate holidays. It is also important to note that the influence of the masque form on subsequent poetic theatre in England is apparent in elements of fantasy used to veil crucial points in an action and in the staging of festivities within plays. 15

The above characteristics of the masque—its perfection of content and means of presentation, and its conclusion in the revels, serve to illustrate one other point that is basic to the whole subject, namely the interdependence between theatre ritual and its social and cultural environment. Ideality of content in the masque reflects a virtually perfect social order which existed under the centralizing policy of kings in the Renaissance, while the emphasis on
celebration is suitable for a comfortable court society which could afford to dream and simply aspire to an ideal perfection rather than attempt to change itself. The Greek chorus and twentieth century theatre belong to less cohesive societies. Their content is usually more directly pertinent to the audience's experience and more indicative of social criticism. In the chorus and in Grotowski's "secular ritual," aesthetic distance is maintained with the audience in order to emphasize communication within the social ceremony.

Cultural differences very probably account for fifty percent of the subject of theatre ritual because "theatre art, in contrast with a predominantly personal or 'recital' art, is distinguished by the fact that its materials are already to a considerable extent embodied aesthetically in forms belonging not so much to the personal artist as to his audience. Theatre material already lies half-formed in the body of general culture." Consequently it is not necessary to examine the social and cultural milieu of each period since these are the determinants of the distinctive types of content and form found in the Greek chorus, the Renaissance masque, and the twentieth-century theatre ritual.

The volume of primary sources pertaining to the Greek chorus, the Renaissance masque, and the modern theatre ritual is staggering. It would be superfluous to examine each Greek play containing a chorus, or each masque, or each example of ritual in modern theatre in order to establish the relationship between these forms. Some rationale for selecting particular examples of each form is, however, necessary.
The examples of Greek tragedy which have been selected are Aeschylus' *The Suppliants*, the only extant tragedy in which the chorus is a protagonist and the one most closely related to the choral drama succeeding ritual; Sophocles' *Antigone* and Euripides' *Heraklidae*, both typical of the chorus' concern with social order and illustrative of the progressive stages of thought derived from the Dionysian cult.

The subject of the masque is limited to the English court masque since it incorporated both the spectacle distinctive of Italian court festivals and the pageantry and celebration of monarchs characteristic of French entertainments. Within the spectrum of English masques, Ben Jonson's are considered to be the culmination of Stuart and Tudor forms. Moreover, their literary quality facilitates the description of a form of theatre which is essentially non-literary. 17

Among the many innovative theater groups of the 1960's, Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Lab Theatre seems to be the most consistent in its aims and techniques. As Jan Kott writes, "Grotowski's system has in itself the ambitious goal of being a complete system: from the morality of the theatre to the theory of signs; from philosophy to the use of light." 18 Consequently, I focus on his theatre with a short analogy to the Open Theatre directed by Joseph Chaikin.

The most informative sources of research on ancient Greek ritual are: Jane Harrison's *Themis*, a detailed study of the process by which the Dionysian religion evolved into the Olympian religion; T. B. L. Webster's *Greek Art and Literature, 700-530 B.C.*, an account of the ritual origins of drama; and Gilbert Murray's *Five
rites associated with Dionysus. H. D. F. Kitto's *Greek Tragedy*, and Gilbert Murray's *The Complete Plays of Aeschylus and Euripides and His Age* are used as references for the interpretation of the role of the chorus in specific plays. In regard to the dance in ancient Greece, Lillian Lawler's *The Dance in Ancient Greece* is an indispensable summary of the subject, while T. B. L. Webster's *The Greek Chorus* and A. M. Dale's *Collected Papers on Greek lyrics* provide more esoteric information.

E. K. Chambers' *The Medieval Stage* contains a complete account of the folk customs of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, while Enid Welsford's *The Court Masque* helps to associate the social traditions with the development of court entertainments. Cecil Sharp's *The Dance, Arbeau's Orchesographie*, and Louis Horst's *Pre-Classic Dance Forms* are informative about the dance in the pre-Renaissance period. Stephen Orgel's *The Jonsonian Masque* is an imaginative reappraisal of the aesthetics of the masque as a form of theatre.

Information on twentieth-century experimental theatre is taken from periodical literature, mainly critiques in *The Drama Review*, and from Grotowski's account of his theory and practice in his book *Towards A Poor Theatre*.
Chapter 2

GREEK RITUAL AND DRAMA

The Dionysian cult is immediately relevant to Greek tragedy, especially to the character of the chorus. It also serves as a parallel to the social traditions which influenced the court masque. Aristotle's statement that tragedy originated from the improvisations of the leaders of the dithyramb, the central rite in the cult of Dionysus, implies that the development of drama was a gradual individualization of social expression. Thus, the most basic point of relationship between the ritual of the year-god and tragedy is the transference of the idea of death and rebirth, symbolized by Dionysus, to the human action portrayed in tragedy, where it becomes the more specific sequence of events referred to as Agon, Pathos, Threnos, Recognition, and Epiphany. As explained in Jane Harrison's Themis, the progression from vague and diffuse thought about life to distinct and specialized concepts is the essence of the shift from Dionysian to Olympian religion and from ritual to art. In this way, deities which personify human values replace an amorphous god of life, and ideas such as justice and law emerge from the social conscience, or Greek themis. Whereas the ritual chorus bases its practices on superstition, the dramatic chorus which comments on an individual action is concerned with the sophisticated variants of thought and with distinct human values.

The most important formal aspect of the chorus in Greek
tragedy that was derived from the Dionysian cult is its homogeneous, social character. The chorus is undivided in its attempts to further the dramatic action beneficially and to gain the audience's sympathy with its comments. As in ritual, the band of worshippers always acts as a unified collective. The poetry which is used by the chorus as a means of expression is an elaboration of lyric songs which were traditionally performed in honor of Dionysus. In the dramatic context, lyricism serves the chorus' integrative function. Finally, the chorus is situated in the orchestra, a dancing-ground facing the audience, which was in ancient times a threshing-floor, and a center of activity for Dionysian ritual. T. B. L. Webster observes that

the link between audience and chorus goes right back to early, very early times, when the village watched the dancers on the circular threshing-floor, praying the god to bless the harvest or thanking him when it was safely stored... It is possible that a circular threshing-floor existed under the Athenian akropolis in what was later the Theater of Dionysus, or it may merely be that the round orchestra was modelled on round threshing-floors elsewhere. In either case, the connection between Dionysus, harvest, and grape-harvest, and dancing-place is suggestive and worth remembering since many elements in Greek drama derive ultimately from agricultural ritual.

The Dionysian Cult

The Dionysian cult preceding Olympian mythology is known mainly by its year-god ritual, the dithyramb, which developed on the one hand into a choral art, and on the other, into the art of tragedy. Evidence of the choral art dates back only to the eighth century B.C., while the ritual precedent to tragedy has a tradition extending at least to the Mycenaean era, approximately 3000 to 1400 B.C. This ritual cult included rites as diverse as the thoughts and emotions of
tribal groups which sought to express themselves on important occasions in life. Some examples are the spring ritual of the Kouretes in Crete, Corybantic worship in Phrygia, the orgiastic rites of the Bacchants and Maenads in Thrace, ubiquitous choruses of satyrs and fat men, and festival rites associated with tomb and fertility worship. The evolution of Dionysian ritual toward tragedy is, then, bound at one end by the Cretan ritual, a solemn invocation to the year-god, accompanied by a "magic dance which was to celebrate, or more properly to hasten and strengthen the coming of spring;" at the other--when the serious aspect of the ritual had been transposed to the human action portrayed in tragedy--by exuberant dance-songs. For example, the following lyrics are attributed to a satyr chorus of the late sixth century.

What is this clamor? What those dancings? What outrage has come to the foot-fall-noisy altar of Dionysus? Mine is the roaring god, mine; mine to shout, mine to stamp as I rush over the mountains with the Naiads . . . It is song that the muse made queen; let the flute dance second part; he is a servant. Only in a revel rout and the fist-cuffs of young door-hammering drunks let him aspire to be leader . . . Now see! Here is the hand and the foot outflung for you, Lord of the ivied hair and stamping dithyramb; hear the Dorian sound of my dance.

The satyr chorus resists the flute-player's control, however, "Greek leaders seem finally to have succeeded in toning down much of the savagery and terror of the dances and to have channeled them into formal ceremonies, performed at stated festivals." In Crete, the dithyramb was not a song and dance performance, but a hymn and a sacred dance, since it was appropriated to a tribal initiation rite, the most intensely social among ceremonies of transition such as birth, marriage, and death, and thus a great
occasion for religious worship. This rite is referred to as a mystery, "a dromenon enacted with magical intent." According to the hymn, a tribe invokes the youth, a Kouros among Kouretes, to come to the mountain Dikte,

for the year;
to leap for full jars and leap for fleecy flocks,
and leap for fields of fruit
and for hives to bring increase;
to leap for our cities
and leap for our young citizens and for goodly Themis.

These lyrics indicate that both the welfare of the tribe and its food supply depend on the success of the rite; also that the Kouros' responsibilities are analogous to Dionysus'--the ensurance of spring and vegetation. Jane Harrison writes, in fact, that tribal concern about the event of initiation is a reason for the god's being. "The Kouros and the Kouretes sprang from social interests and activities. The worshippers, or rather the social agents are prior to the god. The ritual act, what the Greeks called the dromenon is prior to the divinity."14

The members of the dithyrambic chorus, men dressed up as bogies and white-clay men or "titans,"15 act as guardians of the Kouros while he undergoes an ordeal of water and fire rites. These rites, one of which serves to strengthen, the other to revitalize the initiated, symbolize a sequence of death and rebirth. Consequently, the Kouros is twice-born (dithy-rambos) like Dionysus and is projected by the tribe as the "incarnation of spring" and the "return of life."16 His ritual reflects the myth of Dionysus' double birth from Semele and from Zeus, yet it also relates to the myth in which Zeus' son Zagreus is guarded by Kouretes and then given over to the care
of Nymphs in Nysa, whence the name Dion-ny-sus. If the Kouros is like Dionysus, he is also equivalent with Zagreus, who is known as a year-god, and to any other divinity collectively conceived as a bringer of life, be it Apollo, Zeus, or Hermes. As explained by the Cambridge School of Anthropology, myths and the various identities attributed to the year-god are secondary to the worshippers' activity and to the conscience and emotion they express in regard to events in their immediate life. Their emotion, being collective,

... is necessarily felt as something dominant and external. The dancers seek to heighten this effect. They sink their own personalities, and by the wearing of masks and disguises, by dancing to a common rhythm, above all, by the common excitement, they become a true congregation... the emotion they feel collectively they externalize, project; it is the raw material of god-head. Primitive gods are to a large extent collective enthusiasms, uttered, formulated.

The concerns of the primitive tribe are recurrently vegetation and the seasonal process; the purpose of ritual is consequently to bring about an agreement between nature and the life of the tribe. Diversity in the Dionysian cult was created mainly by the choruses which were descendant from Mycenaean Crete, and once they had lost all their ritual significance, by the various magical customs of the festivals which were instituted to honor Dionysus.

Strabo's remark that the Kouretes received their title through being initiators--"as it were satyrs attendant on Zeus"--connects them with the long tradition of satyrs and goatmen, those half-divine fertility spirits who are depicted on Corinthian vases and tombs in Cyprus, and who set an example for the pre-dramatic choruses of men dressed up as bogies and disguised with masks.
Their female variants are the Bacchants and Maenads in Thrace, and the Corybants in Phrygia. According to mythology, Corybants worshipped Cybele, the mother of Dionysus, while Maenads and Bacchants figured as protective mothers at initiation rites. However, both groups are better known for their frenetical dancing which surpassed its practical function of protection and nurture, and for their connection with the winepress. Their orgiastic practices are supposed to have given to Dionysus his epithet "raging god."

When the above worshippers had faded into legend, they were replaced by processions of men and women who dressed up as satyrs and maenads and continued the Dionysian choral tradition. In speaking of a sixth century festival called "The Return of Dionysus," Heraclitus notes a procession of satyrs alongside the wild dances of women known as maenads. According to T. B. L. Webster, satyrs probably danced at the City Dionysia and one of the songs which they sang, or which was sung while they danced was the "Return of Dionysus." But at this point, their activities suggested choral art rather than ritual. Much attention was paid to costume and to the musical accompaniment for dancing. The celebrants were sometimes given particular legendary names, for instance, the maenads' names Dione, Thaleia, and Choreia.

Meanwhile, vegetation ritual was renewed by the festivals of Dionysus, which retained old traditions as they introduced new ones. The name of the January Lenaean came directly from the bacchanals of Dionysian choruses, and the festival itself was intended "to rouse or strengthen the sleeping god." At the Anthesteria, "the mask of Dionysus was carefully prepared and was nailed to a tree or pillar.
with drapery beneath it under the tree, women mixed wine... and sang about the wild dances of the maenads."25 Ceremony consisted of placation ritual and of fertility magic. Its logic—that the dead have to be placated for the benefit of the living—reflects the comparison between initiation and the return of spring, and between the renewal of the tribe and the cyclical periodicity of the year. The belief that death and the renewal of life are two parts of a cycle which Dionysus represents was suggested by the mimic death and rebirth of the Kouros, by the depiction of satyrs on tombs, and by another comment Heracléitos makes in connection with "The Return of Dionysus," that "Hades and Dionysus are the same, in whose honor they rage and celebrate Lenaean rites."26

The Diasia, a festival which preceded the City Dionysia, was altogether a placation ritual. It was a great sacrifice, by some accounts a holocaust, held to appease underworld powers and dead ancestors.27 More often sacrificial rites took place beside fertility magic and served as a formal prelude to feasting. For example, the specific rites at the Thesmophoria, a festival of Demeter, consisted of the carrying of sacred objects by some worshippers while others performed an animal sacrifice in which the animal was thrown into a deep cleft of the earth and then retrieved as a fertility charm to be scattered about the fields. This sequence is described in the myth of Demeter, a corn goddess who annually disappears below the earth and rises again in spring, in the shape of crops.

The Anthesteria, which marked the beginning of spring and was one of the oldest festivals, was a great Wine-feast, consisting of
three days, called Jar-Opening, Drinking Cups, and Pots.  The festival began with a solemn pouring out of the new wine from jars called πίθοι, which were half-buried in the earth. This custom was presumably designed to let ghosts loose in order to appease them, and then to rebury them so that the spring feast could begin, with wine drinking on the second day, and with the opening of pots full of grain and seeds on the third. The Anthesteria was then a feast of "the revocation of souls and the blossoming of plants"—a feast of the great reincarnation cycle of man and nature.

In these festivals, Dionysus is both a god of appeasement and the fertility spirit of the feast. In the placation ceremonies of the Diasia, he is referred to as Zeus Meilichios, "He of Appeasement." At the Anthesteria, he is Hermes, first appearing as Psychopompus, the god of ghosts and the underworld; later, in his more usual guise as the bringer of fertility, with a snake-staff and a cornucopia as his emblems. As follows from his identity as a god of reincarnation and from his earlier celebration by rites which mark the seasons and the important events in life, Dionysus represents life in its movement through time, and the variation in life which time brings. As explained by Professor Bergson, he is an instinctive attempt to express durée—"that life which is one, indivisible, and yet ceaselessly changing."

The life of the year-god, apparently earth-bound and characterized by horizontal movement, gradually acquires more dimension when it is interpreted in myth and when it is transposed to the action of the hero in tragedy. In myth, the death and regeneration
process is expanded into the series of events which includes an Agon, a Pathos, a Messenger, a Threnos, and finally a Theophany, the appearance of a god. In drama, the hero's Epiphany, which is the human equivalent of Theophany, is preceded by an Anagnorisis or Recognition. With the addition of a conscious element, the development of the tragic hero acquires intellectual scope and a more complex concept of time. These aspects are reflected in the Olympians, the immortal, intellectual sky-gods who replaced the irrational god Dionysus in ancient Greek religion. The Olympians, who are for the most part personifications of human values, and show abstract thought and man's attempt to order nature rather than to accord with its seasonal periodicity. Unlike the vague and diffuse Dionysus, the Olympians are distinct, knowable entities. Jane Harrison writes that

... the Olympians represent that tendency in thought which is toward reflection, differentiation, clearness, while the year-god (Eniautos-daimon) represents that other tendency in relation toward emotion, union, indivisibility.

The transition from Dionysian to Olympian thought is very clearly shown by the differentiation which takes place in the identities of Dike, the "way of the world," and of Themis, which represents the social conscience. In Dionysian myth, Dike is concrete and various. She is known as Kore, as Semele, and as Euridike, all of whom symbolize the reappearance of vegetation in spring. In the hymn to the Kouros, Dike represents the turn of the seasons, as is evident in the lyrics, "And the Horai began to be fruitful year by year, and Dike to possess mankind." This goddess is simply the way of
the world, whereas in Greek drama she personifies retribution. Themis is at first related to Gaia, the original earth-goddess, and is described as "the projection and impersonation of earth." This divinity is the focus of attention in an agricultural society, and is therefore interpreted as the collective conscience and the herd instinct which bring ritual about. With the development of a more complex, patriarchal social structure and of Olympian mythology, Themis "crystallizes into fixed conventions, themistes, and regular tribal customs... finally, in the polis, it takes shape as Law and Justice." Themis, like Dike, becomes an intellectual abstraction, often associated with Zeus, the ruler among Olympians. For example, in Sophocles' Electra, Themis is referred to as being "throned in heaven."

The king is another figure who undergoes significant transformation with "the shift of attention and religious focus from earth to sky." In Dionysian ritual, the king is indistinguishable from the natural forces which are symbolized by the year-god, Themis, and Dike. He was any one member of the tribe elected to preside over ceremonies and to assume the title "basileus." He was the winner of races held at vintage feasts and at the Olympic games, and the recipient of a prize such as a cornucopia filled with fruit. As such, the basileus represented the victory of the new year over the old, and thus resembled both the Kouros and the year-god whose functions were to ensure fertility. Harrison calls this king an "Eniautos-daimon and basileus in one." He is a vague, recurrent functionary who reappears as a mock-king in the seasonal festivals of
the Middle Ages.

In myth, the king becomes a distinct individual. In the drama of classical Greece, he is a ruler of city-states and an administrator of social order. Law, justice, and right, cultural sophistications of Themis and Dike, are his prerogatives; they are also the values to which the chorus most often refers when it comments on events in the course of a dramatic action.

The Dramatic Chorus

The transition from religious ceremony to drama was gradual and included a phase of purely choral drama which is assumed to have been "a local development of choral lyric--sacred, occasional, public." Although this genre is practically unknown, it helps to explain the perpetuation of ritual elements in the chorus of classical Greek drama.

First of all, the chorus contributes group thought and group emotion, which strengthen the impact of dramatic action. Harrison comments that "save for the choros, the band, there would be no drama and no dromenon. Emotion socialized, felt collectively, is emotion intensified and rendered permanent." The intermediate position between actors and audience, acquired by the chorus in transition to spectacle, enabled it to make a direct appeal to the audience, to gain its sympathy more effectively, and thus to create social ceremony.

The chorus also brings with it a Dionysian tendency toward unity, a contrast and a complement to the differentiated "Olympian" thought characteristic of action that involves conflict. The chorus
often universalizes particular events and places their significance in a larger philosophical context. "When the actors are on stage, we are following the deeds and fates of so many particular individuals, lovers, plotters, enemies . . . at a particular point of time and space. When the stage is empty and the choral odes begin, we have no longer the particular acts and places and persons, but something universal and eternal . . . we have the greatness of love, the vanity of revenge, the law of eternal retribution." For its poetic role, the chorus is given lyrics, a means of expression which at once separates it from the rhetorical dialogue used to express argument and allows it to express thought relevant to a dramatic situation. For instance, the chorus might plead with and persuade characters; it might comment on the action, but "it must never make a set speech, a 'thesis'; never marshall arguments; try to prove or refute a contention, or speak a descriptive set piece."  

Aeschylus' earliest known play, The Suppliants (ca. 481 B.C.), is unique among Greek tragedies in that its chorus is the protagonist, as it was in the sacred and choral drama which succeeded ritual. Collective thought and certain ritual elements, for example, the chorus' repetitive addresses to Earth, are therefore especially prominent, while the drama itself is obscured. The chorus' lyrical appeal seems to be made to the gods, since the chorus is not yet situated in the intermediary position from which it relates to an audience. The play is a religious celebration in a dramatic context, as Kitto says, it is a celebration "cast in a lyrical, unnaturalistic mould."

The action of the play is briefly the following. The
Suppliants, fifty daughters of Danaus and descendants of the Argive
Io, seek exile in Greece in order to escape from their Egyptian
cousins whom they do not wish to marry. They plead with the Argive
king Pelasgus for a long while, until finally, at the moment when
Egyptian forces are landing, they are granted exile both by the king
and by the populace. War with the Egyptians is averted, the
Suppliants are counseled by their father Danaus, and "the play ends
with a song of deliverance."52 This meager plot is interwoven in a
series of prayers: at the beginning, the Suppliants' prayers for
deliverance; once exile is granted to them, prayers for the welfare of
Greece; and songs of praise and rejoicing which anticipate the end
song. The repetitive quality of their prayers resembles a religious
incantation, which Gilbert Murray envisions as "a cantata or a
religious ballet; in parts a pageant rather than what we mean by a
play."53

The action in this play, the Suppliants' attempt to gain exile
in Argos, in other words, to find a home, is propelled by a recurrent
refrain expressing this desire--

Be Ours, O bosomed Earth,
Earth o'er the Sea . . .
Thou hearest us, Earth, our Friend,
Or, where words fail,
I beat my breast and rend
This Tyrian veil.54

The Suppliants are entirely dependent on Zeus, whom they invoke at
the beginning of the play as they take their positions around an altar
to pray.

May Zeus, the Eternal Suppliant, smile
In mercy on this suppliant band
Sea-lifted from the slender sand
That masks the mouths of Nile (11.1-4).
When they plead with the Argive king, Pelasgus, they admonish him to beware of Heaven and are asking Pelasgus to join in worship, rather than rationalizing about their situation. For example, their address,

Wise King and aged, hearken to our youth; 
Regard the Suppliant and thine offerings given 
In God's house blest shall be (11.362-364).

The whole emphasis in these lyrics is on feeling and on gaining the god's sympathy, as is typical of ritual activity. Zeus, the god of Supplicants, possesses attributes of the year-god, since he is, in a sense, a "Saviour of the Earth" and a projection of the worshippers' desire. In this aspect, Zeus' identity coincides with his mythological name Aphiktor, "He Who Prays for Mercy." When exile is granted to the Supplicants, and their prayers focus on the welfare of Argos, Zeus becomes a god of fertility and reincarnation, as evidenced by the exulting verses,

May Zeus the fruitful earth 
Fulfil as the seasons pass; 
Abundant be the birth 
Of flocks in the grazing grass.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Bards, to the altar fire 
Carry your gifts of story! 
Voices of love waken the lyre; 
Stainless be Argos' glory! (11.689-718).

Celebration is the climax in this play, and it is achieved exclusively by choral means. The Danaids express their desire in passionate lyrics; they pray and plead with the king; and finally they persuade him to grant them exile. The very prayers, ideally hymns and chants to be danced out, are the substance of the play, as, in a social context, it is the "excited doing, the dancing, that is the kernel of dromenon," the ritual act.
Myth, a collective representation of ritual, also has a unique role in this play. In later drama, myth usually provides the basic scheme of relationships on which an author builds character, conflict, and social situations which are pertinent to Greek culture. In The Suppliants, the scheme of mythical relationships plays a major part in the play. Danaus, his daughters, and Pelasgus are one-dimensional characters; they are personalities insofar as they enact the mythical story. When action is at a standstill, these characters converse about the gods, their ancestors, and their own identities.

Having landed at the sacred grove in Argos, the Danaids first take time to find out about the Grecian gods to whom they should make an appeal. Danaus teaches them the Grecian custom, saying,

Lift first your voices to the Bird of Zeus
And pure Apollo, exiled from the sky
I see Trident here, Poseidon's sign
Lo, a strange Hermes, shaped as Hellenes will (11.212-220).

While the people of Argos vote on the issue of their exile, the Danaids meditate about their ancestress Io and relate her story to Zeus.

I wander in the print of ancient feet;
Mid these same blossoms haunted Io grazed;
From this same pasture sweet
She fled, by pain made fleet
On, on through Asia, flying vainly fast.
Through Phrygian sheep folds,
Through Lydian vales she passed;
On over mountains vast
Cilician and Pamphylian . . . (11.541-552).

The tendency on the part of characters to emphasize the subject of land is most apparent when Pelasgus speaks,
I, Pelasgus, of these regions lord and king,

Yea, all the lands where through
Pure Strymon floweth are mine own, away
to the sinking sun. The limits of my sway
Perrhaebia marketh, and the further side
of Pindus, near the Paiones; then wide
Dodona's mountains; and beyond, the cool,

Story replaces a discussion of theme, since, as mentioned
earlier, the action is entirely dependent on the gods for its ful-
fillment. The Suppliant's freedom is not a controversial issue as it
would be in a conventional dramatic context; it is the object of the
Suppliants' desire, and thus a subject for prayer, as stated in the
lines,

As Justice is, let Judgment be,
For this shall God's hand set us free,
For this our prayer we raise (11.1070-1073).

The continuity of action in The Suppliant and the lack of conflict
which obviates the necessity for resolution are characteristics
emphasized by the final dialogue. The Danaids ask their Handmaids,
"What hope then, what yearning may we treasure?" and the latter
reply, "To welcome God's will and to obey" (11.1059-1060).

In Aeschylus' later plays and in Sophocles' and Euripides'
drama, there is argument and discussion of social problems and the
human predicament. The chorus, which is essentially concerned with
the whole of things and with universal ideas, is henceforth removed to
an intermediary position, where it can only comment on an action
with regard to the resolution of its conflict, and attempt to impress
its point of view upon the audience.

The transition from religious ceremony to drama is made
complete in Sophocles' plays. The chorus focuses its attention on
man and society, much less on the gods and earth. It is concerned with a welfare that is based primarily on social law and justice rather than on divine and natural order. This is shown in Antigone, and stated in the central choral ode of the play:

Wonders are many on earth, and the greatest of these
Is man, who rides the ocean and takes his way
Through the deeps, through wind-swept valleys of perilous seas
That surge and sway.
He is master of ageless Earth, to his own will bending
The immortal mother of gods

The use of language, the wind-swift motion of the brain
He learnt; found out the laws of living together
In cities

O wondrous subtlety of man, that draws
To good or evil ways! Great honor is given
And power to him who upholdeth his country's laws
And the justice of heaven. 53

The chorus' admonition to respect the gods and "the justice of heaven has its counterpart in Creon's recognition of divine order as a result of pride and error and as a result of his experience within the social order.

The action of the play consists of the following two parts which create its conflict: Creon's decree against the burial of Polyneices, who was a traitor to Thebes in a recent war; and Antigone's burial of her brother Polyneices against the king's order.

In the conflict between social law, which is represented by Creon, and the dues of the earth and of kinship, upheld by Antigone, the chorus of Theban Elders consistently favors Creon. When the chorus gives Antigone perfunctory praise and sympathy, it is acting as dramatic choruses should, with regard to both sides of an issue, and contrary to its own very patriotic character. The Theban Elders'
involvement with the city of Thebes and the king is apparent in the
choral ode which marks their entrance--

Hail the Sun! the brightest of all that ever
Dawned on the city of seven gates, City of Thebes . . .
Great is the victory, great be the joy
in the City of Thebes, the city of chariots.
Now is the time to fill the temples
With glad thanksgiving for warfare ended;
Shake the ground with the night-long dances,
Bacchus afoot and delight abounding.

But see the King comes here,
Creon, the son of Menoeceus,
Whom the gods have appointed for us
In our recent change of fortune . . . (p. 129).

H. D. F. Kitto writes that this parodos "sweeps away the almost
conspiratorial air of the prologue, substituting for the private
sorrows of Antigone, the joy of the city in its deliverance,"59 which
suggests that Antigone's behavior is a threat to a viable social order
and to the prosperity of Thebes.

When Antigone defends Polyneices' burial and defies Creon's
decree, saying,

I did not think your edicts strong enough
To overrule the unwritten, unalterable laws
Of god and heaven, you being only a man,

the chorus remarks, "She shows her father's stubborn spirit--foolish
not to give way when everything's against her," and thereby definitely
upholds the social order (p. 138). Later, when Creon's son Haemon
begs the king to give special consideration to Antigone because her
intent in the deed was honorable, the chorus admits that there is
something to be said for his point of view, but again favors Creon's
argument. It remarks,

He whom the state appoints must be obeyed
To the smallest matter, be it right--or wrong (p. 144),
and repeats this point of view to Antigone as she is going to her appointed death, saying to her,

You have stumbled against Law enthroned
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
An act of homage is good in itself,
But authority cannot afford to connive at disobedience (p. 149).

The chorus pays its respects to Antigone, mitigates the harshness of her death sentence by offering analogies between her death and mythical deaths, and attributes her death to fate. It continues however to assist the new order and Creon, the hero who is their "god."

The chorus cannot significantly affect Creon's behavior or the outcome of the action. Like the band of ritual worshippers who incessantly engaged in rites which they believed had influence on the year-god's course, but which, in effect, served to create social ties and cohesion in the community, so also the human chorus, specifically the Theban Elders, can only encourage, advise, and offer various perspectives on a situation to both the characters in the play and to the audience. For example, when Tiresias prophesies two deaths in Creon's household and when disaster is imminent, the chorus advises Creon to "release Antigone from her rocky prison; to set up a tomb for him who lies unburied" (p. 155), but it is too late--Haemon and the queen, Euridyce, are dead--and Creon must acknowledge his error and the existence of an order beyond the human one ("Now I believe it is by the laws of heaven that man must live," p. 156). The chorus learns with him and conveys its experience to the audience with the final ode,

Of happiness the crown and chiepest part is wisdom,
and to hold the gods in awe.
This is the law
That, seeing the stricken heart
of pride brought down,
We learn when we are old (p. 162).

Among Euripides' choruses, which are outstanding for their variety, there is often a collective of friends, involved only with the main character's predicament, for instance, the women attendants in Medea and Phaedra, and the men in Hippolytus; on the other hand, the chorus of bacchants in the Bacchae assume the part of a major character. In several plays, notably Alcestis and Heraklidae, the chorus is a typical group of citizens, very much concerned with social order and the king. The chorus of Athenians in the Heraklidae show exceptional vitality in their role as defenders of the city and propagators of right conduct.

The story of Euripides' play has resemblance to The Suppliants by virtue of its simplicity and by the fact that the Heraklidae, like the Suppliants, are dispossessed refugees seeking protection in a foreign city. The children of Herakles are fleeing from Eurystheus, the king of Argos, and from this king's cruel messenger, Cophreas. Under the protection of an old man called Iolaus they come to Attica. The action consists mainly of Athens' defense of these children and their guardian, and of the problems, including the threat of war, which their coming poses for Athens. The Suppliant god is replaced by humanitarianism and ethics, values that are delineated by the Olympians, especially by the goddess of wisdom Athena, and are enthusiastically supported by the chorus.

The chorus' presence in this play then serves two purposes—to guard the city of Athens and to protect the Heraklidae. Its civic
character is apparent at the beginning, when the men reproach Copreus for his brutal pursuit of the children and for his arrogant behavior in their city. They say to Copreus,

Instead of kidnapping these refugees
So brazenly, you should have seen the king
And shown respect for Athens' sovereign rights. 61

Their viewpoint subsequently becomes more vehement and is expressed repetitively. For instance, the following stanza is an emphatic restatement of their first words:

To kidnap refugees and those
the wards of both our gods and men
Is bad enough . . . And then
To have a stranger treat our king
Like dirt, without a single claim
To right and justice is a thing
that only fools and men past shame
can well defend (1.362ff).

The chorus' protective role increases similarly, from an instinctive reaction to the situation to a determination to go to war on behalf of the Heraklidae if this should prove to be necessary. The chorus refuses to drive the children away from Athens at Copreus' bidding, with the comment, "That would be sacrilegious, rejecting people who demand our help" (1.106). Later, when the Argives attempt to abduct the Heraklidae by force, their reply begins,

For Athens, home, and for the right
Of refugees, we mean to fight
With naked steel . . . (1.755ff).

They are confident in the matter since their patron is Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom.

Athens' victory is brought about by action and planning on the part of its king, Demophon, and by the conscientious support of its citizens. Nevertheless, when the chorus celebrate Athens' success,
they attribute it at least in part to luck. As one member of the group exclaims,

I feel too glad for words and thrill
to see the happy ending for
Those near my heart; in brief, to see
Poor devils had good luck in store
For themselves, thanks to Destiny,
And Change, and Time (1.888ff).

The Dike of the gods, which in Antigone was recognized as a divine order to be revered and held in awe, is well integrated into social life in Euripides' play. It is the ability to recognize right conduct, according to the chorus, "to keep along the right road" (1.896), which is attainable by some conscious effort and an observance of the Olympians. Meanwhile, the aspect of the year-god religion that is acknowledged is its mystery, as seen in the above references to luck, change, and time; the impulse to celebrate; and the tendency toward exclamation, exaggeration, and poetry when dramatic action cannot be contained in dialogue and prose.

In all three of the above plays lyricism was prominent alongside the chorus' involvement with dramatic events. In many plays, especially Euripides', the chorus is there just for poetic reasons—"to shed a lyrical splendor over the whole; to translate the particular act into something universal."62 Within the realm of language, it frequently does so with similes between the dramatic action and nature, or the flight of time. In Sophocles' Women of Trachis, the chorus compares Herakles' journeys to a tumultuous sea.63 In Euripides' Alcestis, the chorus laments the event of Alcestis' death in a refreshing way. They say that much shall be sung of Alcestis,
By the men of music to the seven-strung mountain lyre-shell,
And in poems that have no music,
In Sparta, when the season turns and
The month Carneian comes back . . . 64

On occasion, the chorus will alter a perspective completely; "it will make a change in all that it touches, increasing elements of beauty, leaving out crude pain." 65 In Hippolytus, when Phaedra rushes off to kill herself, the chorus diverts the audience's attention to

Where the Lord of the Ocean
Denies the voyager further sailing
And fixes the solemn limit of Heaven

Where the streams flow with ambrosia

And holy earth, the giver of life,
Yields to the Gods' rich blessedness. 66

Choral lyrics lend completeness to tragedy. They contribute a direct, expressive element to the representative quality of dramatic action, 67 and thus strengthen communication with an audience. Yet, in the performance of Greek tragedy, the chorus steps outside the domain of language, into "the inexpressible realm of feeling . . . of immediate experience, forever incognito and incommunicando," 68 if not for music and dance, means of expression which are inseparable from lyrics in the choral art called "orchestique."

Theatrical Dance

Since choral dance is situated in a large orchestra in front of the audience, it is the main visual aspect of tragedy and is accordingly dignified and stately. Its name, emmeleia, literally means "well-measured, ordered, proportioned." 69 The elevated and serious quality of tragedy is initially established by the parodos, or
entrance of the chorus, consisting of formal, tetragonal, march-like evolutions. In the course of a play, dance, together with music, serve as a means of expression for the choral lyrics. These are various in content, and in regard to form, "characteristically taut, elliptical, concentrated." Consequently, dance must possess a flexible language of its own by which it might convey lyrical mood, express the sense and feeling of words, and accord with the rhythms of verse.

The feature of the dance which conveys stateliness and pomp is, in Greek terminology, phora—movements of the mind and body which constitute carriage in steps. Beneath this level in its hierarchy, the language of the emmeleia consists of schemata, distinctive forms, shapes and patterns, visible in the course of a dance, and cheironomia, a code of symbolical gestures. This code is undocumented, but is assumed to have existed if the dance was to express the meaning of words, and if, as A.M. Dale writes, "the emmeleia was mostly an affair of steps and attitudes for the individual dancer... it did not give a choreography for a ballet." More is known about the schemata, since Pollux left an account of a considerable number of these patterns. These include movements called "hollow hand," "flat hand," "basket," "passing on the club," "the sword thrust," "the double," and "sommersault." Lillian Lawler mentions a schema called "to walk past the four," which she attributes to the tetragonal type of processional dance. She also notes characteristic schemata for the expression of grief and gives as an example the gestures referred to in the first choral ode of
Euripides' Suppliantes, where members of the chorus call upon one another to join in the "only dance which Hades honors." 75 Tragic poets are said to have invented schemata for the specific requirements of their plays. T. B. L. Webster concludes from his study of the chorus that they borrowed from traditional choral art in which, as early as the eighth century B.C., special units of dance movement were attributed to lyric meters. An instance where the chorus might resemble ritual is the binding dance of the chorus of Furies in Aeschylus' Eumenides. "Its accompanying song, addressed to Mother Night is written in strophic form, by repeating, incantation-like, refrain stanzas." 76

The rhythmic meters in dance, at least in part elaborations of traditional choral meters, are, according to many scholars, the only valid information we possess about choral art. 77 They are certainly the most indicative of its intricacy. In The Lyric Meters of Greek Drama, A. M. Dale finds that dance movements were not bound up to specific meters, i.e., there were no "dactylic" or "iambic" dances, but that they were interchangeable as a result of a rhythmical code which was developed to measure dance time in correspondence to word rhythms. Her explanation is interesting, and, I think, indicative of the basic character of choral dance.

The primary unit of rhythm common to Greek words, music, and dance is one of time. The smallest sequence of longs and shorts that by repetition can produce a rhythmical effect was called a "pous," and its repetitive movement a "basis." But within the foot itself, there must be some kind of alternation or swing to make its rhythm perceptible, and to this were given the names of the movements of the human foot in its simplest form of progress--"arsis" and "thesis." The function of the terms is to denote the swing in the unit of repetition. This could be followed by the movement of the
foot in dancing, but was applicable metaphorically independently of that... the dances called daktuloi, iambike, molossike mentioned by Atheneus, need not be taken as simply dances suitable for those meters."

An important point in her explanation is that "arsis" and "thesis" denote movements of the foot in its simplest form of progress, in other words, natural rhythm. The terms arose in the first place as an expression of the "duality inherent in all rhythm—motion and rest, sound and stillness, up and down, loud and soft, quick and slow." This suggests that the mimetic gestures which accompanied word-rhythms and were "a function of the words," must have been developed from a subjective expression of emotion and thought. The highly organized dance is then related to ritual dance, in the sense that it is the antithesis of natural, instinctive movement.

Ritual dance performed in honor of Dionysus is reknown for its lack of form, or tyrbe, meaning "disorder, tumult, and revel." From very early times it was associated with the threshing-floor and the season of grape-harvest, when Dionysus is the intoxicating wine-god. In Crete and in Thrace, it was an ecstatic celebration of spring—"a victorious dance which resounds in the mountains and animates the surrounding air with Bacchic frenzy and ecstasy." Corybantic worship in Phrygia is similarly believed to have been "exalted, excited, mystical." Descriptions are vague and grandiose because dancing was for the most part an expression of vague emotions about life and a sheer celebration of the seasonal process which Dionysus represents. In popular account, the Bacchants sought to become possessed by or assimilated with the year-god; they had no particular rationale.
However, in the background of these legendary rites, there is dancing with practical intent. The clamor which the Kouretes produced as they clashed swords against shields and whirled them in the air was in primitive thought an effective means to drive away evil spirits. Earthbound leaps and stamping movements were presumed to ensure vegetation. Circular and labyrinthical figures formed by a group of worshippers served to guard the functionary in initiation rites or a sacred object in agricultural ritual. According to Curt Sachs, the circle signifies "the incorporating, giving, and receiving of power." These forms are apparently instinctive and inseparable from the function of particular movements. The dynamic qualities, shown by the contrast between the restless, continuous motion of the circle and the static stamping and leaping, reflect a natural cycle of tension and release.

Once these earth-bound forms are removed from the practical life of the people, they are simply means of filling up space, until they are consciously re-adapted for their expressive potential or as social recreation. Both the art form and the social activity were developed in Greece to a considerable degree. As evidenced by classical Greek sculpture, the choral dance, with simple elaborations of line and figure, continued to express the life of the people and to reveal its distinctive character. Sachs notes the natural quality of Greek dance, "The observer admires the joyous rhythm which binds together, into a harmony more than personal, movements that arise from an inner compulsion and accord with the law of the dancer's own body." He goes on to say that this social dance "has little to record of actual invention... all that it offers in theme, movement, and
In its development toward theatrical art, dance coalesced with song, and acquired sophisticated rhythmic and step patterns several centuries before its official appearance as a lyric performance of known authorship in Athenian festivals.

The illustrations of Greek choruses show more of tradition than of innovation, although they do show us in the 6th century a new energy in girls dancing, and in the 5th, new steps for satyrs and maenads... But it is a major gain to have three tempi, which we have called walking or stately time, striding or dance time, and excited time, clearly distinguished, and to know that they were already in existence in the 8th century.87

For the use of choral dance in drama, distinctive forms, gestures, and postures were devised, but there was a continual emphasis on rhythm. As a solo performance, choral art was dominated by music, mainly flute accompaniment.88

The art form and the social activity were thus two distinct and separate entities until they were brought together in the parodoi of Greek tragedy, the stately rounds and processions made by the chorus to open and close dramatic events. They expressed the grand style and serious tone of tragedy, but also served to create an atmosphere of social ceremony and to bring about a closer rapport between the stage action and the audience.
Chapter 3

THE RENAISSANCE MASQUE

Whereas the chorus of Greek tragedy was a token ritual device—a collective body incorporated into the drama in order to emphasize its social nature, the Renaissance masque was specifically intended to be an occasion for socializing. The forms and themes of the masque were built around the revels, where masquers danced with spectators in celebration of a social event. Masque poetry was the last element to be added to an entertainment that was a compendium of social customs; it was initially simply a unifying factor and a literary tribute to the king. The masque is distinctly a sophistication of ritual; less an individual art form, like Greek tragedy or the subsequent poetic theatre in England which use elements of social tradition but are primarily criticisms and reinterpretations of life. In its rudimentary form, the masque is theoretically a parallel not to the chorus of Greek tragedy, but to the sacred and choral drama which preceded it. With regard to the masque, Jonas Barish writes that

... its form represents a society not so much aspiring after, as joyfully contemplating its own well-being, the possession of the blessings it considers itself to have achieved... It is a means to compliment the king; to congratulate society and the communal virtues symbolized in the king. To the extent that the actuality falls short of the ideal, the masque may be taken as a kind of mimetic magic on a sophisticated level, the attempt to secure social health and tranquillity for the realm by miming it in front of its chief figure. The frequency of prayer as a rhetorical mode in the masque is hence not accidental.
Before describing the specific social customs which underly the masque form, I think it is worthwhile to consider traditions of the early Middle Ages which have similarities with the Dionysian cult. These lead to the point where customs acquire their authentic pre-Renaissance character, which is recreational and shows a need to attain a sense of freedom from circumstances as well as to perpetuate the status quo. The change represents a secularization of religious ritual, and is, generally, a result of two factors: the waning belief in practical magic, whereby pagan rites become, literally, social "traditions," "preserved by the conservative instinct of cult;"\(^5\) and of the merging of pagan and Christian festival days, effected when the date for Christmas was established in the early eighth century.\(^6\)

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Folk Traditions of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Ritual existant in the early Middle Ages, approximately between the seventh and twelfth centuries,\(^7\) was, like the Dionysian cult, essentially vegetation ritual. Its central intent was the renewal of spring, "to help on by imitative magic the eternal struggle between summer and winter; darkness and light; life and death."\(^8\) The ritual is, again, a combination of propitiation and fertility rites which often overlap in practice as they do in theory. Their culmination in the January Anthesteria in Greece is paralleled by the medieval New Year custom of setting out a great banquet, the "Table of Fortune."\(^9\) As in ancient times, surrounding festivities marked a transition between the old year and the new. They were most appropriate to the twelve days of Christmas which originally represented an intercalary period, inserted to bridge the gap between the lunar and solar years. It was an
anomalous period, "falling outside the regular order of things, but
giving character to the coming year."\textsuperscript{10} Later, these days effected
a fusion between paganism and Christianity because they linked the
two disputed anniversaries of Christ's birth and were, as well, a
synthesis of pagan new year festivals extending from November to the
Kalends of January. Thus, early seasonal festivals, based on "the
notion of a circular course of the sun, passing through the four
turning or wheeling points of the solstices,"\textsuperscript{11} approximated the main
Christian holidays--Christmas, Easter, Midsummer, and All Saints' Day in November.

The earliest perennial rites were circumambulatory pro-
cessions made to surround fertility spirits in the form of vegetation--
of trees and flowers for instance, and then to distribute their benefi-
ticial influence over the entire community. E.K. Chambers writes
that "a large garland, often with an anthropomorphic representation
of the fertilization spirit in the form of a doll paraded the streets,
accompanied by a 'king' or 'queen'."\textsuperscript{12} Processions might also begin
as rounds focused on an anthropomorphic representative of fertility,
the victim chosen for mock-sacrifice ritual. Like the Kouros, who
was symbolically reborn in initiation, and then celebrated as the rein-
carnation of spring, the victim of sacrifice in the Middle Ages was
"flung into water and passed through fire,"\textsuperscript{13} and then feted as the
master of ceremonies at seasonal festivals. This was probably the
origin of the "mock-king" tradition, the custom of electing May-kings,
Summer Lords, Harvest Lords, and mock-mayors to preside over
the activities of their respective festivals.
When the custom of sacrifice became a mere oblation, the themes of fertility and the seasonal process were perpetuated by dances expressive of seasonal activities and by the folk drama, which assumed a central position in festivals. Folk drama typically symbolizes the chasing away of winter, the reawakening of spring and summer, or the winter-summer conflict itself. It is a mimesis of propitiation-fertility ritual. One example is "the expulsion of death," where an effigy symbolizing winter and evil forces is carried in procession and torn to pieces, and then buried or burnt; another is "the sawing of the old woman," in which the female figure represents an ogress connected with Hecate and the underworld. In a different variant, a young leaf-clad man who personifies spring lies asleep on the ground until he is reawakened by a maiden and May-Day dances.

The most ubiquitous and long-lasting among folk-dramas was the Sword Dance, otherwise called the Morris, which was a rhythmic portrayal of the winter-summer conflict, attended by processions and a chorus who wore masks and disguises. Initially, it resembled the above folk-plays. It was "a dramatic fight between two parties, one clad in green to represent summer; the other in straw or fur to represent winter." Later, the Morris Dance acquired highly developed foot, hand, and body movements, while the Sword Dance became known as a chain formation and a figure dance of eight or more men who continuously leap among sword-blades and make noise with their ankle bells. In The Sword Dance and the Drama, Violet Alford describes the connection between features of this dance, like the clashing of swords, the leaping, and the dancers' focus on
some central object, and the initiation ritual in Crete.\(^{19}\) Cecil Sharp remarks that in England, "the Sword Dance is still performed annually between Christmas and New Year, and symbolizes the death of the old year and the birth of the new year."

Practices resembling the Dionysian cult seem to have occurred precisely during the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the customs of which are relatively obscure,\(^{21}\) and most probably so because they were not authentic expressions of life at that time. The social origins of the masque become perceptible in the later Middle Ages, when these same practices shed their ritual meaning and reappeared as zestful social games, a phenomenon for which Welsford suggests the word "revels."\(^{22}\)

The first transition was from strict rounds to recreational dance—the country dance and festive traditional forms in which figures unfold from a processional entry. Face masks used in ritual and disguises such as beast heads and animal skins, which were once sacrificial exuviae, were now worn by processions of persons to amuse neighbors, especially to play a game of dice called mumm-chance, whence the name "mumming" for their processions.\(^{23}\)

Strange apparel often served the spirit of buffoonery, which was particularly well exemplified in the fourteenth century Feast of Fools, a lawless New Year celebration of the inferior clergy in France. In Chambers' account, priests and clerks paraded about wearing masks and monstrous visages, and danced in the choir dressed as women, panders, or minstrels.\(^{24}\) The king of such feasts was not a disciplined master of ceremonies, but a Lord of Misrule, the culmination of the "mock-king tradition. Finally, this
festival gave prominence to the Fool, a substitute for the frenzied worshipper of ritual. He is the one figure who survives subsequent sophistication of most social traditions and pervades Renaissance drama and literature as a Vice, a comic devil, a wild man, or jester.

Customs of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance: The Social Origins of the Court Masque.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the folk disguising was adopted by all social classes and exposed to the fashion of pageantry. It developed into a spectacular show, held to honor royalty and to provide diversion for the nobility. A very early step in the theatricalization of this custom was made by an English show of 1377, when the Commons of London paid a complimentary visit to King Richard II. An account of this show which has been preserved relates,

... in ye night were 130 men disguisedly appareled and well mounted on horsebacke to goe on mumming to ye said prince, riding from Newgate through Cheape wherar many people saw them with great noyse of ministralsye ... and great plenty of waxe torches lighted.

In the fifteenth century, the disguising, alternately referred to as a mumming, was a popular indoor entertainment, which included games and displays of allegorical and symbolical figures, and gradually acquired a slight dramatic character. Initially, this consisted of a presenter's speech to introduce the disguised persons; later, of texts and librettos providing characters with a symbolical action and the tableaux of pageantry with a unifying theme. The literary aspect is mainly an English development, first associated
with John Lydgate's literary memories, written approximately 1427-1430, in the sixteenth century, when the disguising had been exposed to the influence of French and Italian entertainments and was shaped into a definite genre, it became associated with the poetry of Thomas Campion, Francis Davison, John Beaumont, and Ben Jonson.

In France and Italy masquerades and displays of corteges embellished the presentation of religious drama--Mystery plays, Representations, and the literary and musical sacre rappresentazioni. They showed much concern with spectacle and aesthetic form but at the same time expressed the unique social disposition of each country, or at least of its aristocracy and its artists.

The tableaux of pageantry and triumphal corteges in French Royal Entries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries served to emphasize the occasion, which was the celebration of monarchy and of its associated public virtues. Extravagance was itself a compliment to the king, but moreover, it was carefully designed to express "a people's life, a city, and the mutual obligations of a people with the king," or a related theme, such as peace, work, or commerce.

The Italian masquerade developed into a magnificent cultural diversion. As a part of entertainments among the nobility, it was known as an intermezzo, "an extra course, dish, or ornament," which might take the form of a procession of chariots or of splendidly costumed figures who pantomime a myth or an allegorical action. An example which shows original treatment of both myth and allegory is the "Cavalcade of Dreams," an intermezzo included in a Medici wedding of 1565. In this episode, a procession of dream-figures, consisting of Narcissus, Sirens, Fame, and Riches, is
transformed into a group of surreal figures—a satyr, bacchants, and fools led by Polly, when their exquisite costumes are divested of the bat-wings and bird-figures which symbolize the idea of dreams. 31

Another feature of court entertainments, and one that is inseparable from disguisings, is the dance episode. As an interlude, it was known as the morisco, a step dance which was evolved from the sword dance and was amenable to improvised movements. Masquers frequently descended from their corteges to join in a figure dance and to express the mythological subject or contemporary theme for which they were costumed. 32 Processions which opened entertainments, and the balletti which closed them, consisted of social dances of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which were rapidly acquiring aesthetic and spectacular qualities. These dances of court society, "highly stylized in the highly decorous manner of the early sixteenth century," 33 continued to be a fashionable pastime in Italy, developed into the Court Ballet in France, and in England, became the formative aspect of the masque.

The court dances, known as pre-classic forms, are a mixture of abstract form and simplicity, since they are essentially elaborations of the "low" and "high"—Basses and Hautes—dances of the early Renaissance, which are in turn based on the distinction made in the sword dance between walking movement and leaping, skipping, and jumping. 34 In the Basse dance, movements were measured and were given considerable classifications but no prescribed forms. For instance, among the five movements of the Basse dance—the double, two simples, the branle, the reprise, and the reverence—the branle is known to have had at least twenty-five
varieties. Initially signifying an elaborate four-fold honor, "branle" became the term used for circle and broken circle dances of the early sixteenth century. Among these, "some were slow and sedate; others lively; some mimetic; others flirtatious," they reflected the individual tastes of their performers, but could not be identified as dances. Clarification of rules for the proper steps for each dance took place in the mid-sixteenth century and resulted in the distinct pre-classic forms.

The classified dances digress from the patterns of movement found in the Basses and Hautes dances by their artificiality and their demand for small, precise movements rather than large, instinctive ones. Nevertheless, they consistently reflect the characteristic styles of the above: the stately, slow quality of the Basse or the lively, spirited one of the Haute. The well-known pair of pavan and galliard is the best example of the connection between court dances and earlier forms. In Louis Horst's vivid description, the pavan is "a grave kind of dance, wherein the performers make a kind of wheel or tail before each other, like that of a peacock, whence the name... It was used by kings, princes, and great lords to display themselves on some day of solemn festivals, also in masquerades... It was a grand, solemn, majestic dance." The galliard, made with quick, springing steps rather than gliding ones, is, by contrast, lively and very complex. Another stately dance is the processional sarabande, suggesting gravity, pride, and solemnity. Among dances related to the galliard are the courante, danced with short passages of coming and going and with continuous running steps, and the "hot and hasty" jig, known for its rapid and exciting rhythms.
bourree, described as the most vigorous and earthy among the old dance forms, is a unique combination of the two types; it is "content, pleasant, untroubled, tranquil, and gentle." The social manners and moods which these dances convey, the qualities of atmosphere they create, and their ability to communicate abstract concepts such as honor, pride, and grace, indicate that they might be choreographed as figures of speech to express text in theatre. Since they are based on flexible social dances, they are, with some adjustment, also viable as revels, social dancing which includes the audience.

The English Court Masque

The social customs which influenced the English masque of the late sixteenth century are the disguising, developed into splendid masquerades in Italy; the dance, given stylized form in France; and the occasion for entertainments, which was always the arrival of royalty and the celebration of the new year. Masque performances were traditionally begun with the entrance of noble personages and royalty disguised to take part in an entertainment specifically designed as a compliment for them. They marked the important political and social events of the year, but at the same time retained their connection with seasonal festivals. This was shown by an acceleration of court entertainments in the period between New Year and Carnival, and by poets' use of the seasonal process and of holidays as subjects for their plots and as a source of dramatis personae. For instance, Thomas Middleton's Masque of Heroes opens with Doctor Almanack, "coming from the funeral of December or the Old Year, who engages
in a conversation with Fasting Day and Plum Porridge, and is then
joined first by New Year and then by Time. In Ben Jonson's
Vision of Delight, the masquers appear as Glories of Spring. Their
member Peace says to Delight's retinue,

    Why look you so, and all turn dumb,
    To see the opener of the New Year come?
    My presence rather should invite,
    And aid and urge, and call to your delight;
    The many pleasures that I bring
    Are all of youth, of life and spring . . .

For the most part, writers of masque poetry tended to
idealize society, to transform the circumstances of particular events
and to present visions of a harmonious world. They used figures from
classical allegories and mythology since these were at once exotic and
familiar to Renaissance audiences. Enid Welsford observes that

    . . . the masque is an invention moving upon a hinge,
or, it is the logical working out of an idea which has to
be taken for granted. The hinge of a masque was as a rule
some riddling compliment to the sovereign or an actual
event, which was represented as taking place in Olympus
or Arcadia, or as being so magnificent an affair that
divinities were brought down to celebrate it.

The idea of a harmonious world which underlies all masque
themes and has to be taken for granted, is expressed by a form that is
necessarily semi-dramatic. The action of a masque is fixed not on
conflict, but on its resolution. Contrasts and antitheses to ideal
values are contributed by antimasques which typically, involve
grotesque and unruly characters, and serve only to expose and
illuminate the masque world. The literary climax is the moment
when an antimasque cedes to the masque, a ceremony honoring the
monarch and his court. This peculiar form was to some critics of
the Renaissance a princely "toy;" to others, "an adornment of
Ben Jonson's unique contribution to the masque genre was the use of dance both as an image for poetic verse and a means to communicate it to audiences. He attempted "to unite the text with the choreography, and thus to make the verse underlie the revels as it had the spectacle." Consequently, Jonson's masques often proved to be a moral education for his audiences as well as a glorification of the king and his court. They were a considerable departure from the other-worldliness associated with the magnificent spectacles of the preceding Stuart era.

The two Jonsonian masques which I use as illustrations, Pleasure Reconciled With Virtue (1618) and Oberon, The Fairy Prince (1616), are both evidently compliments to King James of England and both derive characters and situations from myth and allegory in the Renaissance tradition. Oberon is the better example of ideal content and of the element of disguising, while Pleasure exemplifies Jonson's unique didacticism and his structural use of dance. Stephen Orgel describes the latter as "a masque explicitly about dancing," while he says that Oberon presents a world of so much definition and consistency that it has no room for the revels within its action.

The idea of Pleasure Reconciled With Virtue is Jonson's interpretation of the myth in which Hercules is at the crossroads, choosing between Virtue and Vice, and of Xenophon's allegory in which these two figures seek to tempt Hercules to follow a hard or an easy path. With a slight rearrangement of values, that is, by
devising a reconciliation between the better part of Vice, Pleasure, and its opposite, Virtue, Jonson eliminated conflict, made the tendency toward Virtue inevitable, and at the same time created a perfect situation for the revels, if they were to be an ennobling as well as a pleasant experience. In Pleasure, the movement from anti-masque to masque, and the descent of the masquers from stage to court ballroom are processes of finding the golden mean between Mount Atlas, where Hesperus, who symbolizes King James, is situated, and the grove, which Comus, "the god of cheer and the belly" inhabits; they are also processes of demonstrating this knowledge to audiences by means of dances that become progressively more rhythmical and intelligible. With the revels, the golden mean becomes a symbol of the bond between Courtiers and the King who is idealized, and between actuality and the stage illusion.

The masque begins when Vice, portrayed by a company of Bottles and Tuns and a group of scheming Pigmies, disappears from view and Hercules is seen resting, not at the crossroads, but at the foot of a hillside. Here, he is met by Mercury, who comes to crown him and to announce the evening's entertainment.

The time's arrived that Atlas told thee of, how
By unalter'd law, and working of the stars,
There should be a cessation of all jars
'Twixt Virtue and her noted opposite,
Pleasure; that both should meet here, in the sight
of Hesperus, the glory of the west,
The brightest star, that from his burning crest
Lights all on this side the Atlantic seas,
As far as to thy pillars, Hercules.

Pleasure, for his delight,
Is reconcil'd to Virtue..."31

Virtue is represented by twelve Princes, the masquers, who have
been trained in the hill of knowledge near Atlas' head, and now, trusted with Pleasure, begin their descent from the lap of the mountain to the scene of the Court, "the Hesperides" (1.191). Thus, the masque consists almost wholly of the descent, the dancing section, which is to actualize the idea of harmony set forth in the verse and to afford an education for the audience. As Mercury says, the aged Atlas is opened,

That men may read in the mysterious map
   All lines
   All signs
Of royal education, and the right (1.198ff).

Under the guidance of Daedalus, who gives them "laws to all their motions" (1.220), the masquers proceed from mazes of life in which pleasures are hardiy distinguishable from virtues, to the labyrinth of beauty, where all is proportion and clarity of line. Having sung his first song, Daedalus says to his dancers,

   First, figure out the doubtful way
   At which a while all youth should stay.
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
   Then, as all actions of mankind
   Are but a labyrinth or maze
   So let your dances be entwin'd,
   Yet not perplex men unto gaze;
   But measur'd and so numerous too
   As men may read each act you do . . . (1.232ff).

Stephen Orgel notes that "measur'd and so numerous too" can refer to the choreography, 52 which suggests that the dances change from Basses, measures or slow dances, to the ordered movements of court dance, the galliards and the corantos. But then Daedalus urges the dancers to compose themselves again, and to

   put all the aptness on of
   Figure that proportion
   Or color can disclose (1.254).
He asks for architectural forms that will replace design and picture "if those silent arts were lost" (1.257). These are choreographic symbols for the order and harmony of court, and for the compliments which had been bestowed upon the king in verse.

In the last section of song and dance, the wisdom of the first dance and the style of the second are brought together in a labyrinth where

Grace, laughter, and discourse may meet,
And yet the beauty go not less (1.289).

This is the moment at which masquers descend to take partners for the revels, and it is the theatrical climax for Jonson. The conclusion is an epilogue spoken by Mercury, who reflects on the progression toward the revels:

An eye of looking back were well,
Or any murmur that would tell
Your thoughts, how you were sent, and went
To walk with Pleasure, not to dwell ... (11.296-301).

The fantasy which is apparent in Pleasure Reconciled With Virtue—the portrayal of King James as the brightest star of the West, and in the antimasque section, the transformation of the spirit of revelry into a god of cheer and the belly, are exaggerations which benefit the development of a theme. In many masque poems, for example, in Oberon, The Fairy Prince, perfect and surreal images tend to remain mysteries, far removed from the audience's experience unless they are recognized as "masques," literally "disguisings" of reality, designed to upset circumstances temporarily or to give a new perspective for them.

In Oberon, the antimasque is a dark world which yields to the
luminous spectacle of the masque and thus balances the form of the whole, since the second part, the masque, actually takes place during the night and ends when Phosphorus, the day star, appears to call the masquers to rest. The antimasque also serves to clarify the masque, by offering the contrast of ugliness to the latter's beauty, of crudity to grace, and particularity to ideality. 56

The scene of the antimasque is "a dark rock, with trees beyond it and all wildness that could be presented." 57 It is inhabited by ten satyrs who bide their time leaping about and making sport; also by Silenus, their knowledgeable prefect, who tries to endow them with the virtue and manners that are the necessary prerequisites for entering Prince Oberon's palace. It is a conflict situation in that Silenus praises Oberon as "the height of all our race" (1.53), while the satyrs are interested in Oberon's wealth. The satyrs expect the Prince to

\begin{quote}
gild our cloven feet, 
  strew our heads with powders sweet; 
  Bind our crooked legs in hoops 
  Made of shells with silver loops; 
  Hang upon our stubborn horns 
  Garlands, ribbons, and fine posies (11.79-87).
\end{quote}

In the second scene, the frontispiece of a bright and glorious palace is apparent in the background, while the satyrs continue their action along the surrounding walls and gates. Finding the palace guards asleep, they consider ten ways of awakening them. The first satyr says,

\begin{quote}
I would fain see 'em roll'd 
  Down a hill, or from a bridge 
  Headlong cast, to break their ridge- 
  Bones; or to some river tak'em; 
  Plump; and see if that would wake 'em (11.147-151).
\end{quote}
They fall into brawls, "catches," \(^{58}\) songs, and dances "full of
gesture and swift motion" (1.219). Meanwhile, the palace opens,
and Silenus bows the satyrs' heads in respect for the ensuing cere-
mony, which is described by a Sylvan as "a night of greatness and of
state, a night of homage to the British Court" (11.251-252).

Prince Oberon appears in a chariot drawn by two white bears.
He is awaited by a nation of Fays, with torches, instruments, and the
song,

\[
\text{Melt earth into sea, sea flow into air,}
\]

\[
\text{Whilst we, in tunes, to Arthur's chair}
\]

\[
\text{Bear Oberon's desire;}
\]

\[
\text{Than which nothing can be higher}
\]

\[
\text{Save James, to whom it flies;}
\]

\[
\text{But he the wonder is of tongues, of ears, of eyes (11.233-239).}
\]

The masque section which follows is an extensive compliment to the
king by way of Oberon. He is extolled as "a god o'er kings," "Pan's
father," "a matter of virtue," and as the sun "that in his own true
circle still doth run, and holds his course . . . that quickens every-
thing like a new nature" (11.282-286). The masquers then display the
verse in a sequence of six songs and three dances, emphasizing the
fact that the harmony, order, and grace associated with the monarch
are communal values.

The Fays sing of the king's majesty, glory, wisdom, know-
ledge, and piety, and are then called upon by the Knights to dance, so
as "not to forget the virtue of their feet" (1.331). The first two songs
are followed by the masquers' own dances, \(^{59}\) specially choreographed
as figures of speech for the verse, while the third sequence consists
of familiar measures, galliards, and corantos. The latter continue
until "morning," when the herald of the Day, Phosphorus, ends the ceremony, saying to the masquers, "then do I give way, as Night hath done, and so must you, to Day (11.369-370).

Phosphorus' appearance at the end replaces revels in Oberon, since it completes the imagery of text and scene begun in the antimasque—the change from chaos to order and from darkness to light. Dance is a pictorial image consistent with the textual and scenic imagery. The satyrs' dances, "full of gesture and swift motion," are replaced by formal court dances characterized by abstraction of gesture. Masque dances are metaphors for the ideal content of the verse affording "the restorative image of harmony" toward which masque poetry was directed.

Whether the masque formally included an audience in its spectacle, or whether it simply imposed visions of harmony on the audience's view, the aim was to transfer part of the stage illusion to the real world and in this way, to ennoble the audience. It is a Renaissance sophistication of the original function of ritual masks, whereby the human being becomes the god, or the god becomes the human being. The "god" in court masques is the virtuous monarch who personifies the virtues such as grace, honor, and order, which made for cohesion among the nobility. This content was called for by the formal aspects of court entertainments—disguisings and dances which traditionally expressed the participants' shared identities and interests, and by the centralizing policy of kings in regard to social and cultural affairs.

There was no problem in establishing basic values in the Renaissance, but only in sustaining them and in perpetuating the myth
of the virtuous monarch. As a solution, fantasy and didacticism were employed; Greek mythology and allegorical symbolism derived from religious drama were incorporated to enhance masque poetry. These were additions to the myths and rituals which arose from contemporary life, and ornaments for the political and social events which took place during each monarch's rule.

Although the masque was shortlived as a form of theatre, it had much influence on later poetic theatre in England. Elements of the masque were often apparent in the staging of entertainments and festivities within drama; in the ritual "taking out" of scenes to the audience; and in the fantasy used to veil or to distinguish crucial points in an action. 61 Like the chorus, the masque was at first a form of "symbolic statement about the social order," 62 and gradually became a formal device used to complement individual authors' thought and to retain poetry and a social atmosphere in the drama.
Chapter 4

TWENTIETH CENTURY THEATRE "RITUAL"

Twentieth century theatre has been an individual art-form from its inception, which is considered to be the transition between nineteenth century Romanticism and early twentieth century Realism, apparent, for example, in the difference between the early and late plays of Henrik Ibsen. The modern theatre is characterized by writers' experimentation with styles such as expressionism, symbolism, epic realism, and the forms which constitute Absurd theatre. These styles represent a search for ways to reconcile meaningful artistic representation with the diversity of beliefs and behavior existent in twentieth century society. Robert Brustein, an outspoken critic of modern drama, associates the above styles with an attitude of revolt—a revolt against god, social conventions, and conditions of existence, which he finds variably emphasized in the majority of authors from Ibsen and Strindberg to Beckett and Genet. He argues that the idea of revolt toward generally accepted values and beliefs negates affirmative criticism and a possible reordering of standards.

But the rebel who wishes to transform the world is also an artist who must accurately represent it... This ambivalence makes the rebel dramatist vacillate between negation and affirmation; rebellion and reality.

The cancelling out of negative and affirmative attitudes suggested by Brustein's "myth of rebellion" might be the theoretical cause for the phenomenon of Absurd theatre in the 1950's, a theatre
which presents a world in which human effort is pointless and communication is impossible. This incomprehensible world is expressed by a style which devalues language and emphasizes the mechanical imagery of things. Ionesco, whose works exemplify both the content and the style of the Absurd, speaks of his theatre as being a paroxysm and a dislocation of reality before its reintegration.\footnote{5}

The Polish Lab Theatre

The decade of the 1960's showed an

\ldots interest in religious matters, or quasi-religious matters; a search for central, harmonizing energies \ldots a return to myth to regain a sense of connection to something of substance.\footnote{6}

Jerzy Grotowski, whose Polish Laboratory Theatre was among the foremost experimental theatre groups of the 1960's, emphasizes the need to relate contemporary life and its accepted values to basic mythological themes, such as the Judeo-Christian myth, which is the dominant religious myth of the West; biological myths, which are synonymous with the Dionysian concern for transition points in life; and national myths, which stem from a country's particular history.\footnote{7}

Since these myths derive from social interests and activities, in some cases from ritual,\footnote{8} and are thus indicative of needs and motives "common to various cultures and ages," that is of "archetypes,"\footnote{9} Grotowski uses the term "archetypes" for all contemporary meanings and their symbols and images which might be connected with the basic themes. Theoretically, mythical themes provide a common ground on which to communicate with audiences. However, Grotowski cannot assume that his audiences will identify with them; he can only confront
audiences with myth. He writes, what is possible is

... to attempt to incarnate myth, putting on its ill-fitting skin to perceive the relativity of our problems, their connection with the "roots," and the relativity of the "roots" in the light of today's experience. 10

Grotowski's "secular ritual" which presents myth from various angles is by no means a vision of harmony. It tends to exaggerate the contradictions existing between fixed conventions and moral standards and the fluid "basic truths" inherent in myths. However, Grotowski's aim is not to aggravate contradictions, but ultimately to mediate them, in accord with the age-long function of ritual. 11 Theatrical exaggeration is intended to destroy stereotypes, to lift social masks, 12 and thus to generate understanding of more than one side of an issue. The theatrical experience which Grotowski wants to achieve is a collective introspection. 13 His procedure is purely artificial, in respect both to the development of content and of the formal methods of presentation.

The Content. Polish Lab Theatre productions consist mainly of adaptations of classical works and of modern texts which emphasize symbols and meanings associated with religious and national myths. In some instances, as in the 1969 Apocalypse, texts are pieced together after the company, using their own experience, develops an acting score by improvisations on a basic theme, in which case the development of the score is a collective ritual act. In Grotowski's view, theatre is essentially an encounter between actors and spectators, not a respectful interpretation of dramatists' works. He writes, for example, that
... one must break away from the trampolin represented by the text, which is already overloaded with a number of general associations. For this, we need either a classical text, to which, through a sort of profanation, we simultaneously restore its truth... or a modern text which might well be banal and stereotyped in its context, but nevertheless, rooted in the psyche of society.¹⁴

The repertoire is in large part a national Polish one, including plays such as Micklewitz's Forefathers' Eve and Wyspiański's Akropolis, which concern Poland's experience in the context of European social history. The theme which is otherwise most frequent is the multifaceted Judeo-Christian ethic.

The production of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus attacks the conventional ideas of sainthood and stereotyped conceptions of virtue and sin. Faustus is portrayed as a saint because he shows an absolute desire for pure truth. He begins his sainthood when he rejects the ambiguous codes of morality and truth around him and signs a pact with the Devil, expecting nothing (but truth), and knowing that he is bound for eternal damnation. According to the director's notes on this production, "if the saint is to become one with his sainthood, he must rebel against God, Creator of this world, because the laws of the world are traps contradicting morality."¹⁵ The theological and scientific studies which Faustus rejected in favor of magic were therefore sins; his pact with the Devil, a virtuous act.

To present the above interpretation, Grotowski left Marlowe's script unchanged, but he rearranged it into a montage and modified the sequence of scenes, omitting several and replacing them with new ones. The most significant addition, and the scene which opens the Polish Theatre performance is the Last Supper, to which
Faustus, the Christ-figure, invites his friends, the audience, in order to hold a public confession and to relate episodes from his life. The remainder of the play then consists of retelling of events which take place in Marlowe's text and of a series of flashback episodes, with the exception of the final scenes. These include Mephistopheles' diversions and Faustus' last monologue, a violent argument with God, which replaces the expression of regret for having made a pact with the Devil. The setting for the production, which calls for the audience to be seated at two long tables facing the acting area, represents a medieval monastery.

The image of Christianity in Calderon's *The Constant Prince* is the opposite from that of *Doctor Faustus*. It is the kindness and passivity of the Prince amidst the ugly and villainous doings of a surrounding society. In Grotowski's adaptation of Calderon's play, antinomies which existed in the baroque era become a twentieth century "study in the phenomenon of 'inflexibility'": on the one hand, the inflexibility of the society which persecutes and humiliates the Prince; on the other, the Prince's stubborn determination to preserve his purity and his spiritual disposition. The contrast between a powerful society and the Prince, as well as the alienation of both, are indicated by their peculiar costumes. The society wear togas, breeches, and top-boots, while the Prince has only a white shirt, and is even divested of this toward the end of the play. The Prince's spiritualism and the conception of surrounding life as evil movement are themes perfectly suited to the actors' technique which will be described below.
One of the Polish Theatre's later plays, *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* (1969), is most literally a confrontation of myth in the light of today's experience. It is built from actors' improvisations of scenes and reactions to a given subject—the hypothetical Return of Christ, a Second Coming. The actors assume names of Biblical characters surrounding Christ, for example, Simon Peter, Judas, Mary Magdalene, John, and Lazarus, in order to facilitate associations between their actions and actual Biblical events. The situation which they invent to begin the story is a profanation of the Host which necessitates the "Second Coming."

Actors first appear as "deadbeats who seem to have passed out from too much drink," sprawled in a heap on the floor. They form an absurd tableau as they wait for something to happen, which does, as one actress enters carrying a loaf of bread, a property that might symbolize the Host. She fondles it like an infant and runs back and forth among the others until they are stirred to action. The loaf is snatched from the girl's hands, hustled about, and finally struck with a knife to the sound of groaning. The group is then gradually aroused to the idea of summoning a Saviour. Simon Peter, the master of ceremonies and the chief antagonist of Christ, begins to distribute roles and to search for the character whom he will designate as Christ.

In developing a story-line which leads to the defeat of the Saviour and to the conclusion that the return of Christ can be only a dream, actors sketched scenes using their own experience, their knowledge of the Bible, and the expression of instinctive reactions to
situations created by others in the company. Words and dialogue were also initially improvised, but once roles were defined, they were replaced by relevant quotations taken from the Bible, Dostoevski, and from the poetry of T.S. Eliot and Simone Weil. The rationale for a diversity of sources was that the spoken word, like the action, should be a collective statement.  

However, the play is not a restatement of the "death of god" theme; neither is it a statement of fact. The subject and its presentation, which includes immediate reactions to the second coming, asks whether the Judeo-Christian myth is alive today, and whether the many values connected with it are still valid. Values related to the myth are, for instance, the archetypal notions of universal human love, the need for expiation of guilt and for higher justice. The questions asked by the play appear to be rhetorical, since the master of ceremonies is Christ's chief antagonist. The attack on the myth is exaggerated for theatrical purposes, in order to generate definite psychic reactions in the audience and consideration of basic truths in the issue. One critic refers to Apocalypse as a vivisection of a myth—"a ferocious one."

The Christ myth is subjected to the test of blasphemy, the test of cynicism, the test of verbal argumentation, the most acute ever made since it comes from The Brothers Karamazov. The object is to strip the myth of all the rich finery in which it has been decked out by religion, tradition, and habit; to have it stand naked before us and try to defend itself.

Circumstances for the attack are set when, for the role of Christ, Simon Peter chooses a Simpleton, a witless yokel who has been cowering in the background of the stage. In Poland, he is known as the "Dark One," a stereotype village idiot to whom good and evil
are simple and spontaneous instincts. Such a character is easily subjugated by the provocations of the group and by the curious games which ensue. The first of these is a satire of the "Horseman of the Apocalypse galloping on the back of his Apostle," in which Simon Peter leaps on the Simpleton's back and takes Christ "for a ride." He whips him and spurs him on to the others' wild cries until the Simpleton goes berserk, "tosses Simon Peter to the ground, and careens off on his own, writhing and twitching with ecstasy... as though his cavortings were some kind of dance, both Dionysian and despairing."26

The action comes to a stand-still. The group sings hit tunes of the 1960's until gospel figures emerge again, and random passages from the Bible remind the actors of actual events in the Christ story. Their next step is to surround the Simpleton and to mime the drinking of Christ's blood with gross gulping and gurgling. There is an episode of the raising of Lazarus, which epitomizes the lack of communication between the Simpleton and other characters. When the Simpleton says gravely, "Lazarus, I say unto thee, arise," Lazarus' reaction is to start a fight. He recites a passage from the Book of Job and begins to stone the Simpleton with pellets of dough from the loaf of bread.

The only interruption of this blasphemy is a lyrical love scene which occurs between Mary Magdalene and the Simpleton and, with John's entrance, assumes the symbolism of a hunt. The sequence, from a gentle embrace to deliberate bow and arrow movements, is described as "a mobile sculpture... radiant, almost mystical."27 It is the only well-illuminated scene in an overwhelmingly dark spectacle, and according to Konstanty Puzyna, the critic who calls the
play a vivisection of a myth, it is the key scene.

The attacks on Christ, led by Simon Peter and Judas, are seemingly irrational. They exhibit aggravation with the Simpleton's incongruous meekness and innocence. The group refuses the challenge of goodness and love offered by the Simpleton, while the Simpleton evades the challenge of asserting himself as Christ. When Simon Peter says to him, "Damn you for coming to trouble us," the Simpleton replies meekly,

Because I do not hope to turn again
Because I do not hope to turn
I no longer strive to strive for such things . . .

The conclusion of the dialectic is another fragment of T. S. Eliot's poetry spoken by the Simpleton.

Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors,
And issues, deceives . . .

Gives too late
What's not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think
Neither fear nor courage saves us . . .

Theatrical Technique. When Grotowski speaks of the possibility to incarnate myth, he means literally, to confront the audience with its physical image. Movement technique is compatible with the content—the myths which are not necessarily inventions of the mind, "but are inherited through one's blood, religion, culture . . . things that are so elementary and so intimately associated, that it is difficult to submit them to rational analysis." It permits the expression of feelings of antagonism beneath argument in Apocalypsis Cum Figuris, and the emotional and volitional states of the spirit which are the substance of
The Constant Prince. But if content is abstruse and vague, the more care is given to the definition of external form and to the development of concrete signs and ideograms. This expressive principle applies as well to vocal technique, which involves work with speech tones and rhythms in order to produce imagery for the ideas expressed. The body and voice are inseparable means of expression since "the voice is the summit of the reactions of the body to a cycle of associations." Performances at the Polish Theatre are typically forceful exaggerations of subject matter. This is evident in the following account of Apocalypsis:

Meanings are multiplied and telescoped; an actor's face will express one thing, the motion of his hand another, the response of his partner something else again; his voice growls threateningly, his eyes sparkle elatedly; his body twitches with pain. The virtuosity of the representation is breathtaking, the etching of each scene marvelously precise.

The formal construction of roles is supported by the actors' training which emphasizes expressive virtuosity. Grotowski's method is called via negativa, an eradication of mental and physical blocks and an elimination of elements of natural behavior which obscure pure impulse by means of intensive psycho-physical exercise. Its aim is a suppleness of the body, which makes for a concurrency between impulse and outer reaction, and allows involuntary expression to diffuse form. "Everything is concentrated on the 'ripening' of the actor, which is expressed by a tension toward the extreme... This is the technique of the trance and of the integration of all the actor's psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and his instinct." The intensity of the technique and the
actors' process of self-revelation are a means to provoke the audience to respond immediately and to undertake a similar process of self-penetration. 38

The Polish Theatre has no tradition. However, it relates in some respects to the theatrical practices of Meyerhold and Vakh- tangov, and refers to Stanislavski's method and to the European systems of movement established by Dullin, Dalcroze, and Delsarte for the development of actors' technique.

Like Meyerhold, Grotowski emphasizes anti-naturalism, the importance of theatrical gesture, and the use of stage space to create spatial and dynamic relationships in addition to temporal ones. But unlike Meyerhold, who tended to impose forms and to use elements of disparate arts, such as ballet, opera, and music-hall in the composition of spectacle, Grotowski posits a poor theatre, which depends on the personal and scenic technique of the actor. 39 This technique is anti-naturalistic not for spectacular effect, but rather in view of Grotowski's principle of expressiveness, which calls for a disciplined artificial form to guide the exposure of psychic content. Actors' training therefore consists not of an accumulation of skills such as fencing, juggling, movement and dance, but of related exercises which are designed to integrate formal technique with the expression of text and experience.

Beyond basic exercises in gymnastics and acrobatics, which emphasize motivated movement, the technique is Grotowski's entirely personal interpretation of the methods evolved by Delsarte in the late nineteenth century, and by Dullin and Dalcroze in the early twentieth century. 40 He derives exercises in rhythmic perception and
exploration of space from Dullin and Dalcroze. In his work with composition, he refers to Delsarte's investigation of introversive and extroversive reactions, which resulted in the following movement categories: movement creating contact with the external world; movement which tends to draw attention from the external world in order to concentrate on the subject; and intermediate, neutral stages. Delsarte's analysis, which was so detailed that it included the reactions of eyebrows and eyelids, is especially useful for Grotowski's exercises in facial masks, which are emphasized, since the reactions of the face should correspond with and epitomize those of the entire body. 41

These exercises are meant to free the actor from all physical resistance in his work of interpreting a text; to help him to articulate the process and to convert it into concrete signs. Grotowski calls for a whole-hearted involvement of the actor with his work; he discourages cliches and ready-made methods. Theoretically, his technique is analogous to Stanislavski's system, which associates precise physical action with the truth of thoughts, emotions, and experiences, and to Vakhtangov's dictum that the expression of inner content must be controlled by a disciplined outward form. 42

The distinctive aspect of the Polish Lab Theatre is theatrical excess, in regard both to actors' technique and to the depth of content with which it deals. The actor is asked to surpass normal limits of behavior. He must include a process of self-revelation in the interpretation of a text so that its communication is the more forceful and direct. By the physical intensity of his expression he subjugates an
audience into the experience of the play. Productions question very basic social values. They "violate accepted stereotypes of vision, feeling, and judgment" because, to Grotowski, theatre is a place of provocation, where actors and audience alike attempt to question and to alter life masks.

Every performance built on a contemporary theme is an encounter between the superficial traits of the present day and its deep roots and hidden motives. The performance is national because it is a sincere and absolute search into our historical ego; it is realistic because it is an excess of truth; it is social because it is a challenge to the social being, the spectator.

The Open Theater

The social and contemporary character of the Polish Theatre has affinity with the new experimental theatre in the United States, most specifically with the Open Theater, which was founded in New York in 1963 by a group of actors and playwrights in search of what is worth expressing and of means to express it. The director, Joseph Chaikin, disagrees with Jerzy Grotowski in that he is interested in a theatre of illusion and mystery, and not one of behavioristic psychology. However, he also explains this as an interest in "the man not on the street" and in "the irrational and fragile aspects of behavior." Like Grotowski, he uses the stage as a weapon to some extent, to satirize the stereotypes in contemporary social manners and to balance today's values against the basic myths of civilization.

Among the exercises which the Open Theater has used in its character work, there is one called "perfect people," which explores the advertising world's image of the American personality. As
Chaikin writes, the questions asked are, "What kind of country is it
that is populated by 'perfect people', talking about cigarettes, spa-
ghetti sauce, detergents, and the thousands of other products we
consume? Who are these consumers? . . . A night watching tele-
vision convinces us that they are perfect people."

This kind of analysis, followed by physical exercises, serves as a preparation for
improvisations on a theme which is chosen for production. Plays
are developed in collaboration with contemporary playwrights, who
supply the text and the formal structure.

The Open Theater's most successful production following the
above approach has been The Serpent, a theatre ceremony written by
Jean-Claude van Itallie. Its structure consists of scenes from the
narrative of Genesis, interwoven with ones which depict American
life. It shows the contrast between the Garden of Eden and God's
curses in terms of familiar values. These values are communication,
trust, belief, and love, as opposed to doubt, hate, loneliness, and
worst of all, a state of suspension wherein characters are in a middle-
ground, "knowing neither the end, nor the beginning."

The positive values that are celebrated in the ceremony,
mainly communication and trust, are conveyed as much by vivid
actions and images as by words, and by attempts to physically involve
the audience in the spectacle. The continuity of life is presented in
the successive images of children playing games; of the ritual of
courtship; and of a group "begatting" while the account of genealogy
from Genesis is being read. In the Garden scene, a group of actors
personifying the serpent radiate toward the audience, inviting it to
taste an apple, to risk leaving their seats for a moment, and to dance,
implying that the audience should loosen their social masks and become receptive to the ideas of the play.

The contrast to positive values is made by two introductory scenes: one portraying a complex brain operation, which distinguishes things measurable from imagination, belief, and dreams; the other, the Kennedy and King assassinations, which oppose social trust and life itself. In the course of the play, Biblical scenes are interrupted by disjointed statements concerning mechanistic behavior. For example, there are conversations about a world of committees which have little to do with helping people; about dinner parties where participants are poised and pleasant while they would like to throw food, ax tables, and scratch faces. These comments on "dead" qualities in people relate to Cain's ignorant killing of his brother Abel. The second series of statements is an extension of the episode where Adam and Eve eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, since it considers the problems of making choices, crossing boundaries, and assessing the possibilities for future choices. In this series, a chorus reflects on its past life as it philosophizes,

But now the point
Toward which we have chosen to go
Has a line drawn
Between itself
And the beginning.

The change can only start
From a line already drawn.

According to the director, The Serpent celebrates present time in society. It asks, "What are the boundaries we adhere to and how have they become fixed?", and it asks what is possible today, acknowledging the fact that the past cannot be remade.
CONCLUSIONS

First, I would remark that among the three theatres described, twentieth century experimental theatre is the most indicative of the basic qualities of ritual and theoretically, the most closely related to early Dionysian ritual.\(^1\) Whereas the Renaissance masque idealized reality and the chorus of Greek tragedy diverted its audience to an elevated, lyrical world, modern theatre reverts to the basic myths and social values which precede conflict in human action and reinterpretations of social life. Even in the case where these myths and values are contrasted with accepted patterns of behavior in contemporary society, their presentation is intended to mediate contradictions and to affirm the common denominators of psychic experience which served to create social ties in the past.

The aim of Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Theatre and to a great extent Joseph Chaikin's Open Theater, is consequently to revive the inner life of the spectator so that he can identify with the content that is presented, for example, with the ideas of trust, belief, and communication, emphasized in *Apocalypse* and *The Serpent*. Beside the choice of myth as content and the use of dance-movement as a means of expression, the method of achieving the above aim includes attempts at a collective development of themes and formal techniques. By this process, the actors' subjective experience and emotion in regard to subject matter is communicated, and theatre ritual, while yet depending on audience participation, becomes authentic.
In contrast to Aristotelian drama which imitates human action and provides the audience with material on which to reflect, "secular ritual," like the Greek chorus and the Renaissance masque, emphasizes direct interaction with the audience. It shows the human effort to supplement, alter, or counteract the work of nature more than the effort to represent, and therefore responds explicitly to the dominant needs in society. Jerzy Grotowski bases his theatre practice on the assumption that the dominant need of his audiences is one for integration, taking into account that twentieth century society is typically fragmented and compartmentalized in respect to both social and artistic activities, and that it tends to place more value on products and results than on the process of living that is celebrated by ritual and social customs.

The efficacy of theatre ritual in supplementing, altering, and counteracting states in the audience's reality is, I think, chiefly attributable to the anti-naturalistic means of expression it employs. This is for the most part the dance, which was a superstructure on instinctive ritual forms in Greece and in Renaissance Europe, and is a formalization of impulse in the Polish Theatre technique. Greek choral art, a rich blend of rhythms, gestures, postures, and attitudes, supplemented all that could be expressed discursively about a dramatic action. The spectacular dance of masques, tending toward abstraction of gesture and the formal precision of ballet, actualized the ideal world of the stage and, with the revels, transferred it to the court ballroom. Finally, the effect of a distillation of impulse and of extreme tension which characterize Grotowski's technique is one of spontaneity, intended to reawaken the spectator to natural
life-rhythms. The process by which social traditions and natural expression pass into high art is reversed and epitomized in the interaction between stage and audience. Nevertheless, the difference between theatre art and social activity remains a time-honored phenomenon. There is an interesting conversation to this effect in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Augurs*, where a character named Vangoose says, "If it go from de nature of de ting, it is de more art; for dere is art, and dere is nature."
NOTES

Chapter 1--INTRODUCTION


2Eugenio Barba, "The Theatre of Magic and Sacrilege," The Tulane Drama Review, 9, No. 3 (Spring, 1965), 174.


7Cecil Sharp and A.P. Oppe, The Dance (New York, 1924), p. 3.


10Jerzy Grotowski, Towards A Poor Theatre, "In terms of formal technique, we do not work by proliferation of signs or accumulation of signs. Rather, we subtract, seeking distillation of signs by eliminating those elements of natural behavior which obscure pure impulse," p. 18.


12The Glories of Spring in Ben Jonson's masque The Vision of Delight.

Chapter 2--GREEK RITUAL AND DRAMA

1Francis Fergusson, ed., Aristotle's Poetics, "Tragedy--as also Comedy--was at first mere improvisation. The one originated with the authors of the Dithyramb, the other with those of the phallic songs" (IV, 12), p. 57.

2Jane Harrison, Themis (New York, 1927), pp. 483-485); see also p. 22.

3F. M. Cornford explains the difference between the united, homogeneous tragic chorus and the comic chorus, which is "either more or less violently on the side of one of the adversaries against the other, or else divided against itself, one half taking each side . . .," F. M. Cornford, The Origins of Attic Comedy (New York, 1966), pp. 79-79.

4"We can accept, as a provisional formula, that a great many units of dance movement, which are also metrical units controlling the sung words, were traditional, and that much of the art of the choral poet lay in finding new combinations of traditional units rather than in inventing new units," T. B. L. Webster, The Greek Chorus, p. 201.

5T. B. L. Webster, Greek Art and Literature 700-530 B.C., (London, 1959), p. 56.

"The mystery-god arises out of those instincts, emotions, desires which attend and express life; but these emotions, desires, instincts, insofar as they are religious, are at the outset rather of a group than of individual consciousness," Jane Harrison, Themis, p. xiii.


"Pratinas of Phlius, in the later sixth century, brought over to Athens his own chorus of trained satyrs, men masked and costumed as those wild, mischievous spirits of the countryside who had long been associated with the cult of Dionysus . . . this hyporcheme or 'dance-song' is a self-contained performance of a satyr-chorus to a flute, danced in the quick, rushing, stamping style that came from Crete," quoted in A.M. Dale, Collected Papers, pp. 167-168.


Jane Harrison, Themis, p. 20.

Tbid., p. 35.

Tbid., pp. 7-8. A ritual hymn excavated at the seaport town of Palaikastro in Greece.

Tbid., p. 29.

Tbid., "the word Titanes (White-clay-men) comes from the Greek titanos, 'white earth or clay'. The Titanes were later . . . mythologized into Titans, giants . . . The Titans, when they tore Dionysus to pieces, were covered with a coat of gypsum in order that they might not be recognized. Later, when people were initiated, they went on doing the same thing and for the same reason that people do things nowadays, because 'it was the thing to do'," p. 17.

Gilbert Murray, Five Stages of Greek Religion, p. 27.

Jane Harrison, Themis, On the subject of certain transition rites, the author says, "Apellaios is the month of these rites and these offerings, Apollon is the projection of these rites; he, like Dionysus, like Herakles, is the arch-ephebos, the Megistos Kouros," p. 411. Harrison conjectures that Apollo was the god of flocks and herds, but "that Apollo is surely not more, nor indeed half so much
god of flocks and herds as Hermes," p. 440. "Ktesios, Epokarpeios, and Charitodotes are titles applied to Zeus in his capacity as giver of increase. To these might be added Ploutos, Obios, Meilichios, Philios, Teleios. All these are daimons of fertility," p. 298.

18 Ibid., p. 45.
19 Ibid., p. 24.
20 T. B. L. Webster, Greek Art and Literature, 700-530 B.C., p. 61.
21 Ibid., pp. 60-62.
23 Ibid., p. 31.
24 Ibid., p. 34.
25 T. B. L. Webster, Greek Art and Literature, 700-530 B.C., p. 66.
26 Ibid., p. 67.
28 Jane Harrison, Themis, p. 275.
29 Ibid., pp. 274-275.
31 Jane Harrison, Themis, p. 295.
32 H. Bergson (L'Evolution Creatrice) quoted in J. Harrison, Themis, p. xii.
33 Gilbert Murray, "Excursus on the Ritual Forms Preserved in Greek Tragedy" in J. Harrison, Themis, pp. 341-347.
34 Harrison finds a special correlative to the temporal Horai--the figure of Moira, division, partition, allotment . . . the Olympians are then but highly diversified Moirai, and the Moirai are departments . . . The wheel of Dike moves through time; Moira


44 H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks*, (Baltimore, 1959), "The king is concerned with or should be concerned with Abstract Right . . . The king governed, like the early Greek monarch, according to Themis. He was ruled by Law, a known Law, which respected Justice," p. 9.

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**The Dramatic Chorus**


46 Jane Harrison, *Themis*, p. 43.


50 Richmond Lattimore, ed., *Aeschylus*, op. cit., "In origin, they must have been a special local development of the choral lyric--sacred, occasional, public--which was alive in all the cities of Greece. But the early phases of the course by which dramatic lyric was transformed into lyric drama are now invisible to us," p. 3.

52 Ibid., p. 175.


57 Jane Harrison, Themis, p. 43.


59 H. D. F. Kitto, Greek Tragedy, p. 163.


62 Gilbert Murray, Euripides and His Age, p. 118.

63 T. H. Banks, ed., Four Plays by Sophocles, Women of Trachis, Wave after wave rolls on across the ocean, Blown by the north or the southwind's tireless breath, So Heracles is lifted to the heavens, Or dragged down to the depths of misery, 11.107-110, p. 45.


65 Gilbert Murray, Euripides and His Age, p. 119.


67 Suzanne Langer, Philosophy in a New Key, (New York, 1942), "metaphysical propositions--like lyrical verses--have only an expressive function. They are neither true nor false, because they assert nothing... but they are, like laughing, lyrics, music, expressive," p. 79.
The knowable is a clearly defined field, governed by the requirements of discursive projectibility. Outside this domain is the inexpressible realm of feeling... immediate experiences, forever incognito and incommunicando..." p. 80.

Theatrical Dance


A. M. Dale, Collected Papers, "For the Greek lyric poet, Voice and Verse were not a pair of sirens; Verse was merely the incomplete record of a single creation, Song. Song, with its dance, was a function of the words themselves," p. 168.

Ibid., p. 166.

These three categories derive from the three aspects attributed to Greek dance: phora, schema, deixis (from deiknumi, "to show, display, portray"), Lillian Lawler, The Dance in Ancient Greece, p. 25.


Ibid., cited from Pollus (IV, 105), p. 209.


Ibid., p. 84.

A. M. Dale, Collected Papers, "What those steps and attitudes were can only very vaguely be surmised," p. 209. Also, H. D. F. Kitto, Greek Tragedy, "Though the music and the dances have perished, they have left something behind them, namely the rhythm which they shared with the verse," p. 114. Also, Lillian Lawler, "The exact appearance of these dances eludes us," p. 85.


Ibid., p. 211.

See 70 above.
Chapter 3--THE RENAISSANCE MASQUE


2Otto Gombosi, "Some Musical Aspects of the English Court Masque," Journal of the American Musicological Society, I, (Fall, 1948), 3. "By virtue of its origin, the masque was, in the first place, dance, and naturally dance music--and by virtue of its history, in the second place, spectacular entertainment. Only in the third place was the masque literature," quoted in Stephen Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque, p. 148.

3See "The Dramatic Chorus," p. 24; also "Greek Ritual and Drama," note 50.


6 "By 734, Christmas was established, with Epiphany and Easter as one of the three leading festivals of the year," Ibid., p. 241.


9 Ibid., pp. 10-11.

10 Sir James Frazer (The Scapegoat) in Welsford, p. 11.


12 Ibid., pp. 117-118.

13 Ibid., pp. 136-137.

14 Ibid., p. 137.

15 Pastoral plays were popular along with folk drama. Pastorals usually showed a romantic action, for instance, the wooing of a shepherdess by a knight, or the romance of Robin and Maid Marion, where all ends happily with dances and songs among the peasants. E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage, II, p. 177.

16 Ibid., p. 182.

17 Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 34.

18 E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage, p. 188.


21 Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 36.

22 A word which Welsford says comes from the French "rebellion," its secondary meaning being "merrymaking," Ibid., p. 359. The word revel might also derive from the French "reveiller," "to reawaken."

23 Ibid., p. 30.


26 Welsford remarks that this show differs from the folk mumming only in scale and magnificence. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

27 "In the 15th century, the terms mumming and disguising were apparently used indiscriminately, but in the Tudor period, the disguising generally corresponded with the more dramatic mmerie (though it could be used for any kind of disguising), and the word mumming was limited in meaning to the cortege of masked and silent dice players," *Ibid.*, p. 41.


30 Welsford uses the word *intermezzo* synonymously with "masked procession" or masquerade. *Welsford*, p. 45.

31 A.M. Nagler, *Theater Festivals of the Medici*, pp. 11-12. The source for his descriptions is Cini and the 1565 "Descrizione" by an anonymous author.

32 Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque*, p. 85. Also, Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographe*, "There were various types of moresca... miming dances which frequently contained sword play and mock battles; highly exotic, acrobatic "savage" dances; dance battles..." *p. 229*.


34 Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographe*, "The basse danse is literally "low" dance... It is interesting today as the ancestor of other dances that survived it. It is performed with the feet kept close to the ground, and undoubtedly had its origin in the round choral dances of the 13th century... the name haute danse was applied to all dances which included in their steps hops, leaps, high jumps, kicks, and stamps," *p. 234*.


36 Louis Horst, *Pre-Classic Dance Forms*, p. 5.

38 Louis Horst, Pre-Classic Dance Forms, pp. 8-9.

39 Ibid., p. 54.

40 Ibid., p. 79.

The English Court Masque

41 Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 308.

42 Ibid., p. 208.


44 Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 256.

45 A. M. Nagler, Theater Festivals of the Medici, p. 4; see also p. 52 and note 30 above.


47 Ibid., "Such unity implies a complex idea of form, which Jonson moved toward and achieved in Pleasure Reconciled With Virtue, a masque explicitly about dancing," p. 125.

48 Ibid., p. 148.

49 Stephen Orgel, ed., Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques, "This story was well known in the Renaissance, and provided an emblem for some compilers of emblem books, which, in turn, affected the composition of masques," Introduction to Pleasure Reconciled With Virtue, p. 229.


51 Ibid., 1. 169ff; p. 240.

The masque world now becomes a society as the dancers acknowledge their partners. The masquers descend, now possessing the wisdom he has learned in the first dance and the style he has learned in the second. These meet in social intercourse, "p. 82.

Stephen Orgel, ed., Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques, "A figure described originally by Philostratus in Imagines, 1, 2, as the youthful spirit of revelry; Jonson made him obese, older, more like Bacchus," p. 229.

The concluding chapter of Stephen Orgel's The Jonsonian Masque is called "More Removed Mysteries," (pp. 186-202).轰

Stephen Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque, "The antimasque world is a world of particularity and instability--of accidents; the masque world was one of ideal abstractions and eternal verities," p. 75.


A "catch" is a suddenly improvised song and dance.

Cecil Sharp and A. P. Oppe, The Dance, "There were then three kinds of dance in the masque: the 'intermixed' dances . . . ; the masquers' own dances in the three formal entries; and the antimasque dances . . . The masquers' own dances were specially devised by professional dancing masters and carefully rehearsed for the occasion," p. 38.


G. S. Kirk, Myth, Its Meaning and Its Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures, "Ritual Action and Belief are alike to be understood as forms of symbolic statement about the social order," p. 23.

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3 Ibid., p. 4.

4 Ibid., p. 4.


7 Jerzy Grotowski, Towards A Poor Theatre, p. 42.

8 G.S. Kirk introduces his book with an argument that myth and ritual are not necessarily connected, although for the most part they are; and that myth and ritual are not necessarily religious. G.S. Kirk, Myth, Its Meanings and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures, pp. 9, 17-19.

9 Konstanty Puzyna, "A Myth Vivisected," Grotowski's Apocalypse, The Drama Review, 15, No. 4, (Fall, 1971), "More accurate, I think, is the interpretation that sees the archetype as the need itself, common to various cultures and ages, and expressed in certain motives; on the whole, however, it has become customary to give the term archetypes simply to these motives, or as they have been described by Levi-Strauss, 'certain mythological themes with which, Jung thought, specific meanings could be connected,'" p. 38.

10 Jerzy Grotowski, Towards A Poor Theatre, p. 23.


13 Eugenio Barba, "A Theater of Magic and Sacrilege," The Tulane Drama Review, 9, No. 3, (Spring, 1965), "Grotowski defines the theater as 'a collective introspection,'" 174; see also Introduction, p. 2.

14 Jerzy Grotowski, Towards A Poor Theatre, p. 43.

15 Ibid., p. 79.

16 Ibid., p. 97.

18 Konstanty Puzyna, op. cit., p. 37.

19 Ibid., p. 38.

20 Ludwig Flaszen, ed., Apocalypsis Cum Figuris, The Drama Review, 14, No. 11, (Fall, 1969), "The idea was that, wherever the spoken word was essential, it should appear in the form of quotations from sources which could be regarded as the work not of one writer, but of the whole of mankind," p. 162.

21 Konstanty Puzyna, op. cit., "God or Christ need not necessarily mean the Judeo-Christian personal identity. It may signify a great many, very different human concerns, for instance, it could denote a psychic need, collective as well as individual, for universal human love, or higher justice, or expiation of guilt. It may, in other words, be a matter of archetypes . . .", p. 38.

22 Eugenio Barba, op. cit., "Art, whatever its form, has one single purpose: to generate a number of very definite psychic reactions," p. 174.

23 Konstanty Puzyna, op. cit., p. 38.

24 Ibid., p. 40.

25 Ibid., "The Horseman of the Apocalypse is the Pope, galloping on the back of his Apostle", a Polish critic commented. Not an Apostle, actually, but Christ, and in any case, this interpretation is not the only one. What is more important is the literal, colloquial sense of 'taking Christ for a ride'," p. 40.

26 Ibid., p. 40.

27 Ibid., p. 42.

28 Ibid., p. 43.


31bid., "The more we become absorbed in what is hidden inside us... in the excess, the self-penetration, the more rigid must be the external discipline, that is to say the form, the artificiality, the ideogram, the sign." p. 39.

32Peter Feldman, op. cit., "The word is also a concrete image. Vocal rhythm, pitch, dynamics, tonality, and careful orchestration is to enhance the word, to restore it from idea to image," p. 193.

33bid., p. 193.

34Konstanty Puzyna, op. cit., p. 39.


36bid., "Impulse and action are concurrent. The spectator sees only a series of visible impulses," p. 16.

37bid., p. 16.

38bid., p. 34.

39bid., p. 15.

40bid., p. 145.

41bid., p. 145.


43Jerzy Grotowski, Towards A Poor Theatre, p. 22.

44bid., p. 21.

45bid., p. 52.


48bid., p. 193.
49 Ibid., p. 194.

50 The themes which are dealt with are various. Chaikin notes old age, death, the experience of living, social themes, communication, and the world of illusion and mystery; also, the theatre's recent interest in dreams and the figure of the fool, Schechner, "The Open Theater," op. cit., p. 193.

51 Jean-Claude van Itallie, The Serpent, p. 47.

52 Ibid., p. 53.

53 Ibid., pp. 68-69.

54 Ibid., p. xviii.

CONCLUSIONS

1 Jane Harrison, Themis, pp. 42-43; see also p. 15.

2 A basic definition of art is "the human effort to imitate, supplement, alter, or counteract the work of nature," W. Morris, ed., The American Heritage Dictionary.

3 A. M. Dale, Collected Papers, "Folk art and high art blend and pass into each other," p. 159.

4 Enid Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 204.
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