

Leeds Studies in English

Article:

Philip Butterworth, 'Discipline, Dignity and Beauty: The Wakefield Mystery Plays, Bretton Hall, 1958', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 32 (2001), 49-80

Permanent URL:

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Leeds Studies in English
School of English
University of Leeds
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/lse>

Discipline, Dignity and Beauty: The Wakefield Mystery Plays, Bretton Hall, 1958

Philip Butterworth

When I started teaching at Bretton Hall in 1972 I arrived too late to witness the two major productions of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* directed by Martial Rose in 1958 and John Hodgson in 1967. Colleagues from other institutions sometimes strike up conversations about these productions in a manner that suggests that their impact is understood; their apparent significance is seemingly taken for granted. This set me thinking as to what this supposed impact or significance might be if it were other than anecdotal, nostalgic or exaggerated. So, in this paper I shall attempt to determine something of the impact and significance of the first of these productions in 1958. Although the 1967 production was by no means an insignificant event,¹ the 1958 production of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* was the first of its kind in modern times.

Bretton Hall was established as a teacher training college in 1949 with its awards validated by the University of Leeds. Since then, Bretton, like other institutions of the same kind has undergone further changes of name and function to a College of Education and latterly to a College of Higher Education. In December, 2000, Bretton Hall and the University of Leeds agreed on a full merger of the two Institutions.

Setting up of the College was largely due to the inspiration and commitment of Sir Alec Clegg, the Chief Education Officer of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1947-74. Under his guidance the educational terms of reference were established by which the College was to develop. Many of the initial questions and problems faced by the newly-appointed staff at Bretton Hall, with its focus upon education through music, art and drama, related to and found reflection in the following lines:

If thou of fortune be bereft,
And in thy store there be but left
Two loaves, – sell one, and with the dole

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Buy Hyacinths to feed thy soul.²

This verse, from the poem *Not by Bread Alone* by James Terry White was a favourite one of Clegg.³ In some ways, the sentiment and deeper insight expressed by the verse stimulated and symbolised much of his views on education. So much so, that he was later to write:

The loaves are mainly concerned with facts, and their manipulation, and with the intellect. The hyacinths are concerned with a man's loves, hates, fears, enthusiasms, and antipathies, with his courage, his confidence and his compassion, in short, with a whole range of qualities which will determine not what he knows but the sort of person he is, and the way he will act . . . Why then have we over the years pursued the loaves to the neglect of the hyacinths?⁴

In 1961, Sir Herbert Read, then the first visiting fellow of the College referred to the same concerns in his inaugural address *Art and Communication* in which he interpreted Plato by saying:

Communication only occurs, . . . ,when the speaker possesses an insight into the nature of the soul, and, moreover, finds a congenial soul in which he can plant his words of wisdom.⁵

The task of implementing the kind of thinking instigated by Clegg and others fell to the first Principal of the College, John Friend. Not surprisingly, he shared Clegg's vision for the development of the College and his background in mathematics made for an inspired and courageous appointment to lead the College in its specialisms of music, art and drama. Notions of creativity and community and their relationship engaged him and all those with whom he came into contact. The College motto: *Qui non ardet non incendit* (He who is not alight cannot fire others) was, by common consent, a fitting tribute to the thinking and actions of John Friend.⁶

In 1952 Friend appointed Martial Rose who was later to become Head of English and Drama and director of the 1958 production of *The Wakefield Mystery Plays*. Some three years after the production Rose became Head of Education. He left Bretton Hall in 1965 and returned in 1967 to offer a lecture in a series known as the *Foundation Lectures*.⁷ He too referred to the 1961 address given by Read in order to

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paraphrase Sir Herbert's comments. He suggested that: 'The pursuit of this theme led him to one of his favourite topics – that of stressing the communication that must exist between the head and the hand. These two must act in collaboration and he stressed that the head must not outstrip what the hand does nor must the hand lose touch with the earth'.⁸ This paraphrasing of Read by Rose served to express and reinforce the vision articulated by Clegg. The *Foundation Lecture* given by Rose in 1967 and titled *The Wakefield Cycle of Mystery Plays: Bretton Hall Production*, extended the series of lectures begun in the 1950's and continued in the 60's. Throughout this period a number of eminent visiting speakers made complementary and persuasive contributions to an emerging institutional philosophy and identity. All the *Foundation Lectures* focused upon the nature and relationship of art and education.

From inception, a tangible sense of community was enjoyed by all who worked at Bretton. When the College opened in 1949 there were 56 students and 6 staff. By 1958, when Rose directed the Wakefield Plays, student numbers had risen to about 190 with a commensurate rise in staff numbers. According to Friend, visitors frequently commented upon the strong sense of community and were interested in how it came about :

I suggest that the ease with which the community formed was partly due to the fact that members came together with two uniting purposes, to study and practice one art in depth and the arts more generally and to share their enjoyment of such experiences with children and others by training to teach . . . When we were faced with change, participation for a whole session by the whole college, tutorial, professional, ancillary staff and students in the first production of the Wakefield Cycle of Mystery Plays gave the community that feeling of belonging and dependence one on another that took us forward with confidence to face ten years of change.⁹

As with many innovations, the exact starting point or ownership of ideas is often unclear in a chronological sense and production of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* appears to have had a number of contributory influences in bringing about the 1958 Production. One such influence was the production of the *York Mystery Plays* in 1954. Although a number of isolated productions from the canon of English medieval drama have taken place since the late-nineteenth century,¹⁰ it is the productions of the

York Mystery Plays of 1951 and 1954, directed by E. Martin Browne, that gave national significance to a predominantly forgotten form of early English drama. Publications by Browne, letters, reviews, eye-witness accounts and production documents lodged in the *Medieval English Theatre E. Martin Browne Archive* at the University of Lancaster testify to the importance and significance of his productions.¹¹ Rose did not see the 1951 production at York but did see the one in 1954 and on more than one occasion. He was clearly influenced by the production and it served as a springboard to his own thinking about the essential spirit of the plays:

I was deeply impressed by the scope of the York undertaking; bewitched by the backdrop of the ruins of St Mary's Abbey; fascinated by the swirl of the crowd movement, and moved by the dramatic power of the story line which culminated in the Last Judgement, the presentation of which I had never seen before. But I was left with the distinct impression that although this presentation had been set against a ruined medieval abbey, performed by a cast in medieval costume, and spoken in a language that was still redolent of the Middle Ages, the overall impression was that this was far from the medieval spirit in which the original performances must have been imbued. I wondered most about the massiveness of the spectacle, the vast numbers of actors, the mammoth set, and the serried ranks of the audience. The original trade guild plays in York had few players, and took up comparatively little space. I had been deeply impressed by seeing in the streets of York, separate from the performance at St Mary's, one of the cycle plays performed in the streets of York. In 1954 it might have been "Jesus and the Doctors", and in 1957 it might have been "Pharaoh". I felt that it was this style of presentation that came closer to the medieval mode, and it was something of this which I wished very much to achieve at Bretton.¹²

This response to the *York Plays* was no doubt affected by the fact that Rose had recently presented three of the Wakefield plays (more commonly referred to as *The Towneley Plays*)¹³ in which he too attempted to identify something of the 'medieval spirit in which the original performance must have been imbued'. The stimulus for the production came from an unlikely direction when, in 1954, a West

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Riding Adviser on Environmental Education, a Mr. Ecclestone, approached Rose with a request that Bretton students might present a performance of some of the Wakefield Plays to his residential group at Woolley Hall [near Wakefield]. Ecclestone 'was concerned that the teachers on the course should relate the district, its history, its industry, its soil, to the people who lived in these parts and who were living at that time in these parts. He wanted an historical and linguistic survey and he thought that the indigenous drama might illuminate the past'.¹⁴ Rose was only too ready to agree and chose three plays from the *Towneley Plays: The Annunciation; The Second Shepherds' Play; and The Flight into Egypt* :

I was keen to see for the first time how that well-known Shepherd's Play fitted in with the other two. The students used the original text and there was no concession to modern English. There was no problem of the Yorkshire audience appreciating the drama of these plays spoken in the fifteenth-century vernacular. The presentation was certainly not understood word for word, but there was no problem in conveying the dramatic movement, and in securing the audience's involvement in the wide-ranging gamut of comedy and solemnity . . . I was astonished at the dramatic power in performance of both *The Annunciation* and *The Flight into Egypt*. What greater riches might there not be in store by realizing the production possibilities of some of the other plays in the cycle?¹⁵

In his foreword to Rose's published 1967 *Foundation Lecture*, Friend records that 'the Right Reverend Bishop Wilson, present Bishop of Chichester and then Bishop of Wakefield, was co-opted as a member of the Governing Body, on one of his visits, perhaps not knowing the extent of his request, he suggested that the College might agree, not only for its own development but also to further its link with the neighbourhood, to produce the *Wakefield Cycle of Mystery Plays*. This suggestion seized the imagination of the staff who agreed that such a project would prove a most worthwhile venture.'¹⁶

According to Rose, many of the staff and some of the students had also seen the 1951 and 1954 E. Martin Browne productions of the *York Mystery Plays* and had been deeply moved by the experience. After performances of *The Annunciation; The Second Shepherds' Play* and *The Flight into Egypt* at Woolley Hall in 1954, the same plays were presented at Bretton Hall where John Friend saw them. He and his vice

principal, Margaret Dunn (who had worked on the Woolley Hall production with Rose), became interested to know whether the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* might not be performed by the Bretton Hall students. In consequence, Rose presented a plan to the College in which student groups were allocated to different plays. The groups consisted of First Year Music students; First Year Art students; First Year Drama students; three groups of Second Year students and a group of Mature students making seven groups in all. The total number of involved students was around one hundred.¹⁷ (Fig. 1).

The presented plan was under discussion during 1955 and 1956 at a time when Rose had already begun work on his translation of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays*. At this stage a complete, line by line, translation was envisaged and not an acting version as was to emerge later. Implicit in the plan was the concern that if the production of the plays was to be successful and the other work of the College was to continue, then careful preparation would need to be established well in advance for the academic year 1957/8. The plan set out the idea of presenting the plays as their subjects coincided with the calendar of the Christian Year. This notion was well received and so the *Nativity* sequence was prepared during the Autumn Term for Christmas and the *Passion* sequence rehearsed in the Spring Term for performance before Easter. Perhaps the ease with which the terms of the plan were accepted may be seen in the following statement by Rose:

The Bretton Hall staff at that time just happened to be believing Christians. They did not make a song and dance about it, and there was no sanctimoniousness about them. The Principal, a lay-reader, was perhaps more overtly Christian than most of us. On a regular basis the whole College was brought together for religious assemblies. His enthusiasm for the *Wakefield Plays'* project certainly stemmed from both religious and educational reasons. I think the same could be said for the rest of the staff. Throughout the enterprise I was not aware of any scepticism or cynicism with regard to the merits of the project on religious or educational grounds.¹⁸

The 'educational grounds' appear to have been articulated by a unanimity of purpose. Friend, writing in 1978 considered that 'the venture could enthuse and permeate our total work for a whole session'¹⁹ and Rose similarly considered that the enterprise 'was to unite the College in one massive undertaking which would inform

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their studies for the year, with the medieval period being especially stressed . . . ' in order that the students might be able 'to perform the drama with deeper insight' and 'to help to present through costume, décor, and music, an integrated impression of the Middle Ages to the audiences . . .'.²⁰

Rose was given considerable support from other staff who shared the direction load of the production. Margaret Dunn, the Vice-Principal (Fig. 2), Margaret Jowett and Catherine Hinson, both lecturers, and Rose formed the direction team. Rose was in overall charge of the production and it was he who co-ordinated the work of other staff that included Daphne Bird (Music); Brian Longthorn (Music) and Reg Hazell (Art). An influential contribution to the production was made by Norah Lambourne. It was she who designed the costumes for the 1951 and 1954 E. Martin Browne productions at York. Rose recruited her to the Bretton production and he regarded her work as 'pivotal' in that her 'experience and her expertise spread confidence throughout'.²¹ Rose recalls that his initial meeting with Browne and Lambourne after witnessing the *York Plays* was almost as influential on his thinking as the impact of the productions themselves.²² As with the religious and educational motives, considerable dramatic unity was thus achieved by this team. Rose attributes the coalescence of such common purpose to the fact that:

We were a small staff by present criteria, but we were close friends, and many of us had shared the friendships of residential life. I am not, I believe, deceiving myself when I recall the very close working of the Bretton staff in those early years. Music, Art, Drama, and English were not hived off into separate and competing bastions of studies. There was a generous giving on all sides, and so many of the College activities brought the various skills of the students and staff together.²³

Such generosity of spirit undoubtedly affected the quality of experience and understanding for students and staff; each learned from the other. In 1957/8 students in training as teachers took part in either two-year or one-year courses and the latter catered for mature students in music and art. However, it was the first-year students of the two-year course who took on the major performing tasks. This was made possible by completely rearranging the first-year timetable to accommodate rehearsal and production needs. Second-year students were also involved but their respective loads were affected by their final teaching practice and final examinations. As a consequence, their contributions were concentrated towards the end of the process

prior to the point of production. A similar pattern existed for the one-year students. So, it is not difficult to appreciate that the respective experiences of the year groups on separate courses was distinctly different.

The ability to re-work the first-year timetable enabled creation of an integrated programme dealing with the Middle Ages that concentrated on its history, religion, costume, drama, music and art. It was considered by Rose that this programme 'had a profound effect on all who participated, staff and students, because each was learning from the other'.²⁴ He extends the value of this process when he declares that:

The other apparent gain for the students in this interdisciplinary activity was their immediate awareness of the practical skill of those who otherwise might not have been highly rated in the field of expressive arts. We depended on the skill of property makers, costume makers, wardrobe mistresses, carpenters, electricians, the marshalling arts of the stage-managers. All this is apparent in any production, but in this year-long undertaking the dependencies were much more evident, and the precociousness of the individual actor was sharply contrasted with the continuing skill and care of the many able technicians who kept the enterprise on an even keel.²⁵

Decisions concerning the eventual scale and scope of the production were affected by the desire to devote a considerable part of the academic year of 1957/8 to its preparation. Two related conditions that established the overall dimension of the production were: the number of existing student groups and the estimated length of the final performance. This, it was decided, should be about 3 hours. Thus, it was clear from these early stages that not all 32 plays from the *Towneley* manuscript would be performed. The plays of *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Thomas of India*, *Ascension* and the *Hanging of Judas* were never seriously contemplated. Other plays that were left out included: *Abraham*, *Pharaoh*, *First Shepherds' Play*, *Purification*, *Christ and the Doctors*, *Pilgrims* and *Lazarus*. This left 20 plays out of the 32 that were subsequently rehearsed and performed. Of the 20, one, *Offering of the Magi*, was performed as a 'mime play' (Fig. 3). Given the decision to align performances of the plays to the Christian calendar, the *Annunciation*, *Mary's Salutation of Elizabeth*, *Second Shepherds' Play*, *Offering of the Magi*, *Flight into Egypt* and *Herod the Great* were all played, albeit not in their final form, before Christmas in 1957 and the *Passion* sequence of plays was rehearsed and performed before Easter of 1958.

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In respect of the shape and structure to which the remaining plays would contribute, it was clear that there should be a 'substantial' *Creation* (Fig. 4) and an 'effective' *Last Judgement*.²⁶ Since these two *Towneley* plays are incomplete, recourse was made to the same-named plays in the *York Cycle* from which parts were incorporated. Similarly, the *Nativity* and the *Passion* needed to be fully represented as did those plays that have been readily identified as those of the so-called *Wakefield Master*; the exception being the *First Shepherds' Play*. It was anticipated that the 20 chosen plays would run considerably longer than 3 hours, so some of the plays were played alternately at different performances. A case in point is the *Play of the Prophets* which was performed occasionally in the evening but mainly in the afternoon and usually to specially invited audiences. The programme that was handed to the audience listed all 20 plays to be performed but each programme contained a slip indicating those plays that would not be played at any given performance. On the Saturday of the performance week, the audience was informed:

Owing to the length of the plays we shall not be able to perform them all on any one night. The following are omitted on Saturday: *Caesar Augustus, The Annunciation, The Flight, The Scourging, The Talents*.²⁷

In retrospect, Rose would have liked to have included *Thomas of India* and the *Ascension*.²⁸

Although only 20 of the 32 plays were performed, Rose's eventual text contained translations of all the plays in the *Huntington MS HMI*.²⁹ He did not set out to change, modify or rewrite the text and considered that as far as possible the original text should be left alone. Criteria that governed any changes centred around the need to reduce the length of given plays in order to allow them to be more effective in performance. Additionally, it was thought that there might be difficulty in understanding certain set passages of the text and so a more intelligible version was considered to be necessary for a modern audience. It was envisaged that this kind of audience would be different from the local Yorkshire audience that Rose attracted to his Woolley Hall production. However, some difficult or obscure words were often left in the revised text where the context supported communicated understanding. Attempts were made to remain true to the original stanzaic patterns in all their variety. The task was made more difficult by the use of complex rhyme schemes which made further use of internal rhyme. Even now, Rose considers that he employed some licence that was not entirely successful.³⁰

As key decisions were made about the length of the production, numbers of participating students and the amount of preparatory and rehearsal time, the scale and scope of the production became clearer. Although such dimension might have encouraged large-scale staging decisions, Rose's concern that the production should reflect an appropriate 'spirit' ultimately affected and defined a more condensed scale of staging.

A number of outdoor sites were considered for the venue that included ones in front of the Mansion (the principal eighteenth-century building on site), the terraced gardens (formal gardens laid out in the eighteenth century), Camellia House (an eighteenth-century conservatory), and Stable Block. The latter site was finally chosen and for a number of reasons, one of which became relevant when 'a resonant area in which amateur voices fared better than in other locations was identified'.³¹ The site was that of an early nineteenth-century quadrangle of buildings that formed the Stable Block. The central focus of this site was a 24ft high arch through which, from the early-nineteenth century, horse-drawn vehicles originally arrived and departed (Fig. 5). Only two sides of buildings surrounding the quadrangle survived, the other two were taken down for reasons of safety. A new building, a theatre, now formed a third side to the quadrangle and the fourth side remained open. Nevertheless, the site offered good opportunities for staging focus and the actors were still able to respond to a 'strong impression of playing within a quadrangle' with its acoustic advantages as well as 'a feeling of tightness of playing'.³² The area of the old quadrangle was now grassed over and offered a suitable ground-level playing area to be used in conjunction with the levels offered by the buildings:

We needed the hierarchies in vertical space of heaven, middle-earth and hell, and we needed some impression of drama in the round which I thought was so strongly inherent in the staging of the Passion sequence in particular.³³

Stable-Block arch therefore provided the focus against which was built a staging block of three different levels that enabled access to the highest level where God sat in majesty towards the top of the arch. Two brightly-painted farm wagons were positioned at ground level on either side of the staging mass and key scenes were played out on these surrogate pageant wagons (Fig. 6) (Fig. 7).

This afforded variety, an added sense of the unexpected and a nearer contact with the audience. This device was very effective in

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the Second Shepherds' Play when the main stage and pageants either side were used. The Nativity took place on the pageant to the right of God's throne, and the scenes in Mak's house to the left, underlying the blessed and the cursed.³⁴ (Fig. 8).

The kind of variety referred to here is that concerned with levels and dramatic focus. Most plays were performed by small groups of actors and could be done so in tight, confined areas. For instance, it was possible to perform the *Scourging*, with its small cast, on one of the wagons. This not only enabled a tight visual and physical focus to be created but also reinforced appropriate tension. Production decisions of this kind served to promote the sought after 'spirit' of the production in which 'the small guild feeling'³⁵ might be attained. With the exception of the *Last Judgement* where most of the entire cast were used, the plays of the Bretton production found an intimacy that was not evident at York with its 'repeatedly presented swirling movements of large numbers of actors'.³⁶

The choir was placed on the roof above the colonnade of Stable Block to the right of the Arch (effectively stage right). Thus the choir was at roughly the same height as God. Some instrumentalists were also placed here although many operated unseen from under the colonnade and behind the main staging block. Characters such as Pilate, Caesar Augustus and Herod were heralded from here. Similarly, cacophonous sound that accompanied 'entrances' and 'exits' of the devils also took place from here. Rose recalls 'that the trombonists were worked quite hard'.³⁷ The audience faced the setting in a wide semi circle, with its back to the theatre (the third side of the old quadrangle). The seating was not raked.

Thus the staging configuration was determined. The simplicity associated with these staging decisions promoted flexibility in response to the varied focal requirements of the plays. Although the production was designed for the open air, contingency plans were made to transfer the production into the adjacent theatre in case of bad weather. (Fig. 9). In the event, the first two performances were played indoors and the rest were played outdoors as planned. 'W.L.W.' reviewed the production for the *Manchester Guardian* (later *The Guardian*) on the opening night and recorded:

But tonight it had to go into the college theatre and the gaudy pageants on which it should have been mounted were left reluctantly outside on the steaming grass of the quadrangle.³⁸

The result of the decision to move indoors led 'W.L.W.' to observe that 'In the weaker scenes, the more conventionally didactic passages, this inevitably made the atmosphere wrong and stagy, . . .'.³⁹ However, the reviewer in *The Times Educational Supplement* wrote:

Those who attended on the second and third evenings, when the weather was fine, were the most fortunate. They could watch the plays, from the quadrangle, performed on the two movable "pageants" (the painted carts) and on the three-tier structure representing heaven, earth and hell. They could also enjoy the gradual change of lighting as the day faded and the well-focused stage lanterns were directed on the players.⁴⁰

'W.L.W.' in the *Manchester Guardian* commenting on the larger structural concerns of the production recorded that 'The chief excitement of the long night's work, however, came in the big set pieces of the cycle, The Creation, The Crucifixion and the Judgement in which the raw gaudy colours of the medieval vision of life and death are reproduced strikingly'.⁴¹ Other reviewers, perhaps predictably, concentrated their assessment on the performances of some of the principal figures. 'Thespis' in the local newspaper, *The Barnsley Chronicle and South Yorkshire News* wrote: 'In the story of the Creation, God was a powerful figure, with a deep sonorous voice to match, and Evil, in the character of Lucifer, was a memorable performance. How well, too, did Adam and Eve portray the wonder of life and the fall into human sin'. (Fig. 10). The reviewer continued: 'We had a ranting raving Herod, who gave full value to the dramatic fury of the character. Pilate and Judas, treated rather sympathetically in modern plays, were powerfully shown as characters of scorn and evil'.⁴² Similarly, 'W.L.W.' referred to 'The maniac Herod and the wily Lucifer with a splendid ginger moustache were among the most memorable individual performances, though the standard of the acting generally was remarkably high when one remembers that there are many bit parts and that they were spread out among most of the college's 150 students'. 'Thespis' observed that 'The plays took on a marvellous new religious quality when Jesus appeared, and the young man who played this wonderful role was indeed above all others in dramatic stature. He had the aura of heavenly majesty about him, and he portrayed the emotional and physical ordeal of the Crucifixion with most impressive realism. Oberammergau cannot have seen anything better than this.' (Fig. 11). *The Times Educational Supplement* referred to the acting: 'Both in diction and in bearing the players were excellent, and within the general

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pattern of acting to which all were required to conform, there were individual demands upon each for differences of tempo and attack according to character or situation. There was so much of variety and contrast that monotony was never even threatened. The main impression that remains, however, is of discipline, dignity and beauty'. 'Thespis' regarded that 'The acting throughout was of the highest quality'. A.C. Cawley of the University of Leeds wrote to Rose to congratulate him on the production:

The staging and costumes are most impressive, and the selection of the plays gives an excellent idea of the grand design of the whole. I also liked your judicious modernising of the language of the plays: . . . This was a wonderful example of dramatic team-work, and I suppose one ought not to pick out any individuals for special mention. But just as the Wakefield Master's work stands out from the rest of the cycle, so I must say that the performance given by Herod and Lucifer was quite masterly. Congratulations on such an ambitious achievement and thank you all for providing us with a memorable experience.⁴³

Similarly, J.E. Stevens of Magdalene College, Cambridge, wrote to Rose and declared:

I rate my experience of the Towneley plays at Bretton among the experiences of the year – especially those fragments of it which I saw out of doors the following morning. The 'Prophetae' were unforgettable. You'd never believe it from reading. I didn't! . . . Certainly, where you scored over all other productions I have seen, was in the homogeneity of the thing, and in the sense of it being a communal effort. This feeling clearly cannot be manufactured or imposed from above. It really takes a community to produce it!⁴⁴

'W.L.W.' not only commented on the quality of the acting but took in the wider scope and implications of the production:

But while the college can be proud of having made a little dramatic history in a very creditable way, the production is even more impressive as the result of a large-scale educational project. The

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excellent costumes, the sets, and the intelligently selected and skilfully performed music of the period with which the production is decorated, provide impressive evidence of the quality of the research which has occupied much of this term at Bretton Hall.

Some delayed impact of the production was communicated to Rose through the offer from the Provost of the new Coventry Cathedral to perform the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* at the opening of the Cathedral in 1961. Rose was in favour of such a development but other circumstances prevented it. Shortly after the production at Bretton in 1958, Bernard Miles wrote to Rose having read the review in the *Manchester Guardian*. He contacted Rose because he thought that it might be a good idea to open his *Mermaid Theatre* with a production of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays*. Subsequently, Miles and his wife came to stay at Bretton where they heard students read through sections of the plays. They were also taken to York where they walked the original route of the plays and discussed the style of presentation of the *York Plays*. On his return to London, Miles began to encounter unforeseen difficulties. He had not reckoned with the effective intervention of the Lord Chamberlain whose office prohibited any professional public performances that involved the impersonation of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. It is remarkable to recall that the motive behind the injunction from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners at York that effectively suppressed production of 'a plaie commonlie called Corpus Christi plaie' in Wakefield in 1576 was still in force in 1959. After some lively correspondence between Miles and the Lord Chamberlain, the former gave in and opened his theatre with a production of *Lock up Your Daughters*. Some two years later censorship by the Lord Chamberlain's office was relaxed and Miles was able to mount productions of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* in 1961 and 1963.⁴⁵ Rose's text was the one used by Miles. The timing of the production in 1961 was close to that of the opening of the new Coventry Cathedral. Miles was therefore against performance of the plays as part of the opening ceremony. Rose, reluctantly, did not accept the Provost's invitation. However, these related circumstances reflected well upon the Bretton production and the College 'as an Institution of some merit'.⁴⁶

From the foregoing responses to the production it is possible to discern some of the attributes, character and quality of it. The motivation in mounting the production is clear as are the educational, religious and theatrical aims and objectives. Clearly, some of the impact of the production relates to the fact that these plays were considered to be performed for the first time in 'modern times'. Interestingly, the notion of 'modern times' may be extended for there is no evidence of any of the plays

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in *Huntington MS HMI* having been performed before 'modern times'. Although 'a plaie commonlie called Corpus Christi plaie' performed at Wakefield in the sixteenth century was effectively censored and withdrawn by decree of the Archbishop of York in 1576, the synonymity between it and all the plays contained in *Huntington MS HMI* has not been proved.⁴⁷ Specific references to Wakefield are contained in some plays of the manuscript as are allusions to Wakefield and its environs.⁴⁸ In consequence, it may be possible to attach even greater significance to this, the first performance of so many plays in 'modern times', than was acknowledged in 1958.

Apart from the comment from 'W.L.W.', quoted earlier, concerning the resultant atmosphere as being 'wrong and stagy' on moving indoors and the 'weaker scenes' being those which were 'the more conventionally didactic passages', comments from reviewers and correspondents were positive and complimentary. Even so, the comment about the atmosphere being 'wrong and stagy' is an empathetic one to the problems associated with a performance conceived for outdoors and forced to play indoors. It is not clear, however, whether 'W.L.W.' considered the 'more conventionally didactic passages' as being intrinsically weaker or whether he thought that it was the indoor performance that made them weaker. Interestingly, perhaps the most didactic of the plays, the *Play of the Prophets* proved to be an 'unexpected success'.⁴⁹ J.E. Stevens, as recorded earlier, called the play 'unforgettable. You'd never believe it from reading. I didn't! . . .'. Margaret Jowett, one of the directing team, talking of Rose said: 'Well, it worried him for a time. He said he couldn't see how to handle it and then he said it suddenly came to him – they were preaching and so they should have been handled as preachers – and they were'.⁵⁰ Rose describes the production treatment:

The play contains no dialogue between any of the characters, but allows for a succession of prophets, Moses, David, Sibyl Sage, and Daniel, to give their vision of things to come. For this play we had made a portable pulpit. The play offered an open-air sermon-entertainment. Each of the characters in turn harangued the congregation gathered close around them in very different styles.⁵¹

A number of responses referred to the achievement of a high standard of acting. In 1958 criteria that were used to determine 'good acting' were filtered through the perceived requirements of the proscenium-arch stage. Although the central ideas of Stanislavski were known, his impact on the nature of acting was not as strong as that governed by the more recent tradition of pre-war actor training. E. Martin

Browne offered advice as to how the actor should act in religious plays:

Keep your eyes on the person you are speaking to, unless you are afraid of him.

Keep your feet still, unless you are going somewhere.

Take a sufficiently broad stance to save yourself from being knocked down by a slight push; this gives you ease and confidence of manner. It is usually best to have the 'upstage' foot (i.e. the one furthest away from the audience) forward.

Gesture must come from the body, and its weight must follow the arm in a big gesture.

Find a reason for dropping a gesture as well as for making it; and give the gesture time to make its effect on the audience before you drop it.

Kneel on the knee nearest the audience.

Turn towards the audience, not away from it.

Don't walk sideways or backwards except before a King; turn in the direction you want to go, and walk straight there.⁵²

Although Browne is essentially addressing the amateur actor, these comments nevertheless offer a good indication of what was considered important in order to achieve 'good acting'. He went on to amplify his advice by saying: 'When we recollect that nearly every one of our front-rank professional actors to-day was trained in Sir Frank Benson's Shakespearean Company, we see what Religious Drama needs'.⁵³

Since Rose has been unable to shed any light on the kind of acting style employed in the production, my guess is that deliberate decisions were not made in this regard and that the acting that was delivered was a kind of proscenium-arch realism with a concession to outdoor playing in terms of 'bigness' of action and response. This is still largely the kind of unconscious acting employed in most outdoor productions today.⁵⁴ This form of acting requires the strength of character portrayed to be the principal criterion by which 'good acting' is determined. Browne refers to this concern as 'the only approach which can lead to real acting – by appreciating the *thoughts* of the character'.⁵⁵ Some of the reviewers cited earlier refer to such a criterion.

For some of the witnesses to the production the evident educational objectives shone through the performance. 'W.L.W.' regarded the production as even 'more impressive as the result of a large-scale educational project' and that it provided

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'impressive evidence of the quality of the research'. 'Thespis' referred to the 'ample evidence of the careful research and the enthusiastic way in which the project was tackled'. The reviewer in *The Times Educational Supplement* was impressed by the intensive collaboration which he described as 'noteworthy and admirable'. One correspondent also referred to the accompanying exhibition as 'first class'.⁵⁶

In addition to the acknowledged high standard of acting and declared educational achievements, the overriding influence upon the production seems to have been that of community aspiration and endeavour. Communication of the strong sense of community purpose was felt and referred to by witnesses and correspondents. This communicated sense was clearly a unifying bonus, for that which a cast or company experience in preparation and performance is invariably not that which its audience experiences. So it is all the more remarkable that such community spirit was capable of transmitting itself in such a way as to reinforce the homogeneity of the production and its purpose. Cawley referred to the 'wonderful example of dramatic team-work'. The implication here is that the production values from everyone involved supported and matched the achievement and its communication.

Rose is the first to acknowledge that some 'mythology' might have grown up around the production.⁵⁷ In other words, more might be made of the production than is actually warranted. This may be so, particularly within the current context of increased medieval-play production in Britain and elsewhere. However, in production terms, many of the ideas, methods and approaches used in the Bretton production are now commonplace in contemporary productions. Of itself, this notion may be seen to both increase and/or lessen the original significance. Perhaps the greatest significance of the production existed within the nature of the experience. This was clearly a deep experience for many. Audience members retrospectively referred to it as 'memorable' and 'unforgettable'. The College community alluded to it somewhat differently. Rose attempted to define the experience for himself and others:

the whole project entailed most of us giving ourselves wholeheartedly over a very long period, and this for most of us was a religious act although at the time we may not have thought of it in those terms. But at the moment before the first out-of-doors performance I had an overwhelming feeling which was shared by most of those taking part, that we were about some deeply moving communal undertaking that I could only then, as I do now, define as religious.⁵⁸

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Those who have attempted, with or without religious motivation, to put on such plays as these will know what Rose means.

Any theatrical production requires theoretical and/or practical decisions to be made that conspire to converge in theatrical resolution in performance. Such decisions may arise out of and from disparate sources. However, if the purpose of the production is clear then such decision making may be guided towards this end. In the case of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays*, decisions that the majority of the College community should work on the production for a whole year and that the timetable should be reworked to further the purpose of the process, clearly formed the basis upon which further more concentrated decisions were to take place. Such decisions also conditioned the infrastructure for community development. This unique process is that which most College participants seem to have valued. However, it is also clear from earlier responses that the audience too was also able to detect, receive and value this spirit.

With some 40 years hindsight, Rose considers that:

the most shaking realisation was that individually we were nothing out of the ordinary as teachers and students, but as a community we achieved something far above the level of our individual competence . . . And I knew then that that insight and that extraordinary experience would never come again.⁵⁹

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Fig. 1. The Cast.



Fig. 2. Margaret Dunn rehearses the *Last Judgement*. The choir was placed above the colonnade (top left).

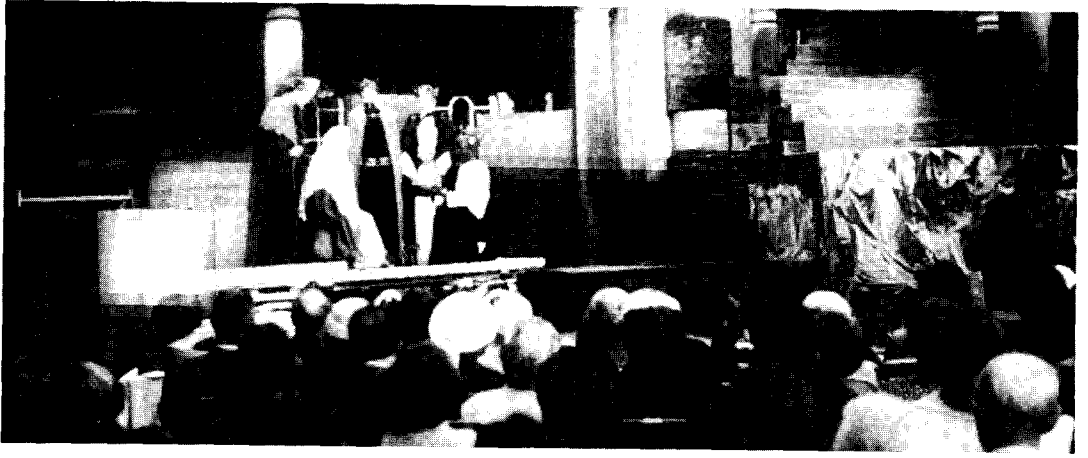


Fig. 3. Offering of the Magi.

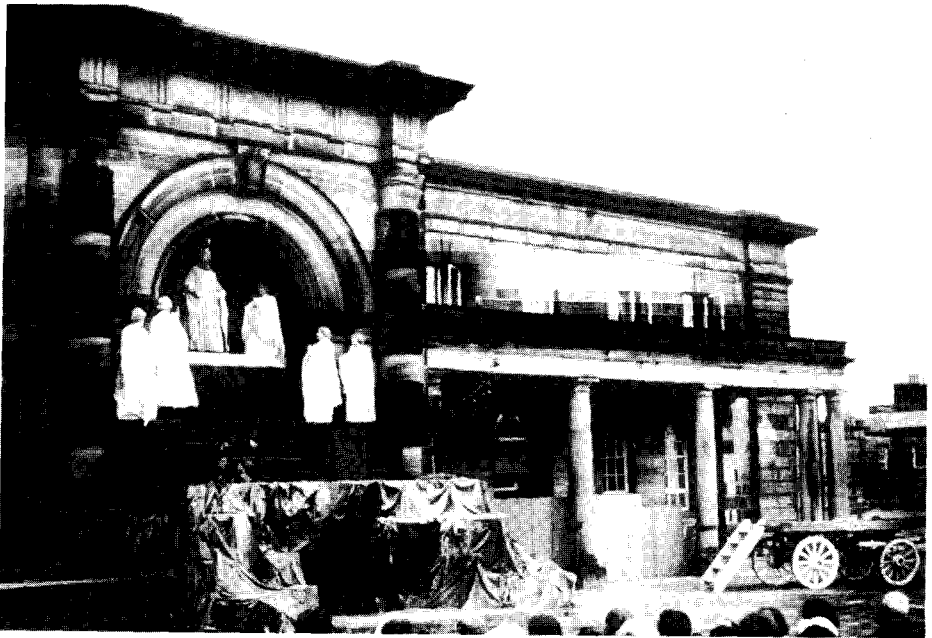


Fig. 4. Creation.

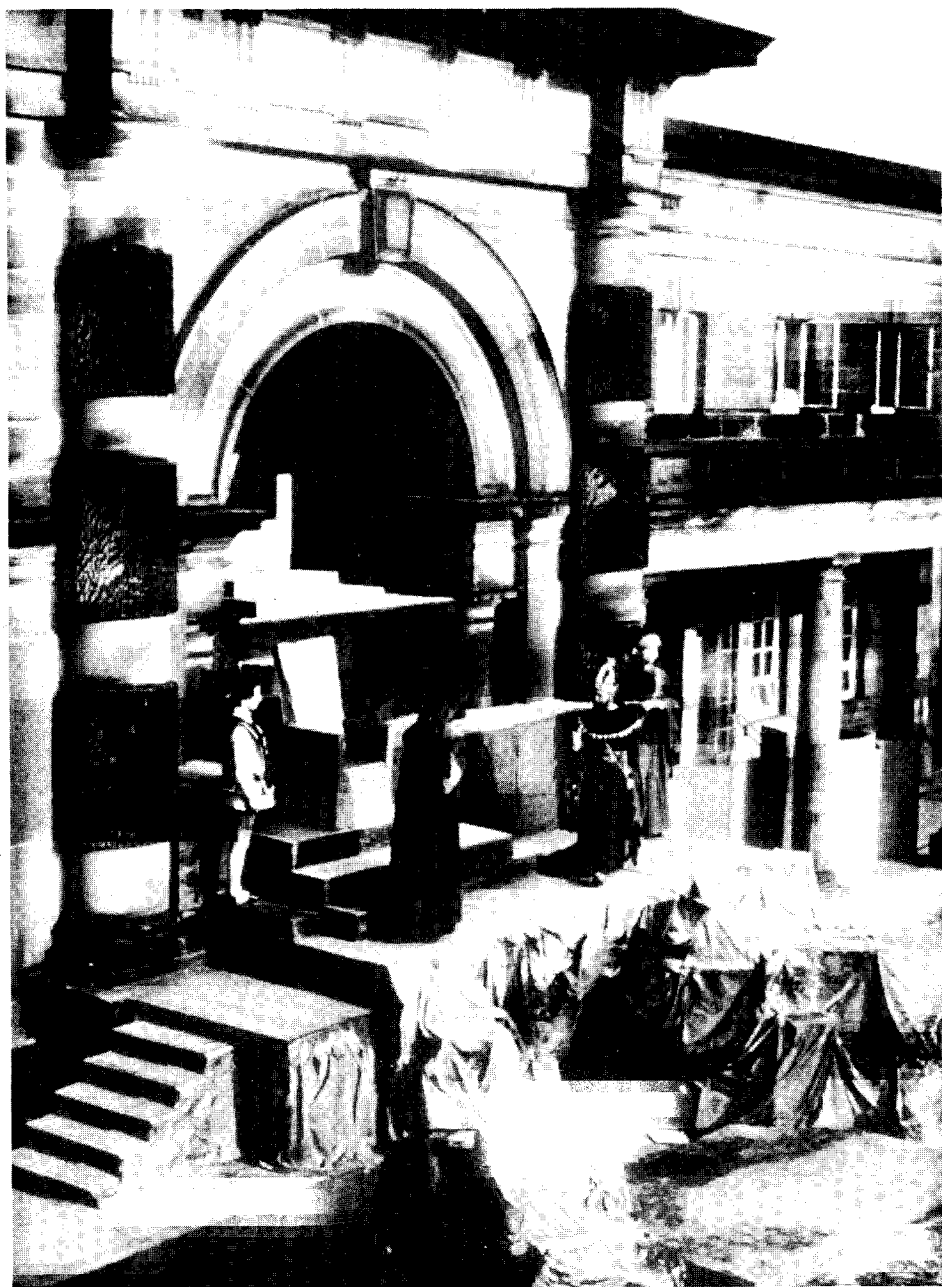


Fig. 5. *Caesar Augustus*. This photograph gives a good impression of the relationship of the arch to the set.

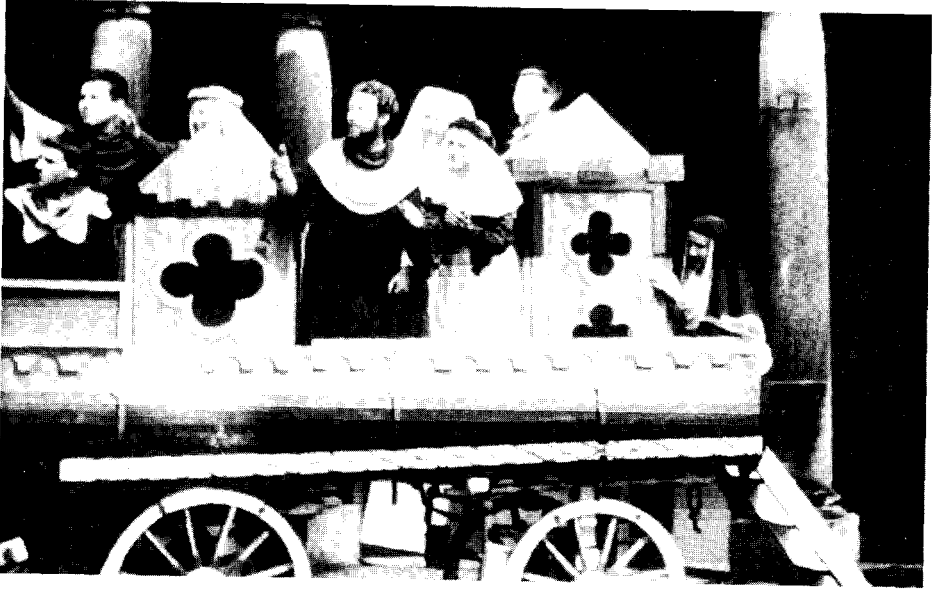


Fig. 6. (above)
Noah on wagon
(stage right).

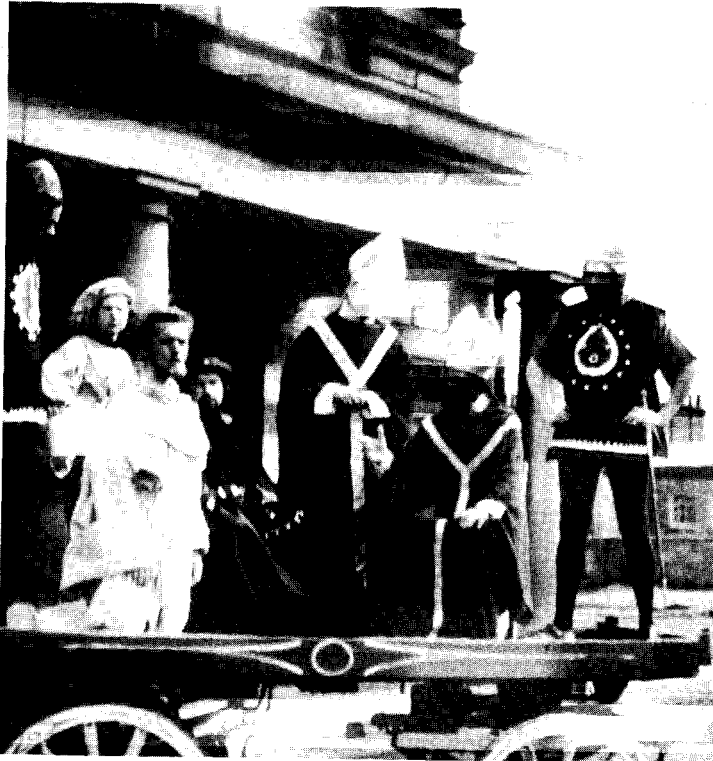


Fig. 7.
Conspiracy
on wagon
(stage left).

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Fig. 8. *Second Shepherds' Play.*



Fig. 9. *Mopping up.*

Fig. 10. *Adam and Eve.*

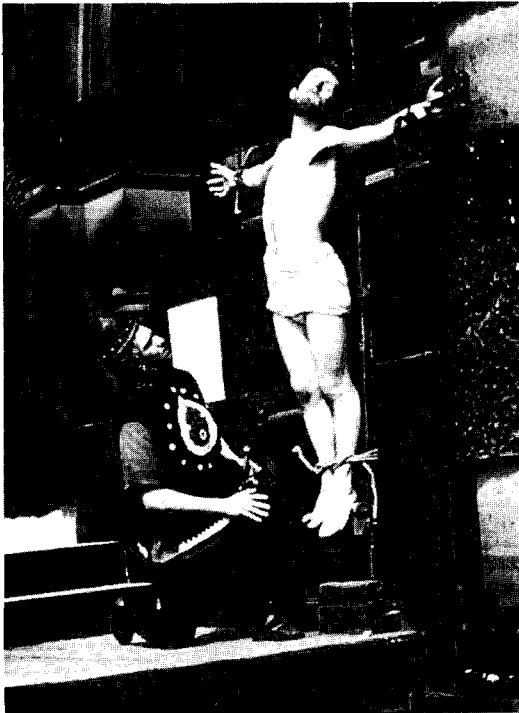


Fig. 11. *Crucifixion* in rehearsal.

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NOTES

It will be evident to readers of this paper that Martial Rose has provided a considerable amount of information to its development. Additionally, he has given much reflective consideration to my questions, some of which would tax anyone required to delve into memories and details of some 40 or so years ago. I can only imagine that the sort of generosity offered by Martial may be likened to that with which the production was imbued; I wish to offer him my sincere thanks.

I should also like to thank Margaret Jowett for her time and kindness in answering my questions and Leonard Bartle of the *National Arts Education Archive* for his persistence in pursuing my requests for information.

¹ The 1967 production of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* at Bretton Hall, directed by John Hodgson took place between 19-26 May. Thursday, 25 May of that year was Corpus Christi Day. This production consisted of all 32 plays in the *Huntington MS HMI* and used a cut-down version of Martial Rose's text. Some 200 students took part as performers with other production functions taken on by additional students. By this time student numbers in the College had risen to over 600.

² James Terry White, *For Lovers and Others: A Book of Roses* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1911), p. 16.

³ Clegg relates his interest in the verse as coming from: 'poker work on a piece of 3-ply in my aunt's sitting room wall over thirty years ago', Sir Alec Clegg, 'Loaves and Hyacinths', *The Bramley Occasional Papers*, 3 (1988), 1-8; Alec Clegg, *About our Schools* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 17.

⁴ Sir Alec Clegg, 'Loaves and Hyacinths', p. 2.

⁵ Sir Herbert Read, 'Art and Communication', *Bretton Hall Fellowship: Inaugural Address*, 17 November 1961, p. 21.

⁶ *He who is not alight cannot fire others: An appreciation of John Friend, M.A., BSc., Bretton Hall College 1949-1968*, ed. by Margaret Dunn (Bretton Hall: 1989), *passim*.

⁷ The *Foundation Lectures* were set up by John Friend and involved the following speakers: Dame Dorothy Brock (Headmistress, Mary Datchelor School); Sir Herbert Read; Bernard Shore (B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra); Professor Meredith (Dept. of Psychology, University of Leeds); Lord Fleck; Dr. Vick (Harwell Nuclear Research Station); Professor Ingham (Dept. of Physics, Keele University); George Devine (Director, Royal Court Theatre); Professor Ben Morris (University of Bristol); Professor J.W. Tibble (University College of Leicester); Professor J.P. Tuck (University of Durham); Professor W.R. Niblett; Professor Louis Arnaud Reid (University of London); Professor Quentin Bell (University of Leeds); Sir Alec

Clegg.

⁸ Martial Rose, 'The Wakefield Cycle of Mystery Plays: Bretton Hall Production', *Bretton Hall Foundation Lecture*, Spring 1967, p. 5.

⁹ John F. Friend, *Creativity and Community In the Education and Training of Teachers: Bretton Hall 1949-1968* (Bretton Hall: 1978), p. 109.

¹⁰ I am specifically thinking of the work of William Poel and Nugent Monck. For descriptions and reviews of their work see: Robert Potter, *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of the Dramatic Tradition* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 1-5, 222-25; John R. Elliott Jr, *Playing God: Medieval Mysteries on the Modern Stage* (Toronto Buffalo London: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 42-47; John Marshall, 'Modern productions of medieval English plays', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* ed. by Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 290-311 (pp. 290-91).

¹¹ The Archive is administered by Meg Twycross and contains many personal documents of E. Martin Browne along with items about him and his work. I should like to thank Meg and Helen Bennett for their help and consideration in enabling me to make use of the Archive.

¹² Martial Rose, *Correspondence*, (5), 17 September 1999. Where Rose' correspondence is cited in the notes, the number in brackets that precedes the date, refers to the section number in the correspondence.

¹³ Useful discussions of the relationship between 'Wakefield' and 'Towneley' designations are to be found in: A.C. Cawley, *The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle* (Manchester: The University Press, 1958), xi-xvii; Martial Rose, *The Wakefield Mystery Plays* (London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1961), pp. 9-30; *The Towneley Plays*, ed. by Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley 2 vols (Oxford: EETS, Oxford University Press, 1994), xv-xxii. Unfortunately, the discussion here attempts to make links that the evidence will not permit. Peter Meredith, 'The Towneley cycle', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* ed. by Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 134-62 (pp. 134-45). This article is by far the strongest and most balanced assessment of the available evidence.

¹⁴ Rose, *Bretton Hall Foundation Lecture*, p. 6.

¹⁵ Rose, *Correspondence*, (1), 17 September 1999.

¹⁶ Rose, *Bretton Hall Foundation Lecture*, p. 3.

¹⁷ The extant lists of participating students are not organised in the way described in the text but the relationship will be clear:

Year 1 Women

Andrews, J
Benfield, C
Carr, J

Atyeo, J
Bowyer, W
Chambers, C

Baker, A
Brett, F
Chambers, S

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Clarke, N
Doran, D
Hague, M.T
Hesletine, O
Jones, S
Lincoln, A
Mepham, M
Williams, E
Wilding, M

Clarke, S
Everitt, P
Hardy, A
Hogg, B
Kingham, G
Miller, F
Nuttall, J
Winchester, L
Woolley, J
Yarrow, J

Cole, W
Gillard, D
Hayes, C
Inglis, R
Kirkham, G
Mc.Master, J
Nutting, J
Wood, C
Wilks, A

Year 1 Men

Arnold, N
Cooper, P
Edwards, P
Green, M
Holt, D
Laycock, C
Pearson, J
Thompson, K
Weavell, R

Carberry, J
Craig, D
Fulleylove, J
Green, R
Johnson, R
Mangham, I
Roccroft, S
Walcot, M
Williamson, R

Cole, E
Douglas, S
Gell, D
Hickling, D
Kirkwood, J
Palmer, D
Smith, P
Wardle, I
Wright, P

Year 2 Women

Adamson, S
Dale, P
Gosney, A
Hopkinson, R
Leybourne, O
Mc.Loughlin, M
Peaker, M
Robinson, M
Vamplew, J

Allan, S
Evans, I
Gray, M
Kinver, M
Lockwood, P
Nield, V
Roberts, J
Searle, J
Wagstaff, C

Cauldwell, B
Gordon, I
Heritage, M
Lawler, M
Mc.Hard, J
Nurse, D
Reynolds, M
Stevens, C
Winterbottom, A

Year 2 Men

Cooper, R
English, S
Jackson, A

Crimlisk, A
Hersee, D
Lomas, G

Crowther, G
Hope, W
Moore, J

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Oliver, J
Sutherland, J

Rogers, J
Traynor, O

Rubens, M
Wilson, R

Mature Students Women and Men

Berry, M
Robinson, M

Dove, S
Robinson, M

Kagwa, G

Choir and Instrumentalists

Year 1, 2 and Mature Women and Men

Sopranos

Burn, K
Collins, A
Feeney, J
Fordham, S
Griffiths, P
Horner, E
Kipling, A
Lumb, B
White, E

Contraltos

Bartlett, R
Davies, G
Lewis, C
Parrish, S
Smith, M

Tenors

Dyson, P
Featherstone, R
Howes, R
Pawson, B
Richardson, J

Basses

Haigh, J
Holt, T
Ladds, R
Loten, R
Muwonge, S
Rimmer, R
Smith, R
Walters, D

Brass

Bailey, M
Baines, B
Barton, A
Bastow, G
Bradford, D
Clarke, P
Dunn, J
Saberton, J
Tucker, R
Willett, C
Wright, R

¹⁸ Rose, *Correspondence*, (3), 17 September 1999.

¹⁹ Friend, *Creativity and Community*, p. 46.

²⁰ Rose, *Correspondence*, (2), 17 September 1999.

²¹ Rose, *Correspondence*, (4), 17 September 1999. Lambourne's two main works are:

Dressing The Play (London & New York: The Studio Publications, 1953) and *Staging the Play* (London and New York: The Studio Publications, 1956).

²² Rose, *Correspondence*, (5), 17 September 1999.

²³ Rose, *Correspondence*, (2), 17 September 1999.

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²⁴ Rose, *Correspondence*, (6), 30 September 1999.

²⁵ Rose, *Correspondence*, (6), 30 September 1999.

²⁶ Rose, *Correspondence*, (10), 30 September 1999.

²⁷ Changes in the programme were obviously well considered in respect of the shape and structure of different programmes. For instance, on Wednesday afternoon of July 2 at 2-00pm, the following were played: *Creation* (25 mins); *Annunciation* (14 mins); *Second Shepherds' Play* (25 mins); *Offering of the Magi* (mimed piece, 5 mins); interval; *Conspiracy* (22 mins); *Buffeting* (15 mins); *Crucifixion* (17 mins); *Resurrection* (18 mins); *Judgement* (20 mins). The programme on Friday evening of July 4 at 6-30pm was the one reviewed by 'W.L.W.' and consisted of the *Creation* (25 mins); *Noah* (25 mins); *Annunciation* (14 mins); *Second Shepherds' Play* (25 mins); *Offering of the Magi* (5 mins); *Herod* (20 mins); interval; *Conspiracy* (22 mins); *Scourging* (14 mins); *Crucifixion* (17 mins); *Talents* (12 mins); short interval; *Resurrection* (18 mins); *Judgement* (20 mins). Different again was the programme on Saturday evening of July 5 at 6-30pm. This was: *Creation* (25 mins); *Killing of Abel* (13 mins); *Noah* (25 mins); *Prophets* (10 mins); *Salutation of Elizabeth* (6 mins); *Second Shepherds' Play* (25 mins); *Offering of the Magi* (5 mins); interval; *John the Baptist* (9 mins); *Conspiracy* (22 mins); *Buffeting* (15 mins); *Crucifixion* (17 mins); short interval; *Deliverance* (15 mins); *Resurrection* (5 mins This was clearly a shortened version designed for this particular programme); *Judgement* (20 mins). Thus the running time, without intervals, was: Wednesday afternoon, 161 mins; Friday evening, 217 mins; Saturday evening, 212 mins.

²⁸ Rose, *Correspondence*, (10), 30 September 1999.

²⁹ *The Towneley Cycle: a Facsimile of Huntington MS HM1*, ed. by A.C. Cawley and Martin Stevens, Leeds Texts and Monographs: Medieval Drama Facsimiles, 2 (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1976); Rose, *The Wakefield Mystery Plays* was also issued by Evans in five separate parts as softback versions.

³⁰ Rose, *Correspondence*, (8), 30 September 1999.

³¹⁻³⁷ Rose, *Correspondence*, (11), 30 September 1999.

³⁸ W.L.W., 'Wakefield Play Cycle: Fruits of research', *Manchester Guardian*, 5 July 1958, p. 9.

³⁹ W.L.W., 'Wakefield Play Cycle: Fruits of research', p. 9.

⁴⁰ Anon, 'The Wakefield Cycle', *Times Educational Supplement*, 11 July 1958, p. 1143.

⁴¹ W.L.W. 'Wakefield Play Cycle: Fruits of research', p. 9.

⁴² Thespis, 'Mystery Plays', *Barnsley Chronicle and South Yorkshire News*, 12 July 1958, p. 5.

⁴³ Letter from A.C. Cawley to Martial Rose, 5 July 1958.

⁴⁴ Letter from J.E. Stevens to Martial Rose, 10 September 1958.

⁴⁵ On 11 August 1958 Miles wrote to Rose: 'The trouble is going to be getting God the

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Father and Jesus Christ past the censor, and it seems the only solution would be to form a club for the particular purpose of this presentation. I'll tell you the situation when we meet.' The censor's responses continued to impede Miles' attempts to put on the plays and on 26 September 1960 Miles again wrote to Rose: 'the whole problem of showing God and Jesus Christ in person has raised its ugly head again, and as I must do these as a big public performance and for a long run, I must get this matter cleared up before we begin talking of versions etc. I have plans to see the Archbishop of Canterbury and others, and have good hopes we may get the whole thing settled in a very short time.' Eric Penn of the Lord Chamberlain's Office wrote to Miles on 27 September 1960 as follows:

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE
St. James's Palace, S.W.1.
27 September, 1960

Dear Mr. Miles,

I am not quite sure exactly what you have in contemplation for your cycle of Mystery and Morality Plays, and perhaps it will help you therefore if I give you the Lord Chamberlain's attitude towards them. It will then be up to you to judge his Lordship's probable reaction to the plans you have, and if you feel that there is any doubt then it will probably be best for you to let us know your positive intentions so that we may give you an authoritative answer.

In brief the production of Mystery and Morality Plays is governed by the fact that the Lord Chamberlain will not allow Christ or the Deity to be impersonated on the stage. A bright light or a voice off stage is allowed but not an actual impersonation. This rule applies to plays written since 1843 and which are subject to Section 12 of the Theatres' Act 1843.

As regards plays written before 1843, and for all practical purposes this means the Medieval Plays only, the Lord Chamberlain does not interfere and it is permissible for Christ to be personified on the stage. I need not go into the reasons for this differentiation because so far as you are concerned it is only the practical outcome which matters.

Where I assume difficulty may arise is the fact that you may have the intention of taking some of the old Mystery, Miracle or Morality Plays and either adapting them, or modernizing the dialogue or dress. Anything which interferes with the basic simplicity of these plays and removes them from what is almost the symbolic sphere to the actualities of a modern presentation would bring them within the sphere of the Lord Chamberlain's ban on the impersonation of Christ or the Deity. Such modern adaptations would also, of course, have to be submitted for a Licence.

I think this should be sufficient to show you what you can do with safety, and what you

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would be advised to consult us on, and if I can be of further help I shall be only too willing.

Yours sincerely.

ERIC PENN.

Bernard Miles, Esq.

C.B.E.

On the following day (28 September 1960) Miles wrote to Rose: 'I have at last received some clarification of the censorship situation-as enclosed. It seems clear that the whole thing turns around the question of adapting and modernizing, and interfering with the basic simplicity. I also enclose my reply to the Comptroller. It seems to me we will have to do a considerable job of negotiation, but in the end they may yield. In practice these things are always a matter of give and take . . . It's only that I just glimpsed the difficulty, i.e. that the Lord Chamberlain could say 'No, this is a translation of an adaptation, and therefore I refuse to let you do it'. In order to keep us from showing God and Jesus Christ in public. You get my meaning?' In a handwritten note at the foot of the page Miles adds: 'I think a great deal may turn on our sticking to the word "TRANSCRIPTION"?? please keep all this very secret.'. In the same letter Miles floats the possibility of performing the plays 'in their pristine form of speech' and asks 'would these plays still be as understandable – because of course that gets over the whole difficulty, i.e., they would hardly have been adapted or modernized at all'. On 1 October 1960 Rose replied: 'The pristine speech of the plays would be beset by difficulties of vocabulary, inversions, and the strangest grammatical inflexions that intelligibility would be completely sacrificed. Dialect speaking of the adaptation on the other hand will recreate the pristine indigenous vigour that pounds through so much of the verse. We would be hard put to justify my version as a "transcription", but if the final issue is to be decided on grounds of "basic simplicity" then we should have little to fear.'

⁴⁶ Rose, *Correspondence*, (6c), 30 September 1999. Subsequently, Rose prepared an acting text of the *Ludus Coventriae* (now referred to as the *N-Town Plays*) to be performed at Coventry. The plays went into rehearsal but were abandoned when the producer, David Langham fell ill. Rose, *Correspondence*, (3), 16 January 2001.

⁴⁷ See Meredith, 'The Towneley cycle', pp. 142-45.

⁴⁸ Stevens and Cawley, *The Towneley Plays*, I, xix-xxii; Meredith, 'The Towneley cycle', pp. 144-45.

⁴⁹ Rose, *Correspondence*, (10), 30 September 1999.

⁵⁰ Margaret Jowett, *Interview*, 16 July 1999.

⁵¹ Rose, *Correspondence*, (10) 30 September 1999.

⁵² E. Martin Browne, *The Production of Religious Plays* (London: Philip Allan & Company, 1932), p. 38.

⁵³ Browne, pp. 39-40.

⁵⁴ Two known exceptions are: a production of the *Towneley* play of *Pharaoh* as part of the 1980 production of the *Wakefield Mystery Plays* in Wakefield city centre, produced by Jane Oakshott. The acting style derived from the perceived rhetorical requirements of the play which led to a bold and showy demonstration of consciously acted technique. The cast of *Pharaoh* was: Peter Meredith – director/God/Pharaoh; A.E. Green – soldier; Dick Wilcox – soldier; Richard Rastall – Moses; John Tailby, Penny Newman, Dannie Green – Children of Israel.

The second example is of my own production of the York *Crucifixion*, presented in the streets of York in 1992. Here the acting style was governed by the intention for all actors to make eye contact with individuals in the audience in order to speak 'to', 'at', 'with' and 'through' the audience. Relationships with individuals in the audience were sought. The cast and crew of the *Crucifixion* was: Don Wood; Brian McCann; Mike Bellini; Kevin Rowntree; Gareth White; Peter Harrop; Joan Farnworth; Jane Francis; Elizabeth Rance; Mark Castle; Stuart Coleman; Neil Gavin; Ed Hill; Chris Hockley; William Meddis; Sarah Hamilton; Jane Francis; Carey Harvey; Justine Hoyland; Jo Oliver; Sarah Tomkins; Deborah Combes and Indira Sengupta. For a discussion of the thinking behind the production see Philip Butterworth, 'The York Crucifixion: Actor/Audience Relationship', *Medieval English Theatre*, 14 (1994 for 1992), 67-76.

⁵⁵ Browne, p. 37.

⁵⁶ Letter from D.H. Evans to Martial Rose, 9 July 1958.

⁵⁷ Rose, *Correspondence*, (6b), 30 September 1999.

⁵⁸ Rose, *Correspondence*, (3), 17 September 1999.

⁵⁹ Rose, *Correspondence*, (15), 30 September 1999.