



Drama and Sermon in Late Medieval England

Performance, Authority, Devotion

Charlotte Steenbrugge



EARLY DRAMA, ART, AND MUSIC

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Steenbrugge, Charlotte, author.

Title: Drama and sermon in late medieval England : performance, authority, devotion / by Charlotte Steenbrugge.

Description: Kalamazoo : Medieval Institute Publications/
Western Michigan University, [2017] | Series: Early drama, art, and music |
Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017043666 (print) | LCCN 2017043819 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781580442787 (electronic book) |

ISBN 9781580442770 (hardback : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: English drama--To 1500--History and criticism. |
Sermons, Medieval--England. | Drama, Medieval--History and criticism. |
Theater--England--History--Medieval, 500-1500. | Sermons in literature. |
Bible plays, English--History and criticism. | Christian drama, English
(Middle)--History and criticism.

Classification: LCC PR641 (ebook) | LCC PR641 .S84 2017 (print) |

DDC 822/.109--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017043666>.

ISBN: 9781580442770

eISBN: 9781580442787

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Chapter 3

Preaching on Stage

IT IS OFTEN TAKEN for granted without further comment that didactic, moralizing speeches by virtuous, saintly, or divine characters in late medieval English drama are sermons or, at the very least, sermon-like. The sermon was, of course, closely associated with the authority of the Church, and the silent assumption is, therefore, that playwrights who resorted to sermon-like strategies to convey their moral messages aligned themselves with an established, ecclesiastical medium to gain a position of authority. However, the adoption of sermons into English drama would not have been a straightforward matter because “Imitations of sermons was no mere literary facility; it raised questions about the would-be ‘preacher’s’ moral and legal authority to preach.”¹ That issue would have been especially problematic if the actor playing the preaching character was a member of the laity (which seems to have been the case for most plays under discussion), because preaching was a carefully guarded privilege of specific members of the clergy in late medieval England. In fact, I would argue that there are surprisingly few uses of the sermon as a textual genre on the fifteenth-century English stage, presumably partly because of contemporary ecclesiastical legislation that aimed to restrict preaching to specially licensed preachers.

Whatever the exact influence of Church legislation may have been, the plays under discussion tend to present their moral messages in ways divergent from preaching. Late medieval English dramatists demonstrably pursued different modes of instruction and, as a result, shaped an autonomous authority for their artifacts. This development is apparently perverse. In France, for instance, where the Church was rather less concerned about unauthorized preaching, playwrights overtly ally their religious instruction with that of the Church whenever they present a sermon on the stage, which they regularly do for such characters as Jesus Christ, saints, and expositor figures.² Likewise, as we saw in chapter 1, the Florentine *sacra rappresentazione* is often emphatically aligned with contemporary preach-

ing practices. Arguably, in England, the dramatists usurp the role of the preacher whenever they do not stage a sermon for virtuous, didactic characters because they do not rely on the acknowledged ecclesiastical mode to teach matters of religion.

It appears to be predominantly the moral content of certain speeches, rather than formal features that can be clearly associated with contemporary sermons, that results in scholars deeming these speeches to be sermon-like. For instance, Mark Eccles states that *Wisdom* “begins ... with a sermon”³ and David N. Klausner agrees that the opening scene is “in a format clearly derived from the late medieval sermon.”⁴ But we know, and indeed both scholars recognize, that these speeches are closely based on a meditative treatise, namely *The Seuene Poyntes of Trewe Loue and Euerlastyng Wisdom*, a translation of the *Orologium Sapientiae*. To my knowledge, no one has ever claimed sermon status for this treatise. Unless *Wisdom*’s use of that text is suffused with features typical of Middle English sermons—and it is not—it is probably safer to claim that, however didactic and religious this speech may be, it is not a sermon.

The medieval sermon is not simply any didactic, exhortative, moralizing discourse; it is a specific genre with its own actors and setting and its own generic features, including the use of a theme, an opening prayer, a prayer for the success of the sermon, the use of Latin, the quotation of *authoritates*, the inclusion of practical lessons aimed directly at its audience, the use of *exempla*, and a well-defined structure.⁵ Burlesques of sermons rely on exactly these features, which were clearly acknowledged to be typical of sermons.⁶ Chaucer’s Pardoner is quick to mention his theme and his use of Latin “To saffron with my predicacioun” (*Pardoner’s Prologue*, 345). He also includes “ensamples many oon | ... | For lewed peple loven tales olde” (*Pardoner’s Prologue*, 435–37) and retain them better; his *exemplum* of the Flemish rioters (*Pardoner’s Tale*, 661–888) is indeed especially memorable. Similarly in the *Parson’s Tale*, the Parson’s sermon commences with a Latin theme and its translation, and he quotes a great many authorities, including “Seint Ambrose” (83), “Seint Ysidre” (88), “Seint Gregorie” (91), and “Seint Augustyun” (96, 100). This sermon is loosely structured with divisions and subdivisions, like many Middle English sermons, and this is reflected in both Latin marginalia and the English text. The subdivisions are especially plenteous: there are three “acciouns of Penitence” (94), three “speces of Penitence” (101), three necessary aspects to Penitence (106), four things are to be understood by contrition (127), six causes move a man to contrition (132), and so forth. Sermons with

such typical features were associated with lay audiences in particular, and not just by Chaucer's Pardoner: both Alexander of Ashby and the scribe of the marginalia in Cambridge University Library Ms li.1.24 strongly imply that a recognizable and predictable sermon structure would most benefit a mixed or lay audience.⁷

While it is extremely difficult to define what exactly constituted preaching, medieval sermon theorists do seem to have been rather insistent on circumscribing its application:

Though preaching almost never verbally declares itself as such ("I preach to you"), a properly authorized man standing in a pulpit, at the appropriate point in a Mass, dressed in clerical garb and speaking on the right sort of topic in the right manner could hardly be regarded as doing anything other than preaching. It might be fair to say that preaching theorists would have wished to exclude from consideration as preaching any speech-act that *could not* properly have taken place in those circumstances (at Mass, from the pulpit)—a criterion that would obviously, and from their point of view desirably, exclude female and lay preaching altogether.⁸

It is again the authority of the speaker, the appropriateness of the setting, and the topic of discourse, which is used by Helen Leith Spencer to define preaching as "utter[ing] a religious and hortatory address, customarily based upon a passage of scripture, provided one were an authorized person in an authorized place at an authorized time."⁹

Indeed, there was considerable awareness in late medieval England that teaching and preaching are not one and the same thing. The latter required a specific frame, particularly in terms of setting and the authority of the speaker, as the early fifteenth-century *Speculum Christiani* explained:

Magna differencia est inter predicacionem et doctrinam. Predicacio est, ubi est convocacio sive populi invitacio in diebus festivis in ecclesiis seu in aliis certis locis et temporibus ad hoc deputatis, et pertinet ad eos qui ordinati sunt ad hoc iurisdictionem et auctoritatem habent, et non ad alios. Informare autem et docere potest unusquisque fratrem suum in omni loco et tempore oportuno, si videatur sibi expedite, quia hoc est Elemosina, ad quam quilibet tenetur.¹⁰

[A grete differens es between prechyng and techyng. Prechyng es in a place were es clepyng togedyr or foluynge of pepyl in hily

dayes in chyrches or other certeyn places and tymes ordeyned therto. And it longeth to hem that been ordeynede therto, the whych have jurediccion and auctorite, and to noon othyr. Techynge es that eche body may enforme and teche hys brothyr in every place and in conable [appropriate] tyme, os he seeth that it be spedful. For this es a gostly almesdede, to whych every man es bounde that hath cunnyngel]¹¹

When Margery Kempe was accused of preaching, she seized on exactly this frame of the sermon to deny the charge: “I preche not, ser, I come in no pulpytt” (Book I, Chapter 52).¹² The fact that Margery was accused of preaching without being in a pulpit, and without suffusing her discourse with typical sermon features, such as a theme, the use of Latin, and the use of *exempla*, shows how fragile a narrow definition of preaching is. As Simon Forde has pointed out, this orthodox, clerical definition of preaching excludes a range of important activities (including Margery’s) which “form part of the transmission of the faith” in the medieval period.¹³

Nevertheless, it was precisely the strict contemporary definition of “explicit preaching” in sermon manuals and Church discourse that enabled Margery to teach without preaching; she did, after all, win her case.¹⁴ Claire M. Waters notes how it was the “very insistence on its own boundaries, as Margery Kempe realized, [which] enabled women to give themselves an *alibi*, in Latin, literally an ‘elsewhere’, from which to speak.”¹⁵ Similarly, I would argue, it was this narrow clerical definition that allowed the playwrights to instruct the laity in the vernacular in religious matters without running the risk of contravening Church legislation, as long as their didactic monologues did not contain too many generic sermon features.¹⁶

In any case, given the medieval differentiation between preaching, which is only acceptable in duly authorized members of the clergy and at certain times and places, and teaching, which can be done anywhere by anyone at anytime, we should beware of identifying any didactic speech by a virtuous character in a play automatically as a sermon. Unless the speech is characterized by some explicit sermon feature or clearly uttered by a preacher, it is more likely that contemporaries regarded it as an instance of teaching rather than preaching. Moreover, “explicit preaching” was presumably most closely associated with the Church’s authority. And, as the sermon is a monologic and overtly didactic genre, as we saw in the previous chapter, dramatic passages that resemble the sermon to a marked degree would probably have generated a suitably docile attitude in the

spectators as well. A recognizable sermon on the stage would give rise to a very different set of audience expectations and attitudes than other kinds of discourse, even if the topic of that discourse is religious and the mode didactic. This chapter will therefore assume that for a passage in a play to have the authority and weight of a sermon, it must be instantly recognizable as such.

If one accepts that a sermon should be a monologue of some length with at least a few of the recurrent Middle English sermon traits, or else a speech that is evidently based on a biblical sermon, the list of potential sermons in the plays becomes rather more limited. In fact, there are remarkably few instances of preaching in late medieval English drama: there are no sound examples of sermons in the whole of York, Towneley, Chester, the Northampton *Abraham and Isaac*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Occupation and Idleness*, *Wisdom*, and Henry Medwall's *Nature*.¹⁷ Even prototypical preacher characters, such as John the Baptist, rarely preach on the Middle English stage: he preaches only in N-Town, but not in York and Towneley (the episode is not represented in Chester), whereas in the French *mystères* a sermon for this saint is standard practice.

It could, however, be argued that to apply these criteria to defining a sermon on the stage is too stringent and makes no allowances for dramatic license. But, using these criteria, there remain a few clear instances of sermons in dramatic texts from England and many more from France, showing that medieval playwrights could successfully incorporate an explicit sermon if they wanted to do so. A nice example is John the Baptist's first speech in Michel's *Le Mystère de la Passion*, which commences:

Et pour tant, au commencement
de ceste predicacion,
j' ay prins pour introduction
le mot d'Isaïe que je dy:
Parate viam Domini.
En ce theme icy, je puis prendre
deux poins bien ayséz a comprendre
a tout homme de bon vouloir.
Le premier sera de sçavoir
comme on doit preparer son cueur
a la venue de saulveur;
et cecy nous est denote
par ce mot icy *Parate.*
Le second sera par quell œuvre
la grace de Dieu on requeuvre;

et est ce noté quant je dy:
Rectas facite semitas Dei nostri. (902–18)¹⁸

[At the beginning of this preaching, I have taken as introduction the words of Isaiah, which I pronounce: “*Parate viam Domini*” [prepare the way of the Lord]. In this theme here, I can take two points, very easy to understand for all men of good will. The first will be to know how one must prepare one’s heart for the coming of the Saviour. And this is demonstrated to us by the word *Parate* [prepare] here. The second point will be by which work one might receive the grace of God, and this is meant when I say: “*Rectas facite semitas Dei nostri*” [make straight the paths of our God].]¹⁹

The divisions are duly developed in the remainder of this sermon.

We find staged sermons in England, too, particularly in texts that are associated with East Anglia. (If more plays had survived, that connection might not be so pronounced, but as things stand it is further evidence for the unique character of East Anglian drama so admirably outlined by Gail McMurray Gibson.) The most obvious example is the protagonist’s speech toward the end of *The Conversion of St. Paul*.²⁰ This long speech of nearly 70 lines (after which Paul is interrupted by the priest’s servant) includes a great many of the traditional, recurrent sermon features. It commences with an opening prayer followed by a prayer for the success of the sermon:

Graunte me, good Lorde, þi pleasure to fulfill,
 And send me soch speech þat I the truth say,
 My ententyons profytable to meve yf I may (506–8)

It contains several Latin phrases and repeatedly refers to Scripture as a source of authority, as in

As Holy Scrypture baryth playn wytnes:
 “*Initium omnium peccatorum superbia est*” –
 That often dystroyth both man and best! (513–15)

St. Paul is not afraid to claim authority for himself, either, as when he insists “And I therfor assent and fully certyfy | In text, as I tell the trw entencyon” (525–26), and “Thys ys my consell: bere the not to hye!” (529). The sermon incorporates a number of practical lessons with direct address of the audience, such as “Kepe clene your body from synne vncuth; | Stabyll your syghtys, and look ye not stunt [cease]” (567–68). There are also a few references to the preacher’s own preaching practices, as when he

says “Whoso in pryde beryth hym to hye, | Wyth mysheff shalbe mekyd as I mak mensyon.” (523–24) and “Wherfor I reherse thys wyth myn owyn mowthe” (565). That this is a sermon cannot be doubted.

In another late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century East Anglian play, the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount is evidently referenced although there does seem to have been some uneasiness about staging the female saint preaching. The Lollard suggestion that even women could preach caused orthodox authorities considerable uneasiness in late medieval England. Female preaching was problematic outside the Lollard context as well, and several medieval artists, writers, and scholars struggled to reconcile the reputed preaching of Mary Magdalene with biblical and ecclesiastical prohibitions against women preaching. The famous preacher Jacques de Vitry, for instance, drew on the distinction between *praedicatio* and *exhortatio*; according to him Mary Magdalene had merely done the latter, not the former.²¹ Whether this female saint does or does not preach was then likely to be a matter of some interest throughout the Middle Ages, but especially so in late medieval East Anglia where the debate about spiritual authority and women’s ability and right to preach had rekindled with deadly intensity. Perhaps that is why the female saint in the East Anglian Digby *Mary Magdalene*²² is never told to preach; instead she is to convert, to teach, and to express God’s law:

Kyng and quene converte xall 3e,
And byn amytyd as an holy apostylesse.
Alle þe lond xall be techyd alonly be the,
Goddys lawys onto hem 3e xall expresse. (1379–83)

The male disciples, on the other hand, are said to have gone “To dyvers contreys her and 3ondyr, | To prech and teche of hys hye damage” (1346–47). In the *Legenda Aurea*, one of the most important sources of the play, the saint is repeatedly described as preaching. In several other versions of the saint’s life, such as the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* and the relevant sermon in John Mirk’s *Festial*, she is similarly said to preach. The play therefore seems to deviate from the widely accepted notion that St. Mary Magdalene preached, and to partake of the anxiety about female preaching that characterizes some medieval material concerning Mary’s ministry in Marseille.

Our play does not seem to be especially interested in Mary Magdalene’s preaching, although two potential sermons are spoken on stage by the protagonist. Karen A. Winstead has argued that a new

trend in hagiography, which involved a greater interest in the preaching activities of saints and especially of female saints, emerged after Arundel's Constitutions.²³ Our female saint, however, seems to be rather more conservative. She has an instructive but not sermon-like speech on the relatively safe topic of the seven days of Creation. Even so, the orthodoxy of the speech is emphasized, as it recommends church attendance:

And on þe Sunday, he gan rest take,
As skryptur declarytt pleyn,
Þat al shold reverens make
To hyr Makar þat hem doth susteyn
Vpon þe Sunday to leuen in hys servyse,
And hym alonly to serve, I tell yow pleyn. (1520–25)

This is the most sermon-like extract of the speech with a reference to the Bible, an assertion of personal authority, and a practical lesson for its audience; it is no coincidence that it is also the most obviously Church-supporting passage. This speech's adherence to the biblical account of Creation is not often found in surviving medieval English sermons, and may have instead called to mind artistic representations and even plays on the Creation, such as that found in the N-Town compilation. But while this distance between contemporary preaching and Mary Magdalene's instruction on Creation may serve as a safety feature, ensuring that the play does not stage a woman preaching, it also strongly links this singular, and female, source of spiritual authority directly to the Bible. As a result, the authority and value of the clergy and of contemporary preaching practices are diminished.

The saint's speech to the returned King and Queen in Marseille is more clearly a sermon, as it contains some recognizable sermon features, such as audience address (e.g. 1923), a closing prayer (1937–38), and Latin (1930). It is, however, extremely short, which may serve to reduce its sermon-like feel (it is a mere sixteen lines long, compare St. Paul's sermon which takes up nearly seventy lines before the preacher is interrupted), which may again indicate some unease about women preaching.²⁴ This passage immediately brings to mind not a contemporary sermon, but Jesus's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 3–8 in particular), connecting Mary Magdalene directly to God and the Bible. Again, then, the playwright bypasses the authority of the clergy and of contemporary preaching, unlike in *The Conversion of St. Paul*, which links its biblical protagonist to contemporary preaching, thereby validating the latter.

The Digby *Mary Magdalene*, conversely, is a play that expresses caution about the ability of clerical “covnnyng” (806) to comprehend and communicate divine mysteries.²⁵ The play throughout emphasizes Mary’s authority as contemplative and visionary, presents her as an exceptional teacher of religious matters, and downplays the importance of the clergy.²⁶ Mary Magdalene’s lack of “explicit preaching” may then not so much be due to the playwright’s orthodoxy in relation to female preaching, but rather reflect the playwright’s understanding of the importance of other, less institutional, forms of religious discourse and teaching in late medieval English devotion.

Another relatively clear instance of a dramatic sermon is Episcopus’s speech in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (also from East Anglia) which commences with a Latin theme and contains practical lessons addressed to its auditors:

*Estote fortes in bello, et pugnate cum antico serpente,
Et accipite regnum eternum, et cetera.*

My chyldern, ye be strong in batayll gostly
For to fyght agayn the fell serpent,
That nyght and day ys ever besy (866–70)²⁷

The sermon status of this speech is not only enhanced by the clerical position of the speaker, but also by the location of the speech. The stage directions directly before this mini-sermon indicate that it takes place in a church, or at least in a church-like structure: “the bysshop shall entre the chyrche and lay the ost on the auter, sayng thus” (after l. 865). The speech is not a fully-fledged sermon but it seems clear that it represents a preaching event.

There are other instances of sermons on the late medieval English stage. In the East Anglian N-Town compilation, we find the only preaching biblical John the Baptist (play 22; he has a further preacher-like appearance in play 26), we also encounter Moses (play 6) preaching the Ten Commandments, Jesus preaching repentance at the start of *The Woman Taken in Adultery* (play 24), and John the Baptist as well as the apostles Peter and John the Evangelist preaching in *Passion Play I* (play 26). In this last play, Peter’s and John the Evangelist’s discourse is described as “prechyng” in the stage directions,²⁸ which may be indicative that their communication was staged in a particular, sermon-like way. These saints include many lessons for the audience, offer interpretations, and assert their own authority and the listeners’ inferior spiritual status. The same

can be said for John the Baptist's speech in this play, as in "Wherefore I counsel þe 3e reforme all wronge" (129), "As 3e xal here whan I have tolde" (140), and

Of þis wey for to make moralysacyon,
Be þe ryth syde 3e xal vndyrstonde "mercy";
And on þe lefte syde lykkenyd "dysperacyon" (141–43)

In the N-Town *Moses* pageant, God explicitly commands Moses to "preche all abowte" (41) before Moses's speech on the Ten Commandments, highlighting that that speech is supposed to function as a sermon. We find various features commonly used in medieval English sermons in this speech as well. These include the use of Latin authorities followed by a translation, as in the opening lines "*Custodi precepta Domini Dei tui: Deutronomini vjto.* | The comaundment of þi Lord God, man, loke þu kepe" (48–49), lessons for the listeners, as in "Frendys, þese be þe lawys þat 3e must kepe" (187), and a position of authority for the speaker, as in "But swere not oftyen, by rede of me" (95), "3ow to teche God hath me sent" (55), "And to my techynge take good intent" (52).²⁹ Such speeches could not be lifted out of the plays as independent sermons, but their status as a preaching event within their dramatic context is evident. These examples clearly demonstrate that, when they wanted to, playwrights could stage a sermon; if other didactic, religious speeches are not very sermon-like it is presumably because the dramatists in question were not interested in staging a sermon.

There are many instances where the sermon would seem an entirely, if not the most, appropriate genre for a particular utterance or character, and yet it is not used. Thus, for instance, Bonus Angelus, the Virtues, and the Daughters of God in *The Castle of Perseverance* are all didactic, but none of them sounds like a preacher. The speeches are too presenter-like and emotional (Bonus Angelus), too short (Virtues), or serve a different purpose to the sermon (the debate of the Daughters of God). In Towneley 7, the prophets use some features that typically occur in Middle English sermons but they are evidently prophesying, not preaching. The Doctor opening the York *The Annunciation and the Visitation* pageant is likewise a "composite Prophet figure" rather than a preacher.³⁰ Reason in Henry Medwall's *Nature* is a thoroughly didactic character but he has not one sermon-like speech. In Chester 14, Jesus teaches Simon by way of a parable, but the whole conversation is too short and too dialogue-based to stand out as a sermon.

The didactic and authoritative role of the Expositor/Doctor in the Chester cycle is indubitable. Authenticating devices are common throughout his speeches—one of his favorite expressions is “believe you me” (e.g. Chester IV.131, Chester XII.195, 301, Chester XXII.249, 305).³¹ Again and again, this presenter limits the range of interpretations of the events staged, as in “By Isaac understande I maye | Jesus that was obedyent aye” (Chester IV.472–73) and “These redde horses call I maye | all maner of marters, in good faye” (Chester XXII.105–6). The value of this insight for the audience is repeatedly highlighted, for example:

Nowe that you shall expresselye knowe
these prophettes wordes upon a rowe,
what the doe signifie I will shewe
that mych may doe you good. (Chester XXII.25–28)

Yet, although this presenter is evidently designed specifically to be didactic, his speeches do not resemble sermons in any overt manner. Several sermon characteristics, such as the use of Latin or the inclusion of practical lessons for the audience are lacking—the focus of the Expositor/Doctor is belief rather than practice. Moreover, he repeatedly addresses the audiences with “lordynges,” which is atypical of preachers, and is instead associated with romances.³² The function of his relatively short speeches, which tend to be spread out throughout the plays, is evidently to elucidate those plays, so these speeches are very different in intent, and even in content, from the sermon.³³ It is also worth remembering that the Chester Expositor/Doctor is unique in the English corpus and probably a late addition to the cycle, possibly postdating the Reformation.³⁴

This sparse use of sermons despite evident opportunities on the late medieval English stage is intriguing. It is unlikely that the infrequent use of the genre is due to a dislike of sermons per se. Admittedly, there are some indications that the medieval public was by no means always positively inclined toward preaching. The congregation’s critical attitude is implied in the complaint of the author of the postils in Longleat 4 that people will not sit down during sermons “but þei welyn stondyn þat þey moun redely gon away 3if þe prechour plesse hem nout. ... Summe comyn for malice and enuye to pynchyn at þe prechouris wordis.”³⁵ Other sources suggest that attendance at sermons was not necessarily dictated by piety: the *Wife of Bath* lists sermons as one of the events she attended “for to se, and eek for to be seye | Of lusty folk” (*Wife of Bath’s Prologue*, 552–53). Many of these kinds of comments come, however, from the sermons them-

selves and serve an ideological purpose, namely to encourage a suitably devout attitude in its listeners; their reliability as historical witnesses is therefore to be treated with due caution. Preachers were at times interrupted by their auditors, sometimes aggressively, but sometimes merely with demands for further explanations or examples, requests which show considerable interest in the sermon.³⁶

There is also evidence to attest the popularity of sermons in late medieval England. For example, Margery Kempe repeatedly describes the great crowds attending sermons: “Ther was a monke schulde prechyn in Yorke ... ther was meche multitude of pepil to heryn hym” (Book I, Chapter 52), “the frer seyde the sermown, a famos man, and a gret audiens had at hys sermown” (Book II, Chapter 2), and

Than cam ther a frer to Lenne which was holdyn an holy man and a good prechour. ... he seyde a sermown in a chapel of Seynt Jamys in Lenne, wher was meche pepyl gadyrd to heryn the sermown. ... In schort tyme aftyr he prechyd ageyn in the same place. ... how fast the pepyl cam rennyng to heryn the sermown (Book I, Chapter 61)

Waldeby, an Austin friar at York, was said to be a very popular preacher and to draw huge crowds.³⁷ Public outdoor sermons at Paul’s Cross in London are recorded from 1330 and became an institution which lasted into the seventeenth century.³⁸ There is therefore no sound reason to assume that English playwrights avoided incorporating sermons because they were fundamentally unpopular—a point worth stressing as a modern predilection for anti-authoritarian discourse makes us prone to assume that sermons are boring and without literary value.

In fact, plays from France as well as *The Conversion of St. Paul*, the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, and various N-Town pageants demonstrate that sermons on stage could contribute to dramatic success. The first sermon of Episcopus in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, for example, is a fitting climax to the miraculous conversion of the Jews. There is, moreover, a strong sense of dramatic irony at play as the audience knows that Aristorius, and to some degree Presbyter, are about to confess their failure to adhere to the bishop’s advice to “be strong in batayll gostly” (867), which serves to reinforce the message of the sermon. The timing of this speech moreover supplies potential for action on stage in order to indicate the effect of this sermon on the sinner(s). The Digby *Mary Magdalene* also demonstrates that playwrights could and did engage with the genre creatively. Rather than aligning the saint with cleri-

cal authority, her biblically inspired preaching and teaching asserts both her independence as a religious authority and the value of forms of religious instruction that did not fit the confines of clerical definitions and understanding of preaching.

To take another example, it is probable that the scribe's (and the Pharisee's) reaction to Jesus's opening sermon on the abundance of His mercy in the N-Town *Woman Taken in Adultery* contained a certain amount of comedy. But this speech also serves to tie the spectators more closely to the moral of the story by highlighting the distance between virtue in theory and in practice. The opening sermon contains relatively self-evident material, such as the call to repent your sins, to love God, and to forgive your neighbor if they trespass against you. Presumably any vaguely devout spectator would have made some kind of mental promise to adhere to Jesus's commands—especially in view of the scribe's and Pharisee's reactions. When the plot develops, and the question of how to deal with the adulteress emerges, however, it is also plausible that these same spectators would not have found it so easy to forgive this sinner in the theatrical world and even harder to forgive an adulterer in the ordinary world. Adultery was taken very seriously in the Middle Ages and is frequently mentioned in records of episcopal visitations, as in "Harry Daundevyl, a tiler, refuses to live with his wife, fails to love her as a husband ought, and has an adulterous relationship with Mathilda, who he keeps in his house at Pyon."³⁹ While the audience's sympathy is clearly not supposed to lie with the accusers, it is likely that they would not have had too much sympathy for the accused either. When Jesus refuses to condemn her, then, the message of the opening sermon—to forgive one's neighbor—is brought home again to the spectators in a rather more personal way: many of the spectators may well have fallen short of this requirement for salvation in the little time that has elapsed since the opening sermon. All the pageants on this episode play with the difference between ideal Christian forgiveness and everyday affairs to some degree, but only in N-Town does the playwright bring home this tension to the audience specifically, and he (or she) uses Jesus's opening sermon to do so.⁴⁰ The sermon was then not only the most appropriate genre for playwrights to exploit in certain episodes, they clearly could incorporate sermons to great dramatic effect in their plays when they chose to do so.

Yet medieval English playwrights employed the genre extremely sparingly. Both the causes and the effects of this disinclination to stage sermons warrant further attention. Two obvious reasons for not staging

sermons come to mind. Firstly, it could be that dramatists preferred carving out an independent authority for themselves and their plays. Secondly, it could be that they felt it was safer to avoid staging a sermon, given contemporary legislation that restricted preaching to duly licensed members of the clergy. In fact, these two possible reasons are not mutually exclusive and it is likely that they fed into each other: that is, that the repressive influence of English ecclesiastical legislation induced playwrights further to explore independent modes of instruction.

It is well known that there was considerable anxiety, especially after the rise of Lollardy, about who was allowed to preach, and that various measures were put in place to limit sermons to licensed preachers. The connection between Lollards and vernacular preaching was made early on in the history of the movement, with Leicester Lollards in 1388 maintaining that “quilibet laicus potest sancta evangelia ubicumque predicare et docere” (“any layman can preach and teach the holy gospel anywhere”).⁴¹ Already in 1382 the Blackfriars Council had decided that the notion that all priests and deacons were entitled to preach by virtue of being in holy orders was erroneous.⁴² In 1400 action was taken throughout England to limit preaching to those with a license from their diocesan and to parochial chaplains in their own churches.⁴³ Finally, Arundel’s Constitutions were promulgated in 1409 and remained in force until 1529. As a result of this latter legislation, both secular and regular clerics had to undergo an examination into their learning and manners in order to gain a license of the diocesan, which allowed them to preach in places appointed by the diocesan in that diocese. Parish priests and temporary vicars, unless they had obtained a license to preach, had to restrict their sermons to the basics of the faith covered in John Pecham’s *Ignorantia sacerdotum*, such as the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly Sins. Anyone who contravened these decrees was to be excommunicated; if they persisted in their unlawful preaching, they were to be declared heretics and punished as such (Constitutio 1).⁴⁴ It was the responsibility of both the clergy and the laity, upon pain of an ecclesiastical interdict, to ensure that members of the clergy were properly licensed before they were permitted to preach (Constitutio 2).⁴⁵

It is difficult to know how strictly these rules were enforced, but people were certainly wary of unauthorized preaching. For instance, in 1417 some chaplains were charged with preaching in contravention of Arundel’s Constitutions⁴⁶ and Margery Kempe had to defend herself to the Archbishop of York against accusations of preaching in the same year

(Book I, Chapter 52). In fact, some Lollards complained that nowadays even as holy a man as John the Baptist would be charged as a Lollard for preaching:

if ony preche þe trouþe, þe multitude schal aþenseie him ... þouȝ he were as hooli as euere was seint Ion Baptist, he schulde not faile to be sclaudrid for a cursid Lollard & pursued as an heretik.⁴⁷

The otherwise orthodox friar responsible for the postils in Longleat 4 fulminates against the restrictions on preaching following Arundel's Constitutions and even likens them to the persecution of early Christians: "þe persecucion of Deoclician and Maximian be now newly begonnyn to letting techinge and preching of Goddys word and Goddis lawe."⁴⁸ Who was and who was not allowed to preach could indeed be a matter of life and death. William White was condemned for various beliefs deemed to be heretical, including that "each faithful person, even if not sent or licensed by diocesans or ordinaries ... may freely preach the word of God," and was burned in Norwich as a relapsed heretic in 1428.⁴⁹ Helen Leith Spencer has argued that there was a marked lull in the production of Middle English sermons following Arundel's Constitutions.⁵⁰ Later manuscripts of the early fourteenth-century *Northern Homily Cycle* contain less of the biblical material and some excise the gospel narratives altogether, which betrays great unease about what material might be safely incorporated in vernacular sermons addressed predominantly to the laity.⁵¹ There are then sufficient indications that preaching in the vernacular to the laity was affected by specific legislation and by the more general anxiety concerning the use of English in lay religious instruction.

While it is impossible accurately to date and locate most of the plays under discussion, the majority of them seem to postdate Arundel's Constitutions and the rise of Lollardy, both of which problematized preaching in the vernacular (by and) to the laity. It is therefore likely that writers and producers of late medieval English drama were concerned about how a sermon on the stage, presumably uttered by a lay actor in the majority of instances, would be perceived. This anxiety can perhaps explain why we encounter indirect preaching in the York Corpus Christi Play. Despite the biblical accounts of his preaching, the York John the Baptist merely recapitulates his sermons: "Loke þou make þe redy, ay saide I" (21.29). Although the audience is the ultimate recipient of the moral message, ostensibly this character does not preach on the stage. This indirect preaching goes against the biblical account of the event. There

also does not seem to be a good aesthetic or dramatic reason to prefer the saint's indirect preaching to a speech which engages directly with the audience (or with extras on stage), making the repressive influence of legislation aimed at circumscribing preaching the more likely trigger for the dramatist's choices.

This anxiety would account not only for the relative dearth of sermons in the English dramatic corpus but also for the careful orthodoxy of most sermons or sermon-like speeches in medieval English drama. Not all the on-stage sermons offer emphatic support for the Church or touch on controversial topics, however. Jesus's preaching on penance in *The Woman Taken in Adultery* in N-Town does not explicitly align itself with orthodox doctrine regarding the sacrament of penance. In *The Conversion of St. Paul* the protagonist preaches on the Seven Deadly Sins, an uncontroversial topic. But nearly every other instance of preaching within a play can be seen as an insistent assertion of orthodoxy. For example, several of the sermons in the East Anglian N-Town manuscript have a distinct anti-Lollard flavoring. Moses preaches on the Ten Commandments but does not mention idolatry, probably because of Lollard debate surrounding images and idolatry. The importance of auricular confession, a point of contention between the orthodox Church and Lollards, is repeatedly emphasized in various N-Town pageants. I shall discuss these instances in greater detail in chapter 6, which looks at the portrayal of the sacrament of penance in late medieval English plays and sermons. For now, I shall only point out that the stress on confession in John the Baptist's closing speech in the *Baptism* play (22.147, 155, 162–63, 167, 177–78) is indeed remarkable, as can be seen when this sermon is compared to the saint's sermons on penance in the French *mystères* where there is no such insistence on confession; sometimes it is not even mentioned at all, as in Michel's John the Baptist sequence, for instance. A similar assertion of this orthodox idea that confession is integral to salvation is also to be found in both the saint's Prologue and Peter's preaching in *Passion Play I* in the N-Town compilation (26.155–56, 410–13). Episcopus's sermon in the East Anglian Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* occurs in a distinctly orthodox play and likewise recommends confession to a priest: "Of synnys forgotyn take good avysement, | And knowlege them to yowr confessor full evyn" (874–75). The overt assertion of orthodoxy which is to be found in these speeches supports the understanding that there was apprehension about whether a sermon on the stage might be perceived as potentially heterodox and dangerous; the writers of these passages took care to fend off any such suspicion.

The treatment of the sermon genre in *Mankind* is of special interest as this play is deeply concerned with the proper mode of religious didactic discourse. Scholars have generally accepted the idea that Mercy's opening speech is a sermon.⁵² However, when looked at side-by-side with surviving Middle English sermons the dissimilarities are more numerous than the similarities. There are certainly some clear sermon features in this speech, such as the lessons aimed at the audience, for instance "In goode werkys, I awyse yow, souerence, to be perseuerante | To purifye yowr sowlys, þat þei be not corupte" (25–26),⁵³ and the references to the audience as a listening and learning congregation with the speaker in a position of spiritual authority, as in "Who ys þe hede forsoth I xall yow certyfy: | I mene Owr Sauyowr" (33–34). But the language of this speech is much more aureate than any surviving sermon I have come across, and at least in so far as regards its aureate tone, this speech resembles other literary genres more than it does sermons.⁵⁴ The repeated address of the auditors as "sovereigns" is wholly unlike the sermon; this is a form of address typically found in plays but never in sermons. We encounter a variety of addresses in sermons, from the bare "sirs" to the more elaborate "worschypful and feithfull frendys," but never "sovereigns."⁵⁵ It is presumably no coincidence that all three instances of lessons with direct address in Mercy's speech also employ this term which undermines the (social) superiority of the speaker (13–16, 25–26, 29–31).

Some typical sermon features are also missing from this soliloquy, such as a theme, the quotation of *auctoritates*, and the use of Latin. As not every single surviving Middle English sermon has all the recurrent sermon features, this absence could be dismissed. Mischief's interruption, however, focuses attention on exactly these features with a spoof authority and the use of doggerel Latin:

For a winter corn-threscher, ser, I haue hyryde

...

Ande he prouyth nay, as yt schewth be þis werse:

"Corn seruit bredibus, chaffe horsibus, straw fyrybusque." (54–57)

The last line is evidently the theme of this sermon-parody, as it is translated (58–59), repeated (60), and explained (61–62). Moreover, Mischief's phrase introducing the translation of the theme, "Thys ys as moche to say, to yowr leude wnderstondynge" (58), most definitely recalls the sermon. The translation of the theme of a sermon is standardly introduced with this phrase, with only minor variations, throughout the fifteenth

century: “& tus miche te seie on engliss tunge to 3our vndirstondyng,”⁵⁶ “thus myche to say in englisc tong to your vndirstondyng,”⁵⁷ “þe wordes of my teme beþ þus much to sey to youre vndyrstondyng,”⁵⁸ “These wordys been þus moche to sey,”⁵⁹ “These wordys that I haue spoken in Laten be thus moche to sey in Ynglyssche to 3owre vnderstondyng.”⁶⁰ Mischief may be ever so slightly ruder, but he captures the phrasing, and the patronizing tone, of these preachers to perfection; it is undeniable that the phrase would have put auditors in mind of preaching. That Mercy does not use any such phrase to translate Latin—which, of course, he does not use in his opening speech either—is equally undeniable.

Another sermon feature which Mischief parodies, although Mercy has not used it, is that of ending Latin quotations with *et cetera*, as in “*Quid uultis mihi dare? et cetera*,”⁶¹ “Ysa primo, *Cum multiplicaueritis oraciones, et cetera*”;⁶² occasionally, we even encounter it embedded in a vernacular phrase, as in “þe virste i sey, clennes, makis *etc.*”⁶³ and “þan wyl he haue mercy on vs and bryngon vs into þe londe of lyf *et cetera*”⁶⁴ If it were not for Mischief’s “‘Chaff horsybus et reliqua’ | ... | And so forth, *et cetera*.” (60–63) we would interpret the *et cetera* of the sermon as a note to the preacher to expand the quotation or phrase as appropriate. Mischief’s parody, however, makes clear that the *et cetera* were in fact at times uttered in preaching—if perhaps only by inept and ignorant preachers.

Although it is patent that Mischief’s interruption is meant to unsettle Mercy’s discourse, it is also evident he mocks all the typical sermon features that Mercy does not employ in his opening speech. The playwright clearly had a sound knowledge of the Middle English sermon, yet chose not to imbue Mercy’s opening soliloquy with those features that would most characterize it as a sermon.⁶⁵ The lack of some of these sermonic features, such as the use of Latin, in Mercy’s opening monologue is quite atypical for the speech patterns of a virtuous character in contemporary religious plays; for instance, Mercy’s later speeches are repeatedly interspersed with Latin. But when, later on in the play, Mercy uses various sermon features, such as quotations of authorities and Latin, it is in dialogues or in emotional outbursts but never in monologues that could be perceived as sermons. Overall, then, despite Mischief’s parody, the playwright does uphold such typical sermon features as rightly belonging in religious, didactic discourse; this play does not appear to be an argument to alter the style of contemporary preaching. The playwright seems to have consciously held check on the sermon-feel of Mercy’s opening monologue, but not because he (or she) disapproved of the contemporary sermon style

as such. Rather, although the writer of *Mankind* experienced no anxiety about having a vicious character parody the sermon on the stage, he (or she) does seem to have avoided staging an actual sermon.

A similar tongue-in-cheek reference to the sermon is to be found in Newguise's "Now gostly to owr purpos, worschypfull souerence, | We intende to gather mony, yf yt plesse yowr neclygence" (459–60). While the phrase "gostly to owr purpos" is normally used in sermons to introduce a piece of exegesis for the spiritual benefit of its auditors, here it is used incongruously to gather material profit for the actors, or sponsors, of the play.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Helen Leith Spencer has suggested a controversial referent for this phrase and its context, namely the debate about whether friars might collect money for their sermons.⁶⁷ In any case, the phrase is further evidence that the playwright of *Mankind* was intimately acquainted with the contemporary vernacular sermon, but chose to abstain strategically from staging such a sermon. Again, the influence of anti-Lollard legislation comes to mind as a reason for his doing so, for the play takes an orthodox stance on some other issues related to Lollardy, such as *Mankind*'s failure to attend church.

These plays and their careful (non-)use of the sermon genre support the notion that sermons on the stage were perceived as dangerous. Playwrights at times went against their sources to avoid incorporating sermons. When they did include a sermon, they usually inserted some material in that very speech to prove their orthodoxy, even though the remainder of the content is normally entirely uncontroversial. Very few plays seem to have been able to use the sermon in an unselfconscious way. It is probably no coincidence that the best example of a staged sermon occurs in a sixteenth-century play, *The Conversion of St. Paul*, because although there still was Lollard activity, and anti-Lollard measures continued to be taken in the sixteenth century, the focus seems to have shifted away from preaching to some extent. This is borne out by evidence from sermon studies, in that there was a marked lull in Middle English sermons being copied after about 1410 and throughout the mid fifteenth century, but later in the century the activity picked up again.⁶⁸ The evidence therefore seems to point fairly conclusively to a prohibitive influence on the plays of contemporary restrictions on preaching.

By not incorporating sermons for many of the didactic moments of their virtue characters, the playwrights also avoided relying on a recognized ecclesiastical medium of religious instruction, and thus to an extent created their own autonomous authority. Despite the orthodoxy of the

plays under discussion, then, it could be argued that playwrights usurp the role of preachers rather more than if they had employed the sermon and thereby derived their authority from that clerical genre. Ironically, it seems that the Church's desire to exclude the laity (and indeed many members of the clergy too) from preaching indirectly encouraged the laity further to develop their own mode of religious instruction and vernacular theology.

Whatever the causes of the sparse use of sermons in fifteenth-century English drama, the end result is that the plays on the whole tend to present their moralizing and didactic messages in a more independent, and frequently lay, fashion. Thus Lazarus's final speech on death in Towneley 31 is greatly inspired by death lyrics, through the use of a wide array of standard images and themes, by replicating lines and phrases from the poems, and through its emotional tone.⁶⁹ Wisdom lectures the audience and Anima through a religious treatise that was associated predominantly with private devotion. Occupation commences *Occupation and Idleness* with an "abuses of the age" speech, a genre also employed by the bishop in *The Pride of Life*. Likewise, although contemporary sermon techniques seem to be endorsed by the author of *Mankind*, Mercy employs a more literary style to teach the audience at the beginning of the play. By not making their virtue characters and the personages historically linked with sermons preach on stage, the dramatists endow these other forms of discourse with their own unique religious and spiritual authority.

As we observed in the previous chapter, the sermon is a monologic genre, making next to no allowances for audience participation; the congregation's (ideal) response was very straightforward: to listen and learn. A play audience faced with a staged sermon may not have been in quite the same devout and docile mood as when faced with a genuine sermon, but presumably the audience's response to a dramatic sermon and a real sermon would have been somewhat similar. By not exploiting this monologic textual genre the playwrights also failed to—or, rather, chose not to—claim the kind of spiritual and intellectual authority over their spectators which the sermon would have provided to some degree. Instead, as shall see in the following chapter, they often encourage the audience's contribution in creating meaning and ascribing value to the performance. An important effect of this relative dearth of sermons on the medieval English stage is therefore that plays generally involve their audiences more in the hermeneutic process.

NOTES

¹ Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 109.

² For the use of sermons in medieval French drama, see especially Knight, Hindley, "Preaching and Plays," Hindley, "Le prédication," and Mazouer. One of the reasons why French *mystères* contain more sermons than the English biblical plays may be that the clergy appears to have participated more actively in performances in France.

³ Eccles, p. xxxv.

⁴ Klausner, p. 5. By extension, any virtuous and didactic character is often assumed to be a preacher simply by virtue of being virtuous and didactic; see for instance Briscoe, "The Relation," p. 120.

⁵ This does not apply to Lollard sermons but I have detected no instances where a Lollard sermon might be presented on the stage.

⁶ Spencer, "Middle English Sermons," p. 603.

⁷ Donavin, pp. 295–96.

⁸ Waters, p. 17.

⁹ Spencer, *English Preaching*, pp. 117–18.

¹⁰ Gillespie, "Chichele's Church," p. 23.

¹¹ Windeatt, p. 253. For the date of the *Speculum Christiani*, see Gillespie, "Chichele's Church," p. 22. The exact same sentiment is expressed as early as the thirteenth century in John of Wales's *Communiloquium* (Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 39).

¹² Staley, *The Book of Margery Kempe*.

¹³ Forde, p. 109.

¹⁴ The term derives from Waters, p. 17.

¹⁵ Waters, p. 122.

¹⁶ Despite the many similarities between sermons and religious plays and despite the general medieval ambiguity of terminology, it is noteworthy that the terms used to describe the vernacular religious plays, such as *play* and *game* and *ludus*, are not those used to refer to sermons and vice versa—although there is some overlap with *treatise*, which was used to label either genre. The distinction between sermon and play consequently appears to have been reasonably thorough and obvious.

¹⁷ There is one potential sermon in Towneley (Lazarus's speech on death in play 31) and one in York (Prisbeter's opening of *The Purification of the Virgin*). The former is more akin to lyrics (see p. 62). The latter is more difficult to determine as it has some, though not many, sermon features. However, given the inappropriateness of Prisbeter's advice for a contemporary audience and the complete lack of sermons in the rest of the Corpus Christi Play, it is perhaps better not to label this speech a sermon. On the other hand, this version of the *Purification* pageant is substantially later than most of the other York texts: it was only copied by John Clerke in 1567 and probably dates from 1477 or later (Beadle, *The York*

Plays, 2:136, 143; this is also the edition used). Perhaps concerns about sermons which appear to have been felt by other York playwrights might no longer have been so strongly present by the late fifteenth and in the sixteenth century (see also pp. 56–57, 61).

¹⁸ Jean Michel, *Le Mystère de la Passion (Angers 1486)*, ed. Omer Jodogne (Gembloux: Duculot, 1959)

¹⁹ The translations from French are mine; abbreviations have been silently expanded.

²⁰ In Baker, Murphy, and Hall, *Late Medieval Religious Plays*. For an analysis of the structure of this sermon, see also Hubert, appendix 1.

²¹ Coletti, pp. 139–40.

²² In Baker, Murphy, and Hall, *Late Medieval Religious Plays*.

²³ Winstead, pp. 487, 502.

²⁴ The situation is rather different in the *Pride of Life*, which possibly predates the rise of Lollardy and is in any case probably Irish in origin (Fletcher, *Drama*, pp. 84–86). (Davis concurs with the Irish provenance and suggests a mid fourteenth-century date (pp. xcix, c). Klausner suggests a date towards the end of the fourteenth century but does not comment on the provenance of the play in his introduction.) Although the Queen's speech to the King is relatively short, it has many more sermon features than the Bishop's homily. She teaches her audience directly, for example, when she tells the King "In feith loke þou be stabil" (Davis, 238). She bolsters the authoritative tone of her discourse by referring to *auctoritates*, as in "Holy writ and prophecy | Perof I take to borowe [as evidence]" (225–26), but also assumes a position of personal authority with utterances such as "I rede 3e serue God Almiȝte" (229) and "For, God wot þe soþe, | I ne sey hit for no fabil" (235–36). The King dismisses her with "Qwhat prehistou" (239). In the early and possibly Irish *Pride of Life* there is no sense that a preaching woman is especially troublesome (except to her obtuse husband). But the surviving text of *The Pride of Life* is incomplete and corrupted, so details of its content can never be wholly relied on.

²⁵ Coletti, pp. 121–25.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 114–21, 124–27, 130–34, see also pp. 144–46.

²⁷ Davis, *Non-Cycle Plays*. If the extra-metrical Latin was not included in the spoken speech, which is possible, this monologue would be rather less sermon-like.

²⁸ Spector, after l. 385.

²⁹ The extrametrical Latin lines may not have been included in the spoken text.

³⁰ The Corpus Christi Play lacks an independent prophet play. See also Twycross, "Books," p. 82.

³¹ References here are to Lumiansky and Mills.

³² Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 113.

³³ These expository speeches following the dramatic action instead recall methods of exegesis (Twycross, "Books," pp. 86–87).

³⁴ Ritch, p. 243.

³⁵ Hudson and Spencer, p. 223. For the idea that these "sermons" were pri-

marily intended for private reading, see also *ibid.*, pp. 226–27.

³⁶ Arnold, p. 49.

³⁷ Wenzel, *Latin*, p. 40.

³⁸ Maclure, pp. 5, 18.

³⁹ As recorded at Burghill in 1397; in Shinnars and Dohar, p. 292.

⁴⁰ The dialogue between Jesus and the two apostles at the end of the episode in the York pageant stresses the need for the spectators to act with mercy and forgiveness, but it does not have the same effect as the engagement with the audience in the N-Town version.

⁴¹ Forde, p. 114.

⁴² Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 51.

⁴³ Aston, p. 33.

⁴⁴ Wilkins pp. 315–16.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁴⁶ Thomson, p. 117.

⁴⁷ Swinburn, *The Lanterne of Ligt*, p. 101.

⁴⁸ Hudson and Spencer, p. 232.

⁴⁹ Forde, p. 115.

⁵⁰ Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 116.

⁵¹ For the later tradition, see also the introduction in Thompson, *The Northern Homily Cycle*.

⁵² See, for instance, Clopper, “*Mankind*,” p. 350, Briscoe, “Preaching,” pp. 157–59, Dillon, p. 59, and Forest-Hill, esp. pp. 22, 24, 27–28.

⁵³ References in Eccles, *The Macro Plays*.

⁵⁴ Helen Leith Spencer makes a similar observation about the divergent level of aureate diction in Mercy’s speech and sermons (*English Preaching*, p. 120).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, *English Preaching*, p. 116.

⁵⁶ Grisdale, p. 51.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵⁸ Ross, p. 33.

⁵⁹ Morrison, p. 186.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁶¹ Ross, p. 33.

⁶² O’Mara, *Four*, p. 129.

⁶³ Grisdale, p. 43.

⁶⁴ Powell, *Festial*, p. 140.

⁶⁵ Further in-depth knowledge of sermons is perhaps argued by the verses “Lex et natura, Cristus et omnia iura | Damnant ingratum, lugent eum fore natum.” (“Law and nature, Christ and all justice | damn the ungrateful, lament that he was born,” 754–55), which occur in a slightly different version in the preaching handbook of Friar John of Grimestone (ca. 1376), as “Lex et natura, Christus, simul omnia iura | Dampnant ingratum, plangunt illum fore natum” (“Law and Nature, Christ, together with all justice | Damn the ungrateful, lament

that he was born," Wenzel, *Preachers*, p. 128). It is also possible that these verses were fairly commonplace at the time *Mankind* was composed.

⁶⁶ Fletcher, "The Meaning."

⁶⁷ Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 116.

⁶⁸ Spencer, "Middle English Sermons," pp. 621–22.

⁶⁹ Taylor, "The Relation," p. 11, and Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric*, p. 319.