A STUDY OF THE ROMANTIC ELEMENTS IN MODERN DRAMA

A THESIS

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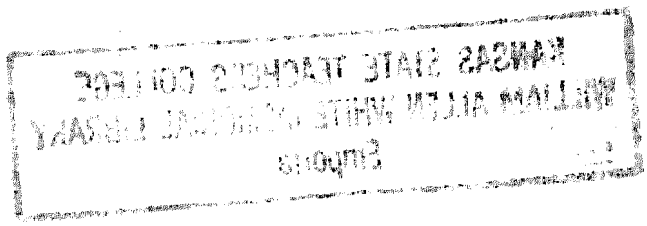

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INTRODUCTION

According to critics, modern drama is essentially realistic in method and spirit; but it has also its romantic aspects which run all through this so-called realistic period, just as in every period of literature that is definitely named there are exceptions to the prevailing form. The purpose of this study is an attempt to estimate and determine the nature and the extent of the romantic elements in modern drama.

The results of this study must be of interest to every student of literature, since the romantic method or spirit is so persistent and is inextricably rooted in the very nature of literature, and since the field of modern drama is such an important one. It is important because it is one of the three great periods in the history of the drama, and modern literature has distinguished itself as much in this field as in any other.

The drama spoken of as modern in this thesis begins with the work of Ibsen.

The writer has drawn her material for this study from a critical reading of the plays themselves, from all the available books about the drama which were applicable, and from magazine articles treating particular works or dramatists. In his Aspects of Modern Drama, Frank Wadleigh Chandler has a chapter called "Varieties of Romance", in which he divides romantic drama into five classes--adventure, sentiment, legend, tragedy, and imagination. He then discusses several plays that belong in each classification.[1]

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[1] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914).

In his Modern Continental Playwrights Chandler gives a brief summary of the works of each of the important dramatists, in which he incidentally mentions works that are romantic in character.[2] Robert M. Smith in his Types of Romantic Drama gives the text of several plays three of which are modern and which he classifies as types of romantic drama, with a brief discussion of each, but he merely mentions in his general introduction the characteristics which cause them to be classed as romantic.[3] None of these books makes any thorough or detailed analysis of the plays to determine what romantic qualities they contain.

Since it was not possible to include all modern dramatic works in the present study, it was necessary to make a selection of plays and playwrights. The dramatists chosen are those who have generally been recognized as preeminent by the literary world. The plays of these authors which are most wholly romantic have been selected for analysis and discussion.

Before proceeding further with the study, it is necessary to have a clear conception of what is meant by romantic since it is a term that has been used with a variety of meanings. The word romantic applied to art or literature denotes a highly imaginative quality, because the romanticist puts imagination very noticeably above actual possibility. It is, in effect, the antithesis of realistic, which implies a frank facing of the facts of life, often of the defects or weaknesses of the social structure, for the realist uses direct, undecorated expression, describing life

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[2] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931).

[3] Robert Metcalf Smith, Types of Romantic Drama, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1928).

exactly as it appears to him. The romanticist sees visions of perfection and he paints the land of wonder trying to raise others to its plane. The realist may also desire to improve actuality, but he uses a negative method by showing the folly and the unpleasantness of things as they are. The difference then, depends more upon the writer's point of view than upon anything inherent in the subject or object contemplated.

There are a number of elements which the romanticist uses in order to furnish a means of escape from the commonplace realities of daily life. He may create atmosphere by setting the story in the remote past or in regions far away. The romanticist does not recollect or attempt to reconstruct the past as it actually was, but fashions it anew as it ought to have been from an idealistic viewpoint. He often uses improbable plots and events, because their very nature provides an escape from the casualness of everyday life. Some of the incidents of romantic plays are impossible and they therefore carry the reader even farther into the realm of dreams and fancy. There the atmosphere is enriched by the presence of certain qualities which tradition has assigned to the domains of romance; golden hair, roses and moonlight, nightingales and larks, balconies, the riches of the orient and feudal castles. Poetry and poetic prose are the appropriate means of expression for creating and sustaining the romantic mood. Fancy dreams, and visions provide an opportunity for imaginary experiences that can happen only outside the limitations of reality. Characters are extraordinary persons endowed with heroic qualities that make them unlike people in the world of everyday events. Ghosts, fairies, angels, sprites, demons, and spirits may all appear as characters. Inanimate objects sometimes act as characters, or are imaginatively endowed with human characteristics in

the minds of the persons in the plays. Unselfish, idealized love is another romantic element. Sentiment also is frequently found in romantic plays. Mysticism is used in numerous instances. Superstition is always accorded sympathetic, approving treatment by the romanticist.

Romanticism, in its various manifestations, reflects the reaction to too persistent a devotion to realism. Expressionism is the final phase in this revolt. The expressionist is not bent upon depicting objective reality. He wishes only to render an inner significance. He tells a story which is intended to illustrate some mood or fancy of his own. He cares nothing for the probability of his events. Therefore his final result may be wholly fantastic and his characters mere symbols of abstract ideas.[4] Expressionism is considered in this thesis only when it appears in the works of the major dramatists and insofar as it contains the elements of romanticism.

The dramatists will be discussed in order according to the country from which they come beginning with Rostand in France, then proceeding to Maeterlinck in Belgium, Hauptmann and Sudermann in Germany, Ibsen in Norway, Strindberg in Sweden, Barrie in Scotland, Dunsany and Phillips in England, Yeats in Ireland, D'Annunzio in Italy, and O'Neill in America.

In the consideration of each dramatist the chronological order will be followed. A summary of the plot of a play will be given in cases where that is necessary to show its romanticism. Quotations that illustrate certain points in the drama will be used. Comments from critics will also be used wherever they apply. A summary of the findings in the study of each dramatist

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[4] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights, op. cit., pp. 383-5.

will be placed at the end of each chapter, and a general assembling of the results of the entire study will be given in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER I

EDMOND ROSTAND

That Edmond Rostand is predominantly a romanticist is very evident in his six best-known plays: The Romantics, The Princess Far Away, The Woman of Samaria, Cyrano de Bergerac, The Eaglet, and Chantecler. All are written in verse, a fitting medium for the expression of that romantic idealism which is characteristic of the spirit of Rostand. In plot, setting, and mood, he is successful in creating a realm of beauty, fancy, and dreams, where his reader or his audience may escape for a time, from the irksomeness of every-day existence. Here Rostand displays a skillful use of the traditional attributes of romance--the strange, the marvelous, the unexpected, with lovely ladies and gallant men, moonlit nights, flowers, nightingales, and wonderful castles. "He reaches the vertiginous heights of sublimity, heroism, self-sacrifice, and adds to the Genius of Romance the Genius of Humour."[1]

Edmond Rostand is the outstanding romantic genius of the modern theater according to Dickinson.[2] And Jameson expresses a similar opinion.

> There is one dramatist among the moderns in the full Romantic tradition. . . . . While Naturalism gasps in the gutter, and Realism wastes its last strength in spasmodic energy, M. Rostand sings to himself in a forgotten isle of romance, sings for the sheer joy of singing. . . . . Let us examine the quality of his song. It is

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[1] William Lyon Phelps, Essays on Modern Dramatists (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), p. 268.

[2] Thomas Dickinson, An Outline of Contemporary Drama (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1927), p. 210.

magnificiently sentimental, resolutely romantic. M. Rostand is a minor poet, but he sweeps the border of fairyland for brilliant images. The atmosphere of fantasy is complete; dramas pass in a marvelous country; the ground is a mosaic of flowers, the sky has the lazy brilliance of high noon; love here is hot, courtly, all-absorbing, and chivalry the measure of manhood. Over a strange story he flings the glorious veil that is to hide its deficiencies. He wraps himself in the romantic, disguises himself as a native of fairyland.[3]

Mary Arms Edmonds has this to say on another phase of Rostand's romanticism:

> Although he himself would be the first to disown any direct intention to point a moral or preach a sermon, the most casual reader can hardly fail to realize that his entire work is simply the expression, under however varied phrasing, of an intense belief in the beauty and value of idealism--the golden vein running thro the world's dross and which alone can make the joy and the inspiration of living. Again and again he bids us realize that
>
> "Above a roof
> A chimney pot,
> And over you and me,
> Above the humblest working day--"
>
> there is always
>
> "A sky as pure, a sky as wide
> As ever sky of Sicily";
>
> and that the one irremediable tragedy is to keep our eyes so persistently on the street that we lose sight of the blue.[4]

Rostand's own comment on the idealistic function of romanticism is interesting:

> The true wit is that which lends wings to enthusiasm. .... And this is why we need a drama through which, exalting lyrically, moralizing with beauty, consoling with grace, the poets shall be able without doing it on purpose to give lessons in soul. This

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[3] Storm Jameson, Modern Drama in Europe (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926), p. 216.

[4] Mary Arms Edmonds, "A fisher of the moon: an appreciation of Edmond Rostand." The Forum, LI (April, 1914), 600.

> is why we need a drama that shall be poetic and even heroic. The personages of the drama are .... intrusted with the duty of taking us out on a holiday from this eternal college which is life--taking us out in order to give us courage to go back again![5]

He called his first play Les Romanesques, which is translated The Romantics or The Romancers. Its literal meaning is The Story-Book People. And the setting is as romantic as the title, for Rostand says that the action may take place anywhere provided the costumes are pretty. Cunliffe and De Bacourt suggest that having a prominent place in the setting occupied by "A Wall" is evidently borrowed from the burlesque of romance in A Midsummer Night's Dream.[6]

When the drama opens Percinet is reading a love scene from Romeo and Juliet to Sylvette, and he shuts the book to remark:

> "So, till to-morrow, I will close its cover
> And make of Romeo a living lover."[7]

They see a similarity between the plight of the lovers in the story to their own case since their fathers have pretended to be enemies in order to foster the passion of the precious pair, and bring about a romantic marriage that will unite the two estates. Ignorant of their father's scheming, the optimistic Sylvette suggests "Healing of hatred from our love may flow."[8]

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[5] Ibid., p. 604.

[6] Pierre De Bacourt and J. W. Cunliffe, French Literature During the Last Half-Century (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 222.

[7] Henderson Dangerfield Norman, translator, Plays of Edmond Rostand (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), I, 4.

[8] Ibid., p. 6.

The fathers arrange with the romantic villain Straforel for an abduction from which Percinet may rescue Sylvette and bring the parents' desires to a happy conclusion. Straforel is a specialist in abductions and can supply all kinds.

> From a common ruction
> To the highest, sir. Imagine an abduction,
> Two men in black, vulgar kidnappers, creep
> Up in a cab. That kind comes very cheap.
> Next, night abductions. Those by day cost more.
> Pompous abduction with a coach and four,
> And lackeys curled and powdered.--Wigs, I figure,
> Are always extra.--Eunuch, mute or negro,
> Sbirro, brigand, musquetaire,--in courses;
> There's post abductions, two horses; three, four horses,
> One can augment ad libitum the number;--
> Top-chaise abductions, always rather sombre;
> Abductions in a bag,--burlesque. Then take
> Romantic ones in boats.--Calls for a lake.
> Venetian gondola takes a lagoon!
> Abductions by the pale light of the moon!
> --Moonlight comes high, sirs, but it is good form.--
> Abduction sinister lit by a storm,
> Flashing of lightning and of steel,--quite grim,
> Mantels dark-hued, plumed hats with spreading brim;
> Abduction, country-style, one for the city;
> Torch-light abduction,--that one's rather pretty!
> The masked abduction, strictly classical;
> There's one to music, suited to a ball;
> The sedan-chair abduction makes a stir.
> That's gayest, newest, most distinguished, sir.[9]

The delighted fathers agree to a sort of combination abduction with all the extras to give the children the romance they ask. The abduction--and the rescue--come off as planned, and the violins strike up a dramatic tremolo as the bravos flee.

Later when Sylvette discovers the truth, she decides not to tell Percinet, but he finds Straforel's unpaid bill. Disillusioned the lovers

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[9] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

quarrel, and Percinet goes off to seek real adventures. Finally, realizing that the romance he seeks is only to be found in the paternal garden with Sylvette, he comes back and they agree that "Poetry is in the heart of lovers."[10]

The entire drama is in verse, and the lover's conversations especially go far beyond the commonplace level of every-day talk.

The following is typical of many of Percinet's speeches

> This evening, my first tryst. O hour to bless,
> The soft breeze rustles like a silken dress ...*
> Gray twilight hides the flowers ... tears fill my eyes.
> Oh, hidden blooms, your perfumes sweeter rise!
> Tall tree, a star ensilvers thy great dome!
> Whence is this music? Lo, the night has come.[11]

In his next play, The Princess Far Away, Rostand's "exaggerated idealism was too far removed from reality to awake any general response".[12] Yet it has a strong appeal to the romantic reader or spectator.

"Its keynote", another critic points out is "the regenerative and spiritually quickening power of idealism."[13] These lines from the play illustrate the thought just expressed:

> No, Lady. Love is holy. 'Tis God's road.
> Who dies for love dies in the grace of God,
> Joffroy Rudel, our love knew heavenly things.
> Our meeting souls have touched each other's wings!
> . . . . . .
> I go. My Dream was truth. I found my Star.
> Grace, Lord of life! Grace, Melissinde! ... There are

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[10] Ibid., p. 55.

[11] Ibid., p. 19.

[12] Pierre De Bacourt, and J. W. Cunliffe, op. cit., p. 225.

[13] Mary Arms Edmonds, op. cit., p. 602.

* The three dots appear in the original to indicate pauses. Four dots as elsewhere in this thesis indicate an omission.

So many whom the froward fates betray, ...
Who never find their Princess far away!
. . . . Better to part when hearts are fresh and fond
Than see it fade,--the freshness of the bond.
. . . . We two will never know a graying glory:
The Adored will never be an oft told story.
Still, still afar, who could from far adore,
When thy eyes close to open nevermore
Thou'lt see me always, wrapt in light sublime,
For the first time,--forever the first time.
. . . . Thou diest, blest of God! [14]

The plot and the setting, as the title indicates, are quite romantic. For that reason a brief summary of the story follows:

The troubador, Rudel, has fallen in love, by hearsay, with the lovely Melissinde, a princess of Tripoli. For two years he worships this fair lady, whom he has never seen, and praises her in speech and song. Finally he decides that he must see her if only for a moment. So he organizes an expedition to sail to Tripoli. The gallant crew suffer many hardships, but they keep up their courage by speaking of the far-away princess. When they reach the end of their journey, Rudel is too ill to leave the ship, so he sends his dearest friend, Bertrand of Allamanon, to Melissinde with his messages of love. Melissinde has heard of the troubador Rudel, and knows some of the poems he has written to her. So when the handsome Bertrand comes and kneeling before her repeats some of Rudel's verses, she assumes that he is the poet and loves him at once. Bertrand then is in a very trying situation, for as a messenger of his dying friend he finds himself in love with the very girl whom that friend has so long adored.

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[14] Plays of Edmond Rostand, op. cit., pp. 137-38.

Melissinde admits that she has loved Rudel, but now she loves Bertrand, and she asks him no longer to plead Rudel's cause: "You'll cease to plead, lest my will bow before you!"[15] He struggles manfully against the temptation to abandon duty for love, but he finally yields and decides not to return to Rudel. A short time later believing that Rudel has expired, Melissinde and Bertrand are shocked into consciousness of their selfishness, and Bertrand bitterly condemns himself as a traitor. When they learn, however, that they had misinterpreted the shouts of the people outside, they hurry at once to the ship and the still waiting Rudel, who, refusing to listen to reports of Bertrand's brief disloyalty, dies in the lady's arms content that he has finally attained his ideal.

"Although, humanly speaking," Chandler comments, "Bertrand might have married the lady after a proper period of mourning, he departs for the Crusades, and she withdraws to a nunnery".[16]

This unusual conclusion, and in fact, the whole story serve to illustrate Hamilton's statement that Rostand took no interest in the fashionable drama of the day--the drama of realism:

> This play, he says, has nothing to do with the nineteenth century and still less with the twentieth. It has nothing to do with anything that seems important to most people at the present time. But it has picturesqueness, it has charm, it has the forlorn loveliness of longing for ideals long ago and far away.[17]

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[15] Ibid., p. 118.

[16] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 231.

[17] Clayton Hamilton, op. cit., p. 30.

Although Rostand's next play, The Woman of Samaria, was "bound to be a failure on the modern stage",[18] and, "from the literary viewpoint can be reckoned as a failure"[19] it, like all his other dramas, bears witness to his perennial romantic spirit. His paraphrasing of some of the plain Bible stories into forceful, yet simple and dignified poetry is done so skillfully that Hamilton compares their music "to the throbbing of some great cathedral organ that shakes you into sanctity."[20] The following story is a typical example:

A certain man
Went from Jerusalem to Jericho.
Robbers waylaid him, stripped his raiment off,
Wounded, and left him so.
The echoes seemed to scoff.
He lay, half dead.
His wounds gaped sore and wide.
A priest came by. Seeing the ground so red,
He chose the other side.
A Levite came. He saw the dimming eye.
He, too, passed by.
By the same road, came a Samaritan,
He saw the man:
Filled with compassion, hastened to his side;
Poured oil and wine to stanch the wound so wide;
Lifted him gently, set him on his beast,
And let him ride,
And lest his mule should stumble in the least,
He walked beside.
He brought him to an inn, put him to bed,
And when the dawn was red,
Said to the good man there,
"Let him have every care
When I go hence.

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[18] Pierre De Bacourt, and J. W. Cunliffe, op. cit., p. 226.

[19] Mary Arms Edmonds, op. cit., p. 594.

[20] Clayton Hamilton, op. cit., p. 32.

Here are two pence.
And what thou spendest more, will I repay."
And so this--heathen--went upon his way.
Which, think you, of these three,
Look in your hearts and see,--
Was, in God's sight
A neighbor to this man--
The priest, the Levite,
The Samaritan?[21]

The author did not call this piece "a play in three acts"; he called it "a sermon in three pictures". The theme is the mystical one of the search of the human mind for the divine--for present happiness through unselfish service, and for eternal life.

The first, and third acts take place at Jacob's Well near the town of Sichem in Samaria. When the play opens it is night--beautiful, clear, and stars are shining.

> Near the well, in the black darkness of the vaulted arch, a vast phantom, with the white beard of a centenarian, leans whitely, on a staff. A second phantom as huge, as white, stands motionless on a step. A third, like the other two, with the same white beard, the same shepherd's staff, advances mysteriously.[22]

These phantoms are the shades of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their appearance at the well of Jacob seems very appropriate, and they speak reverently of, He that shall come--"the world's Desire."[23]

During the first act the woman of Samaria, Photine, encounters Jesus at the well and is converted to become one of his followers. This happens very much as in the real Biblical account except that certain romantic details are added. The woman sings a love song as she comes, and she uses

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[21] Plays of Edmond Rostand, op. cit., pp. 157-58.

[22] Ibid., p. 145.

[23] Ibid., p. 147.

the jar of water as a looking glass while Jesus reflects:

> In the cool water, empty smiles she flashes,
> Admires the dye upon her sweeping lashes,
> Looks at her nails whereon a few drops fell,
> --And the world's Saviour waits beside the well! . . . .
> She is going--type of poor humanity
> That almost finds the Way, but heedlessly
> Chooses the by-path.[24]

The following is representative of the simple, yet prophetic and earnest speeches of Jesus which so impressed the woman:

> All words of love must speak at last of Me.
> One must to Me the halting words address
> To know the fullness of their tenderness.
> . . . . . .
> The love of Me comes always to a heart
> Where lesser, human loves have had a part,
> In the old lamp, a newer light discloses,
> Makes fadeless garlands from life's fadeless roses:
> Lo, I make all things new.[25]

Photine hurries to Sichem to herald the words of Jesus, and returns to Him with a great crowd to whom he kindly speaks. In the crowd are many children whom Peter orders away when they begin to dance and sing. But Jesus speaks:

> Forbid them not. You know not what you say.
> I love their happy songs, their motions free.
> Suffer the little ones to come to Me.
> . . . . . .
> Watch but that baby singing as she skips
> And hark to wisdom from an infant's lips.[26]

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[24] Ibid., p. 163.

[25] Ibid., p. 169.

[26] Ibid., pp. 201-2.

The play closes with a poetic version of the Lord's prayer repeated by the transformed Photine to which the crowd reverently responds "Amen."

For the hero of his next play Cyrano de Bergerac, Rostand found inspiration in the career of an actual soldier, philosopher, and man of letters born in 1619 and distinguished alike for his great nose, his feats of valor, and his skepticism. It had been the role of the historical Cyrano to assist others without profiting himself, and Rostand was attracted by his unselfishness in love which contrasted sharply with his arrant egotism in other relations, as well as by his beauty of soul in contrast with his grotesque physical appearance. From such elements Rostand constructed an altogether original play "employing every dramatic device known to romantic art."[27]

Cyrano loves his cousin in secret. But Roxane does not even consider him as a lover because his unattractive physical appearance obscures for her his charming mind and noble soul. She admires instead the handsome Christian, but his slowness of speech irritates her. She expects to be courted with passionate ardor and eloquent, poetic speeches. This sort of discourse comes naturally to Cyrano; so he unselfishly puts his own wishes aside and woos Roxane for Christian. He arranges the wedding as well. Later on the battlefield Cyrano does his best to protect Christian, and writes the letters which are sent to Roxane from her husband. After Christian's death Cyrano still loves in secret rather than disillusion her. Years later when

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[27] Pierre De Bacourt, and J. W. Cunliffe, op. cit., p. 227.

Cyrano is dying, he reveals his secret as he pretends to be reading the last letter he had written her in Christian's name. The very tones of his voice, and the fact that he cannot see the letter make Roxane realize the truth. But he will not admit that he has loved her, and he dies "with a jest on his lips."[28]

The charm of this play is due in part to its improbability. It is, indeed, a romantic escape from reality. The first act with its animation and picturesqueness immediately establishes the seventeenth-century atmosphere with its insolent noblesse, its soldiers, its bourgeoisie, its professional cut-throats whose swords were at the service of the highest bidder, its pickpockets plying their trade in every public assembly, and its fair ladies of the court.

> The swift action, the unbelievable feats of valor, the impossible journey of the heroine into the besieger's camp bearing Rabelaisian good cheer, the improbable self-effacement of Cyrano for fourteen years after the death of his rival,--all are as delightful as the strokes of fortune in a fairy tale. And, unlike most fairy tales, this play supplies a human character which, however exaggerated, appears not unreal. For Cyrano somehow lives and is lovable. His bluster, his fire-eating, his wit, his fancy, his denial of self, constitute a strange mixture. He who resigns his lady to another less worthy than himself is not only no prig, but a devil-may-care adventurer, blessed with rare humor and fancy, one who, except for his nose, might himself have borne off the prize.
>
> As for Christian, he arouses a certain contempt, owing to his readiness to profit in love by another's service. He seems lacking in honor as well as in brains. Roxane lives chiefly to be adored. She is merely the capricious, vain beauty, knowing no serious passion until Cyrano's letters arouse it, after her marriage to Christian. She and Christian and Cyrano are the folk of romance, and so are their minor fellows, from the roistering captain of cadets to the poetical pastry-cook.[29]

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[28] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), p. 54.

[29] Ibid., p. 55.

Romantic in characters and theme, Cyrano de Bergerac is romantic, as well in its situations and poetry. This creation of theatric and improbable scenes accompanies quite appropriately the character of Cyrano with his admiration for the beautiful gesture. He coolly fights a duel while composing a ballad which he recites to the admiring spectators. His words fit with extraordinary precision every unexpected detail of the fight. With the last line of the poem, he hits the viscount who falls and is carried out by his friends, while Cyrano bows gracefully amid hearty applause and a shower of flowers and handkerchiefs. Obviously theatric also is Cyrano's defying the actor, Montfleury, to go on with the play. When the audience protests Cyrano challenges the whole crowd, but there is absolute silence. Romantic too, is the scene where he goes to his rival's aid, wooing Roxane, who leans from her balcony, seeing in the moonlight the fair form of Christian, but listening enraptured to the fair phrases of Cyrano. "Here, as in the episode that ensues, Rostand's poetical power, his wit, and his imagination are at their best."[30] A few lines separated from their context can give, of course, merely a suggestion of the dramatic power and lyrical beauty of the whole passage:

> Cyrano: Certes, this feeling,
> Jealous and terrible and all-revealing,
> Is love. It has the sadness and the might
> Of love. Yet selfless. Self drops out of sight.
> For thy least good I would give all my own;--
> Aye, though thou knewst it not,--content alone
> If some day, from afar, I heard arise
> Thy lovely laughter from my sacrifice.
> Thy glances fire me holier heights to win,
> New valor, higher truths. Dost thou begin
> To comprehend my love? Ah, canst thou mark

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[30] Ibid., p. 54.

How my soul reaches . . . reaches . . . through the dark?
Truly this evening is too fair, too sweet!
I speak, you listen, and our spirits meet.
It is too much. My hopes leapt not so high
Not in my maddest moments. Let me die!
My life is perfected! My spoken word
Has made you tremble like a swaying bird
Among the boughs,--a leaf among the leaves.
For thou dost tremble! Lo, my heart perceives
The trembling of thy white hand on the vine.
The jasmine bears it. See, it reaches mine.[31]

Cyrano on seeing some one approach who would separate the lovers sends them off to be married, while he intercepts the intruder by dropping from the limb of a tree and talking exquisite nonsense as he pretends to have tumbled from the moon:

I came,--your pardon,--through a waterspout,
Cloudburst, that left its spray. I have journeyed, sir.
My eyes are full of stardust. Ha, . . . this spur
Caught in a comet's tail. This golden tinge.
[He brushes his sleeve delicately.]
Here, on my doublet, is a meteor's fringe.
. . . . . .
I mean to write my travels in a book.
These stars entangled in my mantle,--look,--
When I've recorded all my diverse risks,
These captured stars shall serve as asteriks.
[The other's attempts to interrupt so he can hasten on his errand, Cyrano pretends to take as interest in his story.]
You would learn,--'tis reasonable enow,--
From one who has been there, if it's made of cheese,
Or if folks live there natural as you please.[32]

Even the last great scene, the death of Cyrano, seems studiedly theatric. The audience is purposely kept aware that Cyrano is no ordinary hero--he is consciously idealized. Yet this play has an appeal that has never failed to captivate an audience. Part of this appeal is due to the

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[31] Plays of Edmond Rostand, op. cit., pp. 295-96.

[32] Ibid., pp. 304-5.

fact that Cyrano is an incarnation of all the heroic qualities which the average auditor would like to possess for himself. For, Phelps declares:

> No man has a soul so dead that it cannot be stirred by Cyrano. Its combination of lyrical beauty, passion, wit, sentiment, humour, enthusiasm, tragic force, pathos, united in one divine transport of moral beauty--the Soul! . . . . And in the autumnal garden, amid the falling leaves, and the chill of death, we hear the voice of that which alone is as sublime as the stars,--the human spirit.[33]

> What matter if Cyrano die from the treacherous blow of an unseen enemy: He has fought and triumphed over enemies more potent--hatred, hypocrisy, avarice, To the champions of common sense he may seem absurd; yet he holds sway over the hearts of all who are romantically inclined, since he unites so effectively the charms of d'Artagnan and Don Quixote.[34]

One important factor, of course, that caused Rostand to create the unusual character of Cyrano is that the part was written to give the great actor, Coquelin, a chance to do everything in his repertoire in one evening. He could play all kinds of comedy, he could read, he could make love, and he was one of the few comedians who could die. So Rostand and Coquelin sought for a part that would give this versatile actor the opportunity he sought,--"to make love, to be poetical, to be gallant, to fight a duel, to play a battle scene,"[35] to recite noble passages in that incomparable voice of his, and finally to die. Thus the character Cyrano who does all these things, so unusual in one man, is necessarily one of the most romantic in literature.

Rostand's next play, The Eaglet was also written with Coquelin in mind. It is different from his other romantic plays in that its theme

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[33] William Lyon Phelps, op. cit., p. 273.

[34] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 232.

[35] Clayton Hamilton, op. cit., p. 34.

is naturalistic. The theme is the conflict between the individual and fate--fate composed of heredity and environment. In manner, however, the play is highly romantic.

The time of the play is 1830-1832 which is far enough away from the present to be unknown except through history. The story exhibits the failure of the Eaglet, Napoleon's son, to measure up to the greatness of his father. The boy who inherits that father's ambition is heir as well of Austrian frailty, through his foolish mother, the Archduchess Marie Louise. Although Duke of Reichstadt, Franz is held virtually a prisoner at the Austrian court where Metternich keeps him surrounded by spies. The boy contrives, however, to learn the history of his father's achievements through counter conspirators and prepares by their aid to regain his lost throne. But, weak in body, and lacking the decisive qualities that make for an efficient leader, the Eaglet hesitates because he fears his fair cousin, the Countess Camerata, may lose her life in aiding him to escape. This hesitancy causes the whole plot to fail, for the Duke and his men are captured by the Austrian police just as the Countess's reproaches at the delay have once more inspired Franz to proceed. Left alone on the battlefield of Wagram where his father had once fought, the Duke has a vision or dream in which he sees not only the dead body of the romantic grenadier Flambeau who had dared all for his sake, but also the spectral victims of his father's ambition demanding his atonement. He sees in his own suffering expiation for theirs:

> My agony has put their woe to rout.
> The groans are stilled.[36]

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[36] Plays of Edmond Rostand, op. cit., II, 187.

And he dies in a pathetic last scene surrounded by the court.

Another evidence of the romantic spirit of The Eaglet is its great number of artificial, theatric situations. There are so many coincidences that nearly the whole line of action seems quite improbable. Thus Metternich has just remarked that there is no harm done as long as the shouting for Napoleon is done in theaters when cries of "Long live Napoleon!"[37] are heard outside. As Therese reads the line, "Courage! Descendant of a race divine!"[38] the Duke enters. The Duke has just made terms with his grandfather, the Emperor, when Metternich comes into the room. Metternich addressing himself to Napoleon's hat says:

> Indeed I think mayhap
> If I should turn . . . I'd see . . . still watching so
> A grenadier who guards his threshold . . . "[39]

and turning he sees Flambeau in his grenadier's garb standing in the moonlight. Theatric too, is the scene where Flambeau tries to make Metternich think he is dreaming, and that before the great mirror when Metternich with a sort of hypnotic power causes the frightened Duke to see in his own reflection the phantoms of all his ill-fated ancestors until the boy seizing the heavy silver sconce with a maddened gesture strikes the mirror. "(He strikes furiously; the mirror falls; the candles go out; darkness; the crashing of shivered glass; the Duke hurls himself back with a shriek of

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[37] Plays of Edmond Rostand, op. cit., II, 17.

[38] Ibid., p. 20.

[39] Ibid., p. 93.

of triumph)."[40] Flambeau's stabbing himself "to grow another Cross"[41] of honor and to escape arrest is also dramatically effective.

Another scene in which imagination runs riot is the Duke's dream on the battlefield of Wagram.

> The coming-alive, as it were, of the whole vast plain before this boy who, heir to its glory and its tragedy, has just seen his hopes of a tangible inheritance done to death; the voices that rise of the thousands who died to give Napoleon victory; the groans and lamentations of the wounded that change into a song of triumph--"the pardon for the glory's sake"--as the Duke offers up himself and his ambition in expiation, this as a conception is tremendous; it has the grandeur of Greek tragedy.[42]

To those interested in a romantic story the granting of the people's petitions by the benevolent old Emperor is an appealing scene. When a shepherd of Tyrol asks that his lands be restored to him, the Emperor assents. Then comes a surprise! For the shepherd is none other than the Duke of Reichstadt whose land is France. Something of the charm of the poetry of this play is shown in the Duke's pleading on this occasion:

> It's never best to trust a second thought,
> Bid your heart speak; it led you well before.
> And what a pretty tale: an Emperor
> To spoil his grandson, changed the big world's map
> And for an extra feather in your cap,
> To say,--quite carelessly, as if by chance--
> "This is my grandson, Emperor of France!"[43]

Another evidence of Rostand's romantic treatment of this story is shown in the care with which he creates the desired atmosphere. For act

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[40] Ibid., p. 118.

[41] Ibid., p. 179.

[42] Mary Arms Edmonds, op. cit., p. 595.

[43] Plays of Edmond Rostand, op. cit., p. 93.

three the directions describe the creation of a lovely sunset scene with the throne surrounded by people. In the next act the curtain rises, to the murmur of flutes and violins, upon a fairy scene in the Roman Ruins of the Park of Schoenbrunn. These are pictured in great detail. In the same manner the setting of the battlefield suggests a place where events of momentous significance have transpired. Here the great Napoleon fought! Nowhere throughout the play does the atmosphere or setting approach the commonplace in life.

In his next great play, Chantecler which came out in 1910, Rostand gave the world a satire of contemporary society in romantic guise.

"In this his last utterance on the stage . . . . " says Phelps, "Rostand held fast to the romantic conception of life which was the centre of his thought."[44]

Jameson's comment on the romanticism of Chantecler contains a somewhat derogatory note. She feels that

> A fantasy too aggressive tears the mantle, and romance approaches dangerously near pantomime. Chantecler is indeed across the border; its fantasy, a grace only half-natural, turned to exaggeration and mannerism.[45]

According to another critic:

> . . . . it is in Chantecler that we get the most definite expression of certain significant elements in Rostand's thought. A thorough "romantic" himself, he holds that the romance lies in the individual soul, not in the outward event. To him life presents itself as a glorious and wonderful experience quite inde-

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[44] William Lyon Phelps, op. cit., p. 229.

[45] Storm Jameson, op. cit., p. 217.

> pendent of any apparent limitations of place and circumstance. He would have us believe that there is nothing commonplace, there is nothing mean, unless we choose dully to go along with eyes closed to the daily miracles, and that it only needs a sense of all that is in and around and beyond what we see in the world, to make of the quietest, most circumscribed existence a thing of throbbing interest. Closely allied with this is the other leading motive of Chantecler--the cosmic importance of the individual life. . . . . Faithfulness to the trust that is bestowed on us at birth, with a proud and glad appreciation of its potentialities--this is the lesson taught by the Cock who thinks that his song brings the day into being.[46]

Chandler would have us believe that Rostand used birds and beasts for characters as a deliberate romantic device.

> Rostand wished to compose in verse a romantic play; but conventional garb for his characters seemed hopelessly unromantic. One day, in watching the animals of a barnyard, he conceived of using them on the stage as the analogues of men and women. His creatures are only convenient symbols; therefore, like the beasts of La Fontaine or the birds of Aristophanes. They in no way adhere to the truth of animal life.[47]

Rostand saw that he might present the creatures of the barnyard as symbols of the fine folk of Paris. Here Rostand's characteristic philosophizing involves a study of the relations between men and women, and of the states of soul of an egoist, who passes from self-satisfaction to self-distrust.

Chantecler believes that his splendid crowing brings the sunrise to the world. He is content with his great work despite the jeers and the scorn of the skeptics of the barnyard. In the forest he hears the Nightingale sing and realizes that his own song is much inferior. In order to show him that the sun can rise without his summoning it, the Hen

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[46] Mary Arms Edmonds, op. cit., p. 600.

[47] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, op. cit., p. 88.

Pheasant keeps his eyes covered with her wing until the sun appears. At first Chantecler is very sad because his mission seems useless, but he decides that at least he can announce the day.

The poetry of this drama differs from that of Rostand's other plays in its many short speeches, and its use of wit, puns, and slang. There are of course passages that are superbly lyrical, but one does not get the general impression of beautiful poetry that overwhelms us with its music in Cyrano de Bergerac. By the use of poetry Rostand adds a romantic glamour that prose could not create. That he could achieve infinite variety within the bounds of poetry itself is further evidence of his genius as a romanticist.

In Chantecler the description of the barnyard in the first act is given in poetry. Of course an audience would see the barnyard laid out according to Rostand's plan, and would miss the novelty of stage directions given in verse. This is not true of the reader, however, and for various reasons it is to the reader that the play has most appeal. For, in Chantecler, Edmonds points out,

> We have an allegory worked out with exquisite poetic feeling and under forms which in reading the imagination accepts without any sense of shock. Once, however, promenade the Cock, the Hen Pheasant, the Dog visibly before our eyes, once let us hear them speak their lines aloud in unmistakable voices of men and women--the illusion is gone, and with it the whole effectiveness of the play's meaning and appeal.[48]

Accepting the play as a delightfully clever story, the reader need pay no attention to the significance of the symbolism and satire, for in this play those lie outside the realm of romance. The story as it is

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[48] Mary Arms Edmonds, op. cit., p. 595.

literally given seems to have happened so long ago that it may be looked on as a legend or a fairy tale.

Some of the romantic elements of act four may be considered as representative of those of the whole play. It has an alluring title "The Night of the Nightingale". The stage directions, in poetry, of course, skillfully create a romantic atmosphere:

THE SETTING

The Heart of the Forest

A green asylum for a heart deceived.
Shadow that quiets, and a peace that grows
To healing, where the giant oak upthrows
His crook-backed roots, against the dark relieved.

Here squirrels scuttle. Darting rabbits cross
To burrows where the lusty colt's-foot grows.
Its pearly tents the mushroom village shows.
An acorn, noiseless, falls upon the moss.

Evening. A spring. A bind-weed. World's eclipse.
From tall, osmondas to pale heather tips
The spider's graceful web is thrown and wrought.

Within its mesh, a perfect drop of dew,
Convex, unbroken, gleams the darkness through,--
A little lady-bird in crystal caught.

SCENE I

(As the curtain rises one sees in the underbrush, half-hidden, rabbits drinking in the evening. A moment of silence and coolness.)[49]

Rabbits, an Invisible Choir of Birds

The prayer of the birds is solemn, pretty, and appropriate.

O God of Birds! . . . .
Who made our bodies light as spoken words;
Who painted Thy blue sky upon our wings;
We thank Thee for the Day, and for the springs
Where from we drank . . . ."[50]

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[49] Plays of Edmond Rostand, op. cit., II, 340-41.

[50] Loc. cit.

A summary of the results of this part of the study shows the following romantic elements. All of the plays are written in poetry. An impression of vague remoteness is left upon the reader by The Romantics and Chantecler although they are not placed in any particular period of time. The time of The Woman of Samaria is the first century, The Princess Far Away happens in the twelfth, Cyrano de Bergerac in the seventeenth, and The Eaglet in the eighteenth century. Sentiment has a prominent place in The Romantics, The Princess Far Away, Cyrano de Bergerac, The Eaglet and Chantecler. The plots of all the plays are highly fanciful and have many improbable events. Biblical history forms the foundation for The Woman of Samaria but Rostand has let his imagination clothe the facts with romantic details. The chief characters in The Princess Far Away, The Woman of Samaria, Cyrano de Bergerac and The Eaglet are endowed with heroic qualities and they have experiences that are very unusual, unexpected and unreal. Birds and animals serve as characters in Chantecler. The romantic mood of all the plays is enriched by the skillful use of flowers, moonlight, nightingales, castles, pirate ships, balcony scenes, beautiful ladies, knights, troubadors, and soldiers. The Eaglet has a vision in which dead men rise and speak to him; and silent phantoms appear beside the well in The Woman of Samaria. Idealized, unselfish love is exemplified in Cyrano de Bergerac and in The Princess Far Away; idealism is also important in the latter. Mysticism is found in The Woman of Samaria. The romantic idea of victory in defeat is illustrated in the fate of the principal characters of The Princess Far Away, The Eaglet, Chantecler, and Cyrano de Bergerac. Thus Rostand may be considered a highly romantic writer because he makes use of nearly all the elements that characterize romanticism.

CHAPTER II

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Among the romanticists of modern drama one of the most outstanding is Maurice Maeterlinck, Belgian poet, essayist, and mystic dreamer. Into his plays he has put practically all of the elements that characterize the romantic drama. His characters often are unreal. His plots are strange, fanciful, improbable,--products of his own romantic imagination. In them terrifying adventure, legend, dreams, fairy tales, love, beauty and superstition captivate the mind of the reader. With an idealistic philosophy of life, Maeterlinck is concerned about the spiritual world, eager to present spiritual truth unobscured by materialistic actuality. It is the soul of man with its struggles and suffering that he wishes to depict through plot and setting. His language with its studied repetition of words, and its rhythm creates the impression of poetry which always serves to enhance the romantic mood.

Of the eleven plays chosen for study The Blue Bird, The Betrothal, The Seven Princesses, and Ardiane and Barbe Bleue may be classified as fairy stories. The Princess Maleine, Pelleas and Melisande, The Death of Tintagiles, and Alladine and Palomides are tragedies possessing some of the glamour of Arthurian romance mingled with the terror of the Elizabethan tragedy of blood. The other three plays, Sister Beatrice, Mary Magdalene, and Monna Vanna do not belong to either class, nor do they form a group by themselves.

At the outset it will be necessary to discuss briefly Maeterlinck's philosophy of life, which, critics agree, is responsible for his peculiar

type of romantic drama. Smith says:

> In Maeterlinck's world the mysterious is the real, the Mystery of life is what makes it worth living. Our real selves are not our bodily selves, jostled about in a world of material strife, but our inner selves revealed in the silences. Only when we retire from the hurly-burly of the world do we begin to understand the mystic forces of Destiny that govern all life.[1]

Dickinson's comment is substantially the same.

> It follows from his interest in soul that Maeterlinck was not concerned with the external conflicts of will and passion that make up the average play. And he was not interested in character in the accepted sense of the term. For these plays truth lay behind characters. In these plays faith is held in enormous powers invisible and fatal. No one knows their intentions, but the spirit of the drama assumes they are malevolent, attentive to all our actions, hostile to smiles, to life, to peace, to happiness. It is from the necessity of presenting this esoteric world that Maeterlinck is drawn to the employment of the purer medium of the puppet. From this necessity was drawn, too, Maeterlinck's employment of silence and implicit suggestion as a complement to the use of words.[2]

Because he is striving to make articulate the buried life of the soul, Jameson believes Maeterlinck's plays are symbolic in their language and in their characters.[3] Their romantic spirit is all the more interesting because it is the result of an attempt to picture reality--the reality of man's inner experience. And thus it is that a study of the romantic elements in Maeterlinck's plays refers frequently to his treatment of soul.

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[1] Robert Metcalf Smith, Types of Romantic Drama (New York: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1928), p. 278.

[2] Thomas Dickinson, An Outline of Contemporary Drama (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1927), p. 176.

[3] Storm Jameson, Modern Drama in Europe (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1926), p. 195.

The romantic elements present in each drama are pointed out in the discussion that follows. The chronological order is followed with this exception: Mary Magdalene (1910) is discussed before The Blue Bird (1908) so that the treatment of the latter need not be separated from that of its sequel, The Betrothal.

In The Princess Maleine, Maeterlinck transports his reader immediately from the commonplace world of everyday experience to a dream region, for the story happens "once upon a time"--"long ago and far away."[4] The castle is situated in a dark and gloomy forest. It has numerous secret passages and locked doors,--doors to which the keys were lost long ago, and the iron bars bedded fast in the walls. It has also innumerable rooms, and endless stairways, towers and turrets which no one has entered.

Near the castle is a graveyard which Maeterlinck uses to good advantage in adding horror to the situation. One is reminded of the gloomy, terrifying, unnatural atmosphere that surrounds so many of Poe's stories, for Maeterlinck, too, is a master in using places, time, silence, storms and other moods of nature to intensify terror,--terror that is so ghastly and sepulchral that it takes one's breath away.

The play opens at midnight--a time to which great mystery, dread and superstition are attached. Great clouds threaten rain, and when a shower of stars seems to fall upon the castle, Stepano cries: "It looks as though it dripped blood on the castle."[5] And he goes on to conjecture

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[4] Clayton Hamilton, Conversations on Contemporary Drama (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 169.

[5] Richard Hovey, translator, The Plays of Maurice Maeterlinck (New York: Duffield and Company, 1908), II, 11.

that it seems Heaven is weeping over the betrothal, that all omens presage great disaster. The very fact that the princess' dog is named Pluto has a sinister significance. And Prince Hjalmar's remarks add to the general gloom for he senses that tragedy is approaching the castle.

> It rains, there is a burial in the graveyard. They have dug two graves. . . . . There is not a window but looks out on the graveyard; it eats into the very gardens of the castle: and the last graves come down as far as the pond. They are opening the coffin; I shall close the window.[6]

Another time he speaks while waiting in the woods.

> She told me to await her by the fountain I have a wish to see her in the dusk. . . . . I never saw the autumn wood more weird than tonight. By what light shall we see each other? I cannot make out my own hands,--But what are all those points of light about me? Have all the owls in the park come here? Away! Away! To the graveyard! back to the dead! . . . . Are you the guest for a wedding night? Here I am with hands like a grave-digger's now!--Oh, I shall not come here very often!--Hark, she is coming!--Is it the wind? Oh! how the leaves are falling about me now! There is a tree that is absolutely stripped. And how the clouds fidget across the moon!--Ah! these are weeping willow leaves that are falling so on my hands.--I never saw the wood more gruesome than tonight. --I never saw so many ill omens as tonight.--She comes![7]

Amid such gloomy surroundings, it is but natural to find only morbid, unhappy persons. The little princess ill and forsaken, deprived even of the comfort of her nurse's presence, suffers untold terrors in a dark room while a wild thunder storm rages without. She feels that invisible beings move near her for the furniture creaks, the wind moans, and Pluto howls dismally.

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[6] Ibid., p. 53.

[7] Ibid., p. 71.

It seems that all the voices of nature cry out in protest at the strangling of the innocent Princess Maleine behind closed doors by the wicked Queen Anne. The senile old king protests at her violence, but does nothing to prevent her, while a madman grins in at the broken window.

The superstitious servants and peasants awed by the storm interpret its various aspects as portents of tragic events in the castle. They watch the castle from their strange refuge in a part of the graveyard. They see lightning move the cross over the chapel, and a turret fall into the moat. In terror they rush from the graveyard. A later scene shows that all the animals have taken refuge in the graveyard! "There are peacocks in the cypresses. There are owls on the tombstones. All the sheep of the village are crouching on the graves."[8]

To such scenes of horror it is not an unexpected climax when Prince Hjalmar stabs the queen, and then kills himself.

Some idea of Maeterlinck's employment of nature in creating the desired romantic atmosphere has been given in the discussion of The Princess Maleine. That same effect is secured in The Seven Princesses by the gloom which the rain and the death of the flowers produce. This is a fairy tale in which seven beautiful sisters weary of waiting seven years for the prince, lie asleep on the steps of a marble hall. When he comes at last, he, the queen, and the king gaze through glass at the sleeping beauties, but they cannot enter the room because the door is bolted. He finally gets in through a secret, subterranean passage only to find that she who lies in the middle is dead.

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[8] Ibid., p. 170.

In Pelleas and Melisande the characters approach somewhat closer to being flesh and blood creatures than do those of Maeterlinck's other early plays. But they, too, are creatures of a dream world. The audience has never known anyone like them.

There is about this play from the outset an air of something tragic, indefinable, an encircling gloom, and the inner soul conflict of the characters is revealed in a "dialogue of tense repetition and breathless exclamation. By obvious statements, by constant repetition of words and phrases, Maeterlinck creates this mood of intensity and mystery."[9]

So much, in fact, is made of atmosphere in this play that it towers above plot in importance. There is exquisite harmony throughout between their physical surroundings and the moods of the characters.

When Melisande first appears unhappy after her marriage to Golaud, she speaks of the gloomy gardens, and the dense forests about the palace, for there are places where one never sees the sun. Under the castle there are bottomless crypts whose stagnant waters exude a "smell of death". Golaud expresses the fear that the whole castle will be engulfed some night if care is not taken.

After she loses her ring, Golaud sends her to look for it in the darkness. She is anxious and afraid, and listening to the sounds of the sea she remarks that even it seems unhappy--to-night.

There is one happy time when the silvery moonlight and the beautiful night provide a lovely setting for a balcony scene. Melisande has golden

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[9] Robert Metcalf Smith, op. cit., p. 279.

hair (like the traditional heroine of romance) and she leans from her window talking to Pelleas below.

A few nights later when they meet to say good-bye forever, it is again beautifully moonlight; but this time they are afraid, and when the wind quiets suddenly the realize that Golaud is near.

As Melisande approaches death, it is sunset, which seems poetically appropriate, but she is childishly afraid--of the great cold which she connects with the approaching winter. Golaud, not satisfied with what she has told him, is prevented from questioning her further by the old King's saying that she must not be disturbed. "The human soul is very silent. The human soul likes to slip away in solitude. It suffers so timidly."[10]

Bithell explains that in this play Melisande represents the soul:

> But here the puppets are moved by Love, not Death. In Princess Maleine love is one of the means by which Fate moves the puppets to death; in Pelleas and Melisande death is the bourne to which Love drives his sheep. The sheep do not know whither they are being driven; . . . . ; but they do feel, dimly, that they are not on the road to the fold. Hence the tragedy of their emotions; and it is the state of the soul filled with love . . . . that Maeterlinck projects into Pelleas and Melisande as into Alladine and Palomides.[11]

Another of the outstanding romantic elements of this play is its improbability. One illustration is that Golaud marries Melisande, not knowing, as he says, her age, nor who she is, nor whence she comes. Because she cries when questioned he kindly refrains from bothering her. A man in a realistic play probably would interpret such behavior as significant of past misdeeds which would not bear investigating.

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[10] Ibid., p. 330.

[11] Jethro Bithell, Life and Writings of Maurice Maeterlinck (New York: The Walter Scott Publishing Company, 1913), p. 60.

The first scene of Alladine and Palomides is laid in a wild part of the gardens. The time is long ago when it was not unusual to see "a young knight coming forward through the trees."[12]

The knight is Palomides who is happy in his love for Astolaine. When he meets Alladine, however, something happens. His soul and Alladine's are unconsciously drawn together. Later he explains quite honestly to Astolaine what has occurred, "I know what I shall lose," he tells her, "for I know her soul is a child's soul, a poor strengthless child's, besides yours, and yet I cannot resist it."[13] Astolaine understands. She says, "There must indeed be laws mightier than those of our souls, of which we always speak." But she warns Palomides that the suspicious old king, her father, will be angry.

Alladine has not been long at the palace, nor is she happy. She explains to Palomides:

> I cannot help being uneasy when I go back into the palace. It is so big . . . . and I get lost there still. And then all those windows on the sea. You cannot count them. And the corridors that turn without reason, and others that never turn, but lose themselves between the walls. . . . .
>
> Once I lost my way there. I pushed open thirty doors, before I found the light of day again. And I could not go out; the last door opened on a pool. And the vaults that are cold all summer; and the galleries that bend back on themselves endlessly. There are stairways that lead nowhere and terraces from which nothing can be seen.[14]

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[12] Plays of Maurice Maeterlinck, op. cit., II, 7.

[13] Ibid., p. 21.

[14] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

One day Alladine's pet lamb fell from the drawbridge into the moat. The water carried him rapidly into the tunnel. "One moment more," cried Palomides and he will be under the vaults; and God himself will never see him more."[15]

The idea of insanity, of a mind demented by cunning, trouble, or some cause, Maeterlinck uses often. In this play Alladine says of the king: "He prowls like a madman through the corridors of the palace."[16]

The king locks Alladine in her room. Fearing some evil has befallen her, Palomides takes the key from the hand of the sleeping king and enters. The room is so dark that he sees with difficulty that the girl lies bound and gagged on the bed. Then the king comes in and although it is day he says, "It is as dark here as if we were a thousand feet under the ground."[17]

Act four opens on vast subterranean crypts. "They have bound my eyes . . . . they have tied my hands,"[18] says Palomides and Alladine is held the same way. Neither has any idea how long they have been prisoners, but of course the mad king is responsible.

Astolaine and the sisters of Palomides enter the crypt in search of them just as the two prisoners fall from the slippery rock into the gloomy water.

The next act opens on a corridor so long that its furtherest arches seem to lose themselves in a kind of indoor horizon. There are also innumerable doors. Astolaine is telling the doctor about the rescue of Alladine and Palomides. She says too, that the old king who is bereft

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[15] Ibid., p. 17.

[16] Ibid., p. 24.

[17] Ibid., p. 33.

of reason has mysteriously disappeared. The doctor announces that Alladine and Palomides are hopelessly ill. In the end the audience does not know just what has happened, but they watch those in the corridor listening in anguish. There is absolute silence. Finally the nurse allows them to enter Palomide's room. A little later the door of Alladine's room opens, the nurse comes out, but seeing no one, re-enters the room, leaving the door wide open.

In The Death of Tintagiles the expression of two unusual ideas helps to create an atmosphere that promises tragedy. One is that dead trees poison the horizon, and the other that shadows poison that which they touch.

In this play as well as in the others Maeterlinck lets his imagination make much of the effect of silence. In the old castle: "There reigned such a silence that the falling of a ripe fruit in the park, called faces to the windows."[19]

When the three handmaids enter, talking mysteriously of the queen's commands that it (the audience does not know what) must be done in silence, they step forward noiselessly. Suddenly there is a silence. Every time they pause there is a dramatic silence.

Later, when Tintagiles has disappeared, Ygraine is afraid of the terrible silence as she goes to seek him. She approaches a door behind which he is hidden. She tries in vain to break open the door, pleading with the mysterious person who is frightening Tintagiles to spare him. He,

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[19] Ibid., p. 200.

too, cries out in terror. Then suddenly there is silence--a long inexorable silence. Maeterlinck no doubt counted on the suggestions he had given to make his audience imagine much during this dramatic silence. Thus the play ends.

Romantic, because it is merely a fairy story based on the old legend of Blue Beard, Ardiane and Barbe Bleue is touched with humor in its satire upon the adoring wives of this old storybook hero, who refuse to leave him when they are set free.

Five of the wives in Barbe Bleue bear the names of previous heroines of Maeterlinck,--Melisande, Alladine, Bellangere, Selysette, and Ygraine. These five have been thrust into dark, endless caverns underneath the castle. It is an old feudal castle surrounded by a moat and there are all the locked doors of the familiar legend. Ardiane, the sixth wife, unlocks them one by one revealing amethysts, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, pearls, and diamonds in bewildering profusion. At last she finds the five other wives, and offers them their freedom, but to the surprise of the audience they choose to stay with Barbe Bleue.

A saint's legend from Holland forms the basis of Sister Beatrice. A beautiful young nun decides to go away with her lover, the handsome Bellidor, who has come with an impressive retinue of knights on horseback to take her from the convent. To the eyes of the romantic Beatrice he appears as a prince from a story book (and to the audience as well) for he is clad in a coat of mail and a long blue cloak. At his right hand, as

he appears on the threshold is a boy laden with costly garments and glittering jewels. It is a lovely moonlit night. And as Bellidor kneels to kiss the hem of Beatrice's robe, he speaks to her ardent words in poetry! What more could the searcher for romance desire? But Maeterlinck adds still another--a perfecting touch to his picture. Beatrice, overcome by conflicting emotions, swoons in the arms of Bellidor. He thinks her nun's veil is responsible, so he unwraps it slowly, revealing at last her beautiful hair "like flames unimprisoned". This awakens her, and Bellidor passionately kissing her dishevelled hair exclaims:

> Behold, behold! It is your proper fire
> Awakens you, and you are overwhelmed
> With your own beauty! Lo, you are enmeshed
> With your own radiance! O, you never knew,
> I never knew, how beautiful you were!
> I thought that I had seen you, and I thought
> I loved you! Ay, and but a moment gone
> You were the fairest of my boyish dreams:
> Most beautiful of all most beautiful
> I find you now to my awakened eyes,
> And to my hands that touch you, and in my heart
> That now discovers you![20]

Then he removes her mantle and she appears clad in a robe of white, while the boy attendant draws near bearing costly raiment, a golden girdle, and a necklace of pearls. Beatrice can resist her desire to accompany him no longer, and addressing a last plea for love and understanding to the image of the VIRGIN, she places her veil and mantle, her chaplet with the cross of silver, and her keys at the feet of the image, and goes forth into the world with Bellidor.

As the last strokes of the bell ringing matins are heard the VIRGIN stirs, and donning Beatrice's discarded mantle and veil she assumes her

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[20] Bernard Miall, translator, Sister Beatrice and Ardiane and Barbe Bleue, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1902), pp. 14-15.

duties. When the NUNS discover the image is missing, the ABBESS reprimands the VIRGIN severely for neglect of duty. (She thinks, of course, that she is speaking to Beatrice). Preparing to scourge the VIRGIN the NUNS enter the chapel, but a miracle happens.

> Suddenly a song of unspeakable sweetness filters through the doors of the chapel. It is the sacred . . . . Ave Maris Stella, which sounds as though sung by the distant voices of angels. Little by little the hymn becomes more distinct, draws near, ... becomes universal, as though an invisible host, took it up . . . . , ever more and more celestial. . . . . Finally the two leaves of the door are violently thrown wide, and the nave appears all inundated with flames and strange splendours, which undulate, blossom forth, gyrate, and sweep past one another, infinitely more dazzling than the splendour of the sun . . . . Then amid the delirious Alleluias and Hosannas which burst forth on every hand--confounded, haggard, transfigured, mad with joy and superhuman awe, waving armfuls of blossoming boughs that overflow with miraculous flowers which increase their ecstasy, enveloped from head to foot in living garlands which fetter their steps, blinded by the rain of flower-petals which stream from the vaulting--the NUNS tumultously surge into the too narrow doorway, and uncertainly descend the steps, encumbered by the marvelous showers; and while at each step they strip their burdens of their flowers, only to see them renewing themselves in their hands, [they speak]:
>
> A miracle!
> A miracle!
> A miracle!
> . . . . O, the Lord
> Is close about us! O, the Heavens are open
> The angels overwhelm us, and the flowers
> Pursue us! Hosanna! Hosanna! Sister Beatrice
> Is holy! Ring the bell, O peal the bell,
> Until the bronze be shattered! She is holy!
> Ah, Sister Beatrice is holy, holy![21]

When the real Beatrice returns to the convent twenty-five years later, she is ragged and ill. The VIRGIN resumes her old place on the pedestal. And Beatrice discovers that since her place has been taken

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[21] Ibid., pp. 49-53.

by the VIRGIN, she is still held in loving reverence by the NUNS, who will not credit her story because they think it is she who has served so faithfully among them during all the years that have passed.

The scene of Monna Vanna is Pisa, Italy, near the end of the fifteenth century. The spirit of the Italy of that period is so admirably contrived that the reader or spectator forgets the present in his imaginative contemplation of far off time and place. The story involves two questions. Shall a woman sacrifice her honor to save a starving city? Then, when the nobility of that motive is doubted by a stupid husband, is she justified in leaving him for one who does understand?

Monna Vanna, the wife of the Pisan commander, Guido, consents to go to the tent of the enemy general, Prinzivalle. One of his conditions is that she come clad only in her mantle. In exchange for her coming, he is to send provisions into the beleaguered city. When she reaches his tent she finds instead of the villain she had expected, a romantic lover, who has known and worshipped her since her childhood. Because he loves her he spares her, and she takes him back with her to Pisa to save him from the treachery of the Florentines. Her husband refuses to believe her story when she speaks the truth, so she changes it and says that she tricked Prinzivalle into returning with her, so that she could punish him as he deserves. Guido is willing to credit this account, and the prisoner is held for Vanna by Guido's father, a garrulous but idealistic old man who understands Monna Vanna perfectly. In her last speech Vanna refers to the past as a bad dream but expresses confidence that the beautiful one will

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begin. Bithell believes that the chief interest in this play "lies in the soul's awakening in love of Monna and of Prinzivalle."[22] Clark also, remarks that Maeterlinck, as in his earlier plays, was picturing the soul. "Guido the blind", he says, ... "has lost his wife because of the smallness of soul; she has gone to one who is more fitted to love and understand her."[23]

The romanticism in Mary Magdalene lies only in the selection of a Biblical character for the heroine, in the setting, and in the attempt to express the transforming power of faith gained through knowledge of Jesus Christ. The treatment of all these factors is almost purely realistic.

The scene is laid in the region around Bethany, and the time is during the last days of Jesus' life on earth. Jesus is being followed by crowds of people, who praise him for the miracles he performs. The audience is never permitted to see the Master, but they hear the shouts of the multitude, and see the people he has cured. Among these is Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead.

The Roman tribune, Verus, offers to save Jesus from execution provided that the converted Magdalene will sacrifice herself to Verus. Magdalene refuses, because her consent to such an act would belie all that Jesus taught her, for, Bithell explains:

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[22] Jethro Bithell, op. cit., p. 127.

[23] Barrett H. Clark, The Continental Drama of Today (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), p. 195.

> Christ has made her a wise and therefore a good woman, and she would be untrue to Him in her if she were to rescue Him from Death--in other words His teaching, the essence of His Soul, must not be soiled, whatever torture be inflicted on His poor human body.[24]

Verus has not experienced the change of heart that has so changed Magdalene's life and he cannot understand the vision she has had of God's will for her. Her attempts to explain this to him are the only beautiful passages in the play. It is the voice of the mystic, the idealist, Maeterlinck speaking through her.

Taken simply as fairy tales both The Blue Bird and The Betrothal are delightful for they carry the reader into an airy, fanciful, realm where fairies live, and animals can speak. The trees, the cows, the sheep, and the other animals are all portrayed as having souls, and DOG, CAT, BREAD, and SUGAR speak to the children.

Tyltyl and Mytyl, the children of a woodcutter, are sent out by the FAIRY in search of the blue bird. They pay a visit to their dead grandparents in the misty land of memory. Here they get a new view of death for they are told that "the dead who are remembered live as happily as though they were not dead."[25] The blue bird they secured here turned black later.

Wandering on they visit the Palace of Night, and the enchanted palaces where all men's happinesses are gathered together in the charge of Fate. Later they arrive at the Kingdom of the Future where all the

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[24] Jethro Bithell, op. cit., p. 148.

[25] Alexander Teixeira De Mattos, translator, The Blue Bird (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1909), p. 62.

unborn children are awaiting the hour of their birth.

Everywhere the blue bird appears just within their grasp yet it always proves elusive.

The last act shows the children back in their little beds, but the room seems brighter and prettier. It is Christmas morning. When Tytyl gives his pet dove to a neighbor's little girl who is sick, he finds that it is blue. The children realize that the whole experience has been a dream, but it is more interesting than the usual dream in a romantic story because it has been shared by both children.

The search for the blue bird that symbolizes happiness is certainly conducted from an idealistic point of view. For the results of the quest show that happiness although sought in the past, in the remote or mysterious present, and in the future, can best be found at home in an act of unselfishness. The final flight shows that happiness can be captured and held only for a moment. In the quest, not in the possession lies joy.

The story of The Betrothal is similar in its events. This time Tytyl, now a lad of sixteen, has a dream in which he is seeking a mate who has been predestined for union with him since the beginning of time. After many strange experiences but still in doubt as to the identity of the girl, Tytyl awakens on Christmas morning and recognizes in Joy, to whom he had given his bird as a child, the Veiled Lady of his latest dream. Destiny who had loomed large in the first part of his dream seems to grow smaller and smaller, and at last is carried off in the arms of Light. One critic suggests that by this event Maeterlinck means to show that Destiny or Fate as such is replaced by Character and Love.[26]

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[26] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, The Contemporary Drama of France (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1920), p. 300.

In commenting on Maeterlinck's improbabilities of plot and fanciful imaginings, Moses[27] remarks that even the stage directions are demanding of the impossible objectively. There are many illustrations of this in the earlier plays, but especially does it apply to The Blue Bird and The Betrothal. Not even moving pictures could do full justice to such creations as the following:

> Tytyl has no sooner turned the diamond than a sudden and wonderful change comes over everything. The old FAIRY alters then and there into a princess of marvelous beauty; the flints of which the cottage walls are built light up, turn blue as sapphires, become transparent and gleam and sparkle like the most precious stones. The humble furniture takes life and becomes resplendent; the deal table assumes as grave and noble an air as a table made of marble; the face of the clock winks its eye and smiles genially, while the door that contains the pendulum opens and releases the Hours, which, holding one another by the hand and laughing merrily, begin to dance to the sound of delicious music.[28]

Another view discloses:

> The Palace of Night
>
> A large and wonderful hall of austere, rigid, metallic and sepulchral magnificence, giving the impression of a Greek temple with columns, architraves, flagstone, and ornaments of black marble, gold and ebony. . . . . The palace is lit only by a vague light that seems to emanate mainly from the brilliancy of the marble and the ebony.[29]

The next two quotations reveal scenes of such marvelous beauty that it staggers the imagination:

> Tytyl throws the door wide open. The STARS, in the shape of beautiful young girls veiled in many-coloured radiancy, escape from their prison, disperse over the hall and form graceful groups

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[27] Montrose J. Moses, Representative Continental Plays (Boston:

[28] The Blue Bird, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

[29] Ibid., p. 87.

> on the steps and around the columns, bathed in a sort of luminous penumbra. The PERFUMES OF THE NIGHT, who are almost invisible, the WILL-O-THE-WISPS, the FIREFLIES and the transparent DEW join them while the SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE streams from the cavern and floods the PALACE OF NIGHT.[30]

> . . . . suddenly revealing the most unexpected of gardens, unreal, infinite and ineffable, ... where, among stars and planets . . . . flying ceaselessly from jewel to jewel and from moonbeam to moonbeam, fairy-like blue birds hover perpetually and harmoniously down to the confines of the horizon, birds innumerable to the point of appearing to be the breath, the azured atmosphere, the very substance of the wonderful garden.[31]

A summary of the results of this part of the study shows the following romantic elements. Ardiane and Barbe Bleue, and Sister Beatrice are written in poetry. The language of several of the other plays is rhythmical and through word choice and sound repetition produces the impression of poetry. This is an outstanding quality of Pelleas and Melisande, The Seven Princesses, Alladine and Palomides, The Princess Maleine and The Death of Tintagiles. Ardiane and Barbe Bleue and Sister Beatrice have a legendary basis. Fairies are characters in The Blue Bird and in The Betrothal. These plays are really fairy stories which make use of the magical powers that belong only to the realms of fairy land. Ardiane and Barbe Bleue and The Seven Princesses happen in the manner of fairy tales also. Dreams in The Blue Bird and in The Betrothal make possible wonderful, unreal experiences for the characters. Every one of the plays studied happens in the far away and long ago. The plots of all the plays except Monna Vanna and Mary Magdalene are highly imaginative, unreal, improbable;--some incidents are impossible. Parts of Monna Vanna are quite improbable. The characters of

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[30] Ibid., p. 108.

[31] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

The Princess Maleine, The Seven Princesses, The Death of Tintagiles, Alladine and Palomides, and Ardiane and Barbe Bleue are more like puppets than real people. Nor are the characters of Pelleas and Melisande much more than inhabitants of a dream world. All of the characters in The Blue Bird and The Betrothal except Tytyl and Mytyl, their parents, and their neighbors are merely imaginary beings. In all of the plays the atmosphere of romance is created through the use of certain of its traditional attributes --moonlight, golden hair, balcony scenes, feudal castles, beautiful palaces, roses, knights, king, princes, princesses, nightingales, precious stones. No one play contains every one of these things, although Pelleas and Melisande has all except two. In The Seven Princesses, Ardiane and Barbe Bleue, The Princess Melisande, The Death of Tintagiles, and Alladine and Palomides an unreal atmosphere of terror, gloom, and tragedy is created by the use of omens, significant names, superstitions, storms, insanity, silence, graveyards, darkness and stairways, and innumerable rooms and doors. Sentiment occupies a prominent place in all the plays, especially in the tragedies. Unselfish love is exemplified in Monna Vanna. So many of the elements of romanticism are present in Maeterlinck's work as a whole, that he may quite properly be placed in the foremost ranks of the romantic writers of modern drama.

CHAPTER III

GERHART HAUPTMANN

Gerhart Hauptmann has written in addition to other types of drama twelve romantic plays.[1] These may be divided into five classes,--dream, fairy, legend, allegory, and semi-history. The following plays were chosen for study because they represent, respectively, the various classes: Hannele, The Sunken Bell, Henry of Aue, And Pippa Dances, and Charlemagne's Hostage.

Romantic elements which Hauptmann uses in these dramas are dreams and visions, the expression of faith in God, medieval scenes and events, legends, superstitions, poetry, angels, fairies, elves, dwarfs, woodspirits, and trolds. Unselfish love is exalted. The stories are fanciful, unreal, and improbable in plot so that they intrigue the reader's or the spectator's imagination and carry him far from every-day experience.

Although critics recognize the fact that Hauptmann exemplifies in unusual variety the principles of naturalism, they are agreed that in certain dramas, he is showing forth the tenets of romanticism. Commenting on the fine fancy of Hannele and the ample historical imagination of Florian Geyer, Chandler says: "It was clear that, when he chose, he could lift from the earth and fly free in the realms of romance."[2] Lewisohn[3] speaks of Hannele, The Sunken Bell, and Henry of Aue as Hauptmann's most notable

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[1] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), pp. 277-298.

[2] Ibid., p. 278.

[3] Ludwig Lewisohn, editor, The Dramatic Works of Gerhart Hauptmann (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1920), Volume IV, vii.

contributions to the new romantic movement in which Maeterlinck, Strindberg and Rostand have each had a part and which sprang from the "hardness of truth and the pitilessness of life."[4] "When he leaves free rein to his poetic fancy," writes another critic, ". . . . he gives being to poems of exquisite beauty, veritable asphodel blossoms, fragrant with a delicate and melancholy sweetness."[5]

> How Hauptmann worked himself free from the exclusive imitation of reality of the Naturalistic school is made clearly visible in Hanneles Himmelfahrt (1893). It is hardly possible to conceive of a greater contrast than that of the Silesian poorhouse and the glory-filled spaces of Heaven to which Hannele's soul mounts.[6]

> The center of interest is translated from the actual to a world of apparitions, and the most powerful imagination of the audience is put into commission to picture Hannele lying fatally ill in bed and at the same time taking part in a commedia dell' arte born of her feverish visions.[7]

Hauptmann himself called Hannele "a dream poem", and the text "Suffer the little children to come unto Me" is prefixed to the beginning of the printed edition.

When the story opens little Hannele has been rescued from the pond into which she had walked rather than return home to the brutality of her stepfather. She is taken to the poorhouse for care. There she explains her act by saying that the Lord Jesus called to her from the water. To her

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[4] Ludwig Lewisohn, loc. cit.

[5] Otto Heller, Studies in Modern German Literature (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1905), p. 124.

[6] George Witkowski, The German Drama of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1909), p. 197.

[7] Otto Heller, op. cit., p. 169.

kind nurse, Sister Martha, she exclaims with childish fervor: "Oh, how I long to go to Heaven, Sister" . . . . "I do believe in Him."[8]

When Sister Martha leaves the room for a few minutes, Hannele has a vision in which she sees her stepfather, who scolds and abuses her as usual ordering her to get up and light the fire. The Sister finds her on the floor near the stove when she returns. Once more in bed the child fancies that she hears the voice of Jesus calling her, that she smells lilacs and that she can hear angels singing. As the Sister sings softly to her Hannele addresses her as "Mother". Then:

> The poet with exquisite touch ushers us into the atmosphere of dreamland. In the dream action, the characters are none other than the persons of the sick-room transfigured by the imagination of the little sufferer. . . . . All that passes is unreal, and yet in the fantastic action how much of Hannele's soul is revealed![9]

In a dream the child beholds her mother, who comes to her from heaven, with a glowing account of its beauties. There angels sing and no one is ever hungry or thirsty. The mother gives her a golden flower--the key to heaven.

After her mother is gone the room is filled with angel's singing:

> The sunlight that gleamed on the mountains
> Gave nothing to thee of its gold.
> The wavering green of the valley
> For thee ne'er its wealth would unfold.
> . . . . . .
> A heavenly greeting we bring thee
> . . . . . .
> The spires of the City Eternal
> Shine deep in our eyes.[10]

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[8] Works of Gerhart Hauptmann, op. cit., p. 29.

[9] Otto Heller, op. cit., p. 170.

[10] Works of Gerhart Hauptmann, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

Hannele is afraid of the Angel of Death who comes next, but her mother reassures her and she resigns herself to the inevitable. Then the village tailor arrays her as a bride in beautiful garments. As Hannele lies in state, the schoolmaster and his pupils come in, and she hears Teacher Gottwald say:

> See how beautiful death has made the child. Once she was clad in rags. Now she wears silken raiment. She went barefooted once. Now she has crystal slippers on her feet. Ere very long she will be taken to a house all built of gold, where she will never more know thirst or hunger.[11]

Presently, the old cloak of the Stranger who had entered drops away and Hannele recognizes the Lord in a robe of white and gold. Speaking gently he describes the peace and glory of heaven while angels appear and strew the way with flowers and harps play softly. "The Stranger's Song," says Clark, "shows the triumph of the poetic, the highest ideal of the purity of childhood."[12]

The translation, of course, cannot adequately convey the musical beauty of the German poetry but it illustrates the imaginative picturing of the wonders of heaven:

> Its mansions are marble, its roofs are of gold,
> Through its rivulets ripple wines ruddy and old.
> In its silver white streets blow the lily and rose,
> In its steeples the chimney of joy-bells grows. . . . .
> Swans, twelve, soft as snow, ring them around in the sky,
> . . . . And louder and louder the symphonies swell.[13]

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[11] Ibid., p. 55.

[12] Barrett H. Clark, The Continental Drama of Today (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), p. 94.

[13] Works of Gerhart Hauptmann, op. cit., p. 69.

Then the Stranger instructs the angels to care for her tenderly. All the pleasures of heaven he mentions are to poor little Hannele the realization of what she has missed on earth.

The angels sing in chorus:

> We bear thee away to the Heavenly Rest,
> Lullaby, into the Land of the Blest,
> Lullaby, into the Land of the Blest![14]

As the song ceases, the stage grows light disclosing the almshouse as before, and the doctor bending over the child on the bed announces, "She is dead."[15]

Recognizing that Hannele is realistic in its humorous presentation of the paupers, Heller goes on to say that the naturalistic part is decidedly secondary in importance to the idealistic.

> In the effect produced by Hannele as a whole the outer visible misery is only subservient to the touching portrayal of Hannele's martyrdom and deliverance. . . . . In the higher sphere Hauptmann's genius bursts the somber chrysalis and spreading its brilliant wings, soars high above the arid sobriety of the actual.[16]

The Sunken Bell, Hauptmann's masterpiece, uses for many of its characters figures from German folk-lore. One critic says:

> The subject in this case did not entail any delineation of rude reality . . . . still further, the play is written in verse, is dipped in the fragrance of the fairy-atmosphere and shows the love of a sweet, elf-like creature for an artist with ideals.[17]

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[14] Ibid., p. 70.

[15] Ibid., p. 71.

[16] Otto Heller, op. cit., p. 172.

[17] George Witkowski, op. cit., p. 199.

"This work of art," Chandler believes, "may be enjoyed just as a lovely poetic creation, rendering more sympathetically than any other drama since A Midsummer Night's Dream the mood of fairy-folk lore."[18] Clark, too, compares Hauptmann's "scenes of fairy romance"[19] to those of Shakespeare's play. "For it is a romantic, fairy play in poetry," wrote Hale, "very different certainly from the plays which had gone before."[20]

The following is chosen from Heller's discussion of the romantic elements of the play:

> . . . . it is an art work of singular beauty, couched in language of a poetic splendor unparalleled in modern letters and fraught with a pure and truly German inwardness. The real worth of this poem does not lie in its far-sought symbolism, but in the wondrous atmosphere suffusing the whole and transporting us by its magic into the heart of the old romantic land of Tieck, Eichendorff, and Fouque, where the brooks babble, and the trees whisper and the winds make music to it all. In this fantastic world Gerhart Hauptmann fairly revels. . . . .[20]

Another writer says that this world of romance is certainly very beautiful.

> It is like the walls of Camelot, which were not built at all and are therefore built forever. So we can go at will to that upland mountain meadow, with its violets and primroses, and the bees that sip gold from the crocuses, and the pines that rustle round about."[22]

The story opens immediately in the fairy world--in a fir-clad glade in the mountains. There, the elfin creature, Rautendelein, talks pretty nonsense to a bee while she combs her hair with a golden comb.

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[18] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights, op. cit., p. 280.

[19] Barrett H. Clark, The Continental Drama of Today, op. cit., p. 97.

[20] Edward Everett Hale, Jr., Dramatists of Today (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1905), p. 47.

[21] Otto Heller, op. cit., p. 180.

[22] Edward Everett Hale, Jr., op. cit., p. 48.

Rautendelein lives with her wise but quarrelsome grandmother. For diversion she teases the Nickelmann, a water-spirit, dances with the elves, and frolics with the dwarfs and trolds. Old Wittikin, the grandmother, feeds the trolds bread and milk. Finally she says "Enough for today" and they vanish into the woods.[23]

Hauptmann creates the impression that the story happened long ago by having these fairy creatures believe in pagan deities. When it lightnings, Wittiken says, "Ay, ay, I see thee, Father Thor! 'Twill storm!"[24] They express belief also in Loki and other Norse gods.

It is into this world of romance that Heinrich, the bell-founder comes. His great bell which was to have been hung in the church tower had fallen, through the trick of a mischievous wood-sprite,* over the cliff and into the lake below. Heinrich, too, had fallen from a great height. When he reaches Wittikin's hut, he is weak and faint. There, Rautendelein discovers him lying unconscious outside the door. When he awakes, he can give no explanation of how he reached that place. He is charmed by Rautendelein, and although this is their first meeting, feels that she must have inspired his splendid work on the bell. He says:

> I wrought for thee, and strove--in one grand Bell,
> To wed the silver music of thy voice
> With the warm gold of a Sun-holiday.
> It should have been a master-work! I failed.
> Then wept I tears of blood.[25]

A little later he looks at the landscape around him and exclaims:

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[23] Works of Gerhart Hauptmann, op. cit., p. 92.

[24] Ibid., p. 84.

[25] Ibid., p. 89.

* The sprites and dwarfs hated bells, especially church bells, as disturbers of their ancient privacy.

Here all is beautiful! The rustling boughs
How solemnly their heads sway to and fro!
The very soul of fairy fantasy
Sighs through the wood.[26]

The Wood-Sprite warns Rautendelein that Heinrich's friends are coming to get him; she suddenly breaks a flower twig from a bough and drawing a circle round him chants:

With the first fresh buds of Spring,
Lo, I draw the magic ring!
Safe from every harm and ill,
Thus thou art, It is my will!
Thou art thine, and thine, and mine.
None may cross the mystic line!
Be thou youth, or man, or maid,
Here thou surely must be stayed![27]

When the men approach the girl hides, The barber expresses fear of the witch whose home they are near. After they bear Heinrich away, the elves come out into the moonlight and join hands and dance. Their roundelay is full of music and charm:

First Elf

Sister!

Second Elf

Sister!

First Elf

White and chill
Shines the moon across the hill.
Over bank, and over brae,
Queen she is, and Queen shall stay.

Second Elf

Whence com'st thou?

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[26] Ibid., p. 90.

[27] Ibid., p. 96.

First Elf

From where the light
In the waterfall gleams bright,
Where the glowing flood doth leap,
Roaring, down into the deep.
Then, from out the mirk and mist,
Where the foaming torrent hissed,
Past the dripping rocks and spray,
Up I swiftly made my way.

Third Elf

Sisters, is it here ye dance?

First Elf

Wouldst thou join us? Quick--advance!

Second Elf

And whence com'st thou?

Third Elf

Hark and hist!
Dance, and dance, as yet may list!
'Mid the rocky peaks forlorn
Lies the lake where I was born.
Starry gems are mirrored clear
On the face of that dark mere.
Ere the fickle moon could wane,
Up I swept my silver train.
Where the mountain breezes sigh,
Over cliff and crag came I!

Fourth Elf

Sisters!

First Elf

Sister! Join the round!

All

Ring-a-ring-a-ring-around!

Fourth Elf

From Dame Holle's flowery brae,
Secretly I stole away.

First Elf

Wind and wander, in an out!

Rautendelein

Ho, my fairies!
. . . . . .
Let me join the merry round.
Ring-a-ring-a-ring-around!
Silver nixie, sweetest maid,
See how richly I'm arrayed.
All of silver, white and rare,
Granny wove my dress so fair.
Thou, my fairy brown, I vow,
Browner far am I than thou.
And, my golden sister fair,
I can match thee with my hair,
Now I toss it high--behold,
Thou hast surely no such gold.
Now it tumbles o'er my face:
Who can rival me in grace?

. . . . . .

All

Wind and wander, in and out,
Ring-a-ring-a-round-about!
Daisy and forget-me-not,
Fairy footsteps injure not.[28]

Then the Nickelmann appears and begs Rautendelein to enter a wonderful palace he describes but she refuses:

> And what though thy coffers of coral be wrought
> Life lived with the fishes were good for naught.[29]

In the meantime, Heinrich's wife, Magda, happily awaits his coming; for she imagines that by now the wonderful bell, his masterpiece, is surely hung in the church tower. An anxious neighbor comes in and says:

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[28] Ibid., pp. 104-107.

[29] Ibid., p. 114.

In the village streets
They do say something dreadful has occurred.
Dark omens, boding evil, fill the air.
But now, a farmer saw a naked witch,
Perched on a boar's back, riding through his corn.
Lifting a stone, he cast it at the hag--
Straightway his hand dropped--palsied to the knuckles!
'Tis said that all the mischievous mountain sprites
Are leagued and up in arms against the bell.
How strange you have not heard all this before.[30]

When Heinrich is brought home, the schoolmaster explains to Magda that no one knows just how he happened to fall. As Heinrich lies at the point of death, Rautendelein comes disguised as a peasant girl. The Vicar says to her:

As a princess,
Stepped from the pages of some fairy book,
Thou seem'st.[31]

Rautendelein suddenly bustles about the hearth chanting this incantation:

Flickering spark in the ash of death,
Glow with life of living breath!
Red, red wind, thy loudest blow!
I, as thou, did lawless grow!
Simmer, sing, and simmer!
. . . . . .
Green and tender herbs of Spring,
In the healing draught I fling.
Drink it sweet, and drink it hot--
Life and youth are in the pot!
Simmer, sing, and simmer![32]

Heinrich is glad to see her. She tells him she has superhuman powers.

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[30] Ibid., p. 119.

[31] Ibid., p. 133.

[32] Ibid., pp. 133-34.

. . . . To me is given
The power to open every eye I kiss
To the most hidden mysteries of earth
And air.[33]

Then on the apparently dying Heinrich she works her magic charms.

Master, sleep is thine !.
When thou wakest, thou art mine.
Happy dreams shall dull thy pain,
Help to make thee whole again. . . . .
One, two, three. A new man be!
For the future thou art free![34]

When Heinrich awakes he is almost well. And in the next act he lives with Rautendelein in the mountains. The Vicar goes there in an effort to persuade Heinrich to return to his duties in the village. The vicar sees Rautendelein first and angrily denounces her.

With magic spells, and sweet unhallowed draughts,
Thou hast witched him, till he obeys thee like a dog.[35]

Then Heinrich comes and tells the Vicar how he has recovered his strength. But he will not return to the village because he has a new work now--fashioning bells for a glorious sun worship. He pictures in glowing poetry his vision for the future of his bells.

And now the wondrous chime again rings out,
Filling the air with such sweet, passionate sound
As makes each breast to sob with rapturous pain.
It sings a song, long lost and long forgotten,
A song of home--a childlike song of Love,
Born in the waters of some fairy well--
Known to all mortals, and yet heard of none!
And as it rises, softly first, and low,
The nightingale and dove seem singing, too;

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[33] Ibid., p. 138.

[34] Ibid., p. 140.

[35] Ibid., p. 152.

And all the ice in every human breast
Is melted, and the hate, and pain, and woe,
Stream out in tears.
. . . . . .
Then shall we all draw nearer to the Cross,
And, still in tears, rejoice, until at last
The dead Redeemer, by the Sun set free,
His prisoned limbs shall stir from their long sleep,
And, radiant with the joy of endless youth,
Come down, Himself a youth, into the May![36]

The Vicar cannot understand Heinrich's point of view; so he leaves after warning Heinrich that the lost bell shall toll again.

In the fourth act Heinrich is working at his anvil with the assistance of six dwarfs. After he sends them away he lies down to rest and dreams,--among other things he hears the Nickelmann say:

A sunken bell in the deep mere lies,
Under the rocks and the rolling:
And it longs to rise--
In the sunlight again to be tolling!
The fishes swim in, and the fishes swim out,
As the old bell tosses and rolls about.
It shudders and sways as they come and go,
A weeping is heard, and the sound of woe.
A muffled moan, and a throb of pain,
Answer the swirling flood--
For the mouth of the bell is choked with blood!
Woe, woe, to thee, man, when it tolls again!
. . . . Hark to the knell!
Death is the burden of that lost bell!
Bim! . . . Boom!
The Lord save thee from thy doom![37]

Heinrich, filled with dread, awakes, and is comforted by Rautendelein, who addresses him as "Balder", a mythological hero.

Thou Balder! Hero! God!
I press my lips against the fair white brow
That overhangs the clear blue of thine eyes.[38]

She tells him he need not be afraid for she has been busy in promoting his safety.

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[36] Ibid., p. 160.

[37] Ibid., pp. 173-74.

O'er the hills I flew:
Now, as a cobweb, on the breezes drifting,
Now frolicing as a bee, or butterfly,
And darting hungrily from flower to flower.
From each and all, from every shrub and plant,
Each catch-fly, harebell, and forget-me-not,
I dragged the promise, and I forced the oath,
That bound them never to do harm to thee.
And so--the blackest elf, most bitter foe
To thee, so good and white, should vainly seek
To cut thy death-arrow![39] *

Heinrich, however, is still oppressed by the awful prophecy he has heard, but is further reassured by Rautendelein who promises him the impossi (except to fairies and other immortals):

Thou'rt proof against all ill, I say--thou'rt proof.
And now, blink but thine eye, or nod,
And gentle strains shall upward float, as mist,
Hem thee about, and, with a wall of music,
Guard thee from call of man, and toll of bell:
Yea, mock at even Loki's mischievous arts.
Make the most trifling gesture with thy hand,
These rocks shall turn to vaulted palace-halls,
Earth-men unnumbered shall buzz round, and stand
Ready to deck the floor, the walls, the board!
Yet--since by dark, fierce foes we are beset,
Wilt thou not flee into the earth with me?
There we need fear no icy giant's breath--
There the vast halls shall shine with dazzling light--[40]

Finally she succeeds in dispelling Heinrich's gloom. Then she calls the gnomes, and elves to help them make merry.

But Heinrich sees another disquieting vision. The phantom forms of two children--his sons, barefooted and dressed only in their night-

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[39] Ibid., p. 177.

[40] Ibid., p. 178.

* It was an old belief that dangerous arrows were shot down from the air by elves.

clothes ascend from below. Between them they carry a two-handled pitcher. As they speak the first faint tones of the sunken bell are heard from the depths. They carry in the pitcher their mother's tears, they explain. She is now with the water-lilies. The bell tolls loudly, and the distracted Heinrich rushes away.

In the next act three elves are resting near the well. It is past midnight. The first elf speaks of the thick, white clouds, then the second and third speak in turn:

> A nightingale within the beechwood sang:
> It sang and sobbed into the waning night--
> Till, all a-quiver with responsive woe,
> I sank upon the dewy grass and wept.
>
> 'Tis strange! I lay upon a spider's web.
> Between the blades of meadow-grass it hung,
> All woven out of marvelous purple threads,
> And softer than a royal shift it clung.
> I lay, and rested, while the glistening dew
> Flashed up at me from the green mead below:
> And so, my heavy lids did gently droop,
> Until at last I slept. When I awoke,
> The light had faded in the distant west:
> My bed had turned to grey. But, in the east,
> Thick clouds went up, and up, that hid the moon,
> While all the rocky ridge was covered o'er
> With molten metal, glowing in the night. . . . .
> And so alone I lay,
> Trembling with fear, and lost in wonderment.
> Till, winged and gleaming as the dragon-fly,
> The dearest, loveliest, of all the elves,
> Who from afar his coming had proclaimed,
> Rustled and fell into my waiting arms.
> And, as we prattled in our cosy bed,
> Warm tears were mingled with our kisses sweet,
> And then he sighed, and sobbed, and pressed me tight,
> Mourning for Balder . . . Balder, who was dead![41]

Rautendelein believing Heinrich is dead, is now willing to go to the Nickelmann, and so she descends slowly into his well.

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[41] Ibid., p. 195.

In the conversation that follows between the Nickelmann and the Wood-Sprite, the audience learns how the latter took a burning brand and set fire to the work on which Heinrich had lately toiled. Then the Nickelmann tells that which would never gain credence except in the realms of fantasy and romance:

> Much more I'd tell thee--ay, who tolled the bell!
> And how the clapper swung that rang the knell!
> Hadst thou but seen, last night, as I did see,
> What ne'er before had been, nor more shall be,
> The hand of a dead woman, stark and cold,
> Go groping for the bell that tossed and rolled.
> And hadst thou heard the bell then make reply,
> Peal upon peal send thundering to the sky--
> Till, like the lioness that seeks her mate,
> It thrilled the Master, even as the Voice of Fate![42]

Heinrich learns of the fire that destroyed his latest work from old Wittikin. When he goes to the well to get a drink he hears a voice, that of Rautendelein, from below:

> Heinrich, my sweetheart, I loved thee true.
> Now thou art come to my well to woo.
> Wilt thou not go?
> Love is all woe--
> Adieu! Adieu![43]

Through the magic of Wittikin who gives him three goblets of red, white, and yellow wine, Heinrich sees Rautendelein once more. As he is dying, she comes closer crying exultingly: "The sun is coming!" and Heinrich exclaims, "The sun!"[44]

The Sunken Bell, as has been said, is delightful solely as a fairy story, but it contains as well suggestions of deeper meanings. Chandler[45]

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[42] Ibid., p. 199.

[43] Ibid., p. 204.

[44] Ibid., p. 215.

[45] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights, op. cit., pp. ix-x.

explains three symbolical interpretations which various critics have put upon it. Witkowski,[46] Heller,[47] and Lewisohn[48] agree in their respective discussions of the poem's basic meaning that Heinrich is an idealist. Because Heinrich recognizes in himself the creative power, his one aim is to allow it to develop:

> What's germed within me's worthy of the blessing--
> Worthy of ripening.[49]

His wife and associates in the village cannot understand the pangs that the artist suffers if his central aim is unrealized. To Magda it is enough that her husband is safe. But Heinrich is full of despair because his bell--he feels sure--

> Was not made for the heights--it was not fit
> To wake the answering echoes of the peaks.[50]
> 'Twas for the valley, not the mountain-top![51]

In the mountains with Rautendelein he goes hoping to create a work that approaches his ideal. "And yet he fails," Lewisohn says. "It is the tragedy of his too human soul. For he has really left his heart, his earthly affections, in the valleys of his other life."[52]

> Yonder I am at home . . . and yet a stranger--
> Here I am strange . . . and yet I seem at home.[53]

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[46] George Witkowski, op. cit., p. 199.

[47] Otto Heller, op. cit., pp. 192-93.

[48] Ludwig Lewisohn, op. cit., pp. ix-x.

[49] Works of Gerhart Hauptmann, op. cit., p. 157.

[50] Ibid., p. 127.

[51] Loc. cit.

[52] Ludwig Lewisohn, op. cit., p. x.

[53] Ibid., p. 187.

The sunken bell rung by the hand of his dead wife "tolls the destruction of his hopes. And yet he dies, clasping the ideal with all his strength. For it is better to die so than to return to the valleys where the ideal is a stranger and an outcast."[54]

In Henry of Aue, Hauptmann lays the scene in the remote past for it is based on a medieval legend.

This play is also written in poetry. In the original, the translator explains:

> Hauptmann has again and again succeeded in blending the inevitable image with noble music.
>
> That poetic beauty must always be obscured by translation. . . . . I have sought to preserve the exact modulation of the original verses, the music of the verse paragraph, the alternate poignancy and homeliness of Hauptmann's diction.[55]

Thus the following passage gives some suggestion of the music and poetic language which surround the most trivial incident of the play with the spirit of romance:

> Forgiven and forgotten! Nobly done!
> We'll say no more. Forgiven and forgotten.
> True wert thou and true art thou. Come to me.
> Thou trusty friend. I know thy courage well.
> I saw thee as a wolf among the herds
> Scatter the foe and slay. Come to my hearth,
> And I will strike the steel and light the wood,
> And be thy servant, not thy master, once.[56]

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[54] Ibid., p. x.

[55] Ibid., p. xii.

[56] Ibid., p. 276.

The story, which is highly improbable, may be given in a few sentences. Its central idea is the exaltation of the unselfish love of the girl, Ottegebe. Henry, Count of Aue, may be cured of leprosy through the sacrifice of her blood, if she will journey to Salerno and willingly yield her body to the master's knife. Her insistence and Henry's desire to be cured of the loathsome disease drive him finally, in desperation, to try the cure, but he is healed without the sacrifice of her life. Love and faith accomplish the miracle. Overjoyed at his restoration to health Henry returns immediately to his great estate and prepares to wed Ottegebe. She consents at last and Henry reverently places the crown on her head. Then he turns to the assembled knights asking that they honor her now as their lady. This they are quite willing to do, although she is of the peasant class. And as the wedding chimes begin softly to sound, Henry crowns himself with the second crown, for he is once more assuming power over his ancestral domain.

Another romantic quality of Henry of Aue is the use of superstition. One character believes that he has secured absolution because he wears near his heart a splinter of the cross from the Holy Land.[57] He believes that Henry was afflicted with leprosy because:

> He jeered at my amulets; he laughed
> Scornfully at all simples, spells and charms![58]

While a guest in Ottegebe's home before his illness, Henry is regarded as a hero because of his valiant deeds in the Crusades. To the admiring girl, he paints a glowing picture of what he had heard and seen in the East.

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[57] Ibid., p. 221.

[58] Ibid., p. 273.

Two years ago--ah, child--
This poor, poor guest who eats a meagre crust
Of peasant's bread to ease his hunger, lay
In marble halls where lyric fountains plashed
And golden fishes in the basins swam;
And if his eye ecstatic roved afar
'Twas where in delicate clouds the incense o'er
The magic gardens of Azzahra rose.
O child, thou hast not seen in strangest dreams
A Paradise like that, where heavy and sweet
Splendour and ecstasy oppress us. . . where
The bamboo quivers in the hidden grove,
Darkened and roofed by immemorial heights
Of cedar, and the azalea bushes spread
Their pillows of pure bloom. The azure sea
Seems as of blossoms; it foams on marble steps,
And rocks the gondolas aglow with gold,
Purple and precious stones. And then thou hearest
Music. The slave-girl sings: O sombre bloom
And sad. Into the cypress-shaded well
She dips the flashing silver of her pail . . .
Strange words from alien ardours of the soul
Murmur about thee. Thou drinkest them in with all
The swooning fragrance which the gentle wind
Brings from the west to lull thee into sleep.--[59]

The man who relates such extraordinary experiences is portrayed as a very unusual person. Hartmann mentions a few of his friend Henry's heroic attributes in this speech:

. . . . Thou stood'st
Magnificently in the triumphant light
Of joyance. Oh, thy foot did scarcely press
The earth on which thou troddest, and it seemed
As though an angel held his shield o'er thee
In joust and battle, in all trials and deeds.
Far faring in God's honour didst thou come
Homeward, thyself with honour richly deckt.
Fame heralded thy coming. But instead
Of gathering the glad harvest of thy deeds,
Thy golden ears rot in the abandoned field.
Was not the emperor's hand stretched out in grace
Above thee? Did not his full heart pour forth
Its gratitude? Did not his favour grant
Thee noblest meed--a daughter of the house
Of Hohenstaufen?[60]

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[59] Ibid., p. 237.

[60] Ibid., p. 264.

Then, silent, in that dim, mysterious hour,
Rising from southward and from northward, poured
As from a fountain, a radiant light and clear,
And from that light, alien suns that moved
Gradually higher, father, and higher still,
Till, in the zenith, they became as one.
Now a great purity fell over all--
In me, about me, upon heaven and earth,
And from those constellations o'er my head
The sweet, immortal Saviour issued forth.
And a vast music sounded as of choirs
Numberless and the song came: Sursum corda!
Gloria in excelsis Deo! And last
A great and goodly voice sounded and sang:
"Amen, for thy beseeching hath been heard,
And broken is the burden of his doom!"[62]

When the girl is trying to persuade Henry to try the cure she says confidently that it is all decreed by God.[63]

The play contains many other expressions of faith in God.

Did not God give his own son
To suffer for us on the bitter cross . . . .[64]

My lord, God lives! Believe me
Seek Him in spirit and in truth . . . .[65]

. . . . a deep monition to my heart
Came in a mystic hour when the bush burned
With God--a knowledge, strong, unquenchable,
Or call it faith or vision . . . .[66]

Until the Love Divine that seeks us all
Found me at last.[67]

Because And Pippa Dances is based on a legend the reader feels immediately that its events take place in the remote past. Hauptmann

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[62] Ibid., pp. 303-5.

[63] Ibid., p. 320.

[64] Ibid., p. 249.

[65] Loc. cit.

[66] Ibid., p. 299.

[67] Ibid., p. 343.

has explained that in the mountains of his Silesian home there exists a Venetian legend which states that at one time Venetians came to Silesia and there endeavored to awaken the unknown treasures of the mountains.[68] Upon this idea his imagination built the story And Pippa Dances.

A small part of the play is in poetry. One poetic speech is that of Wann as he looks at the sleeping golden-haired Pippa:

> Into my winter cabin fairy magic came.
> The robber broke the icy wall of wisdom down,
> The golden haired one . . . . .[69]

Another time although his language is prose its imaginative scope and choice of words produce the effect of poetry:

> Everything that the rhumb-rose brings; clouds, mists, ice-crystals! for the silent double lightning of the great Pan-fires! for the little flame that rises from the hearth! for the songs of the dead in the waterfall! for my death! for the new beginning and entrance into another musical cosmic brotherhood![70]

One of the striking improbabilities of the plot is the arrival of Pippa at Wann's home, summoned as if by magic at the clapping of his hands.[71]

Two of the leading characters, one critic points out are not persons from real life. Pippa, he says, is a fancifully conceived heroine and Michel Hellriegel is an impossible youth--

> wandering thru the wastes and wildernesses of the world in search of a fair City of Dreams, which is Venice. Pippa will seem fully as impossible, if one regards her literally. She is a daughter of the sunny south, drifted, Heaven knows how, to the northern solitudes, where by her grace and by the poetry of her dances she wins every heart. . . . .[72]

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[68] "Hauptmann's new symbolic drama", Current Literature, XL (April, 1906), 410.

[69] Plays of Gerhart Hauptmann V, 223.

[70] Ibid., p. 197.

[71] Ibid., p. 203.

[72] "Hauptmann's latest play", Independent, LXI (September, 1906), 692.

Another writer calls Wann a mythical personage--

> mythical, ... because actual experience scarcely affords a character so cleansed of earthiness, whose life is vision and whose contemplation rises to the hardihood of action. His pregnant saying: "Tedium is where God is not," expresses the atmosphere of his life.[73]

It is in the interpretation of the allegory rather than in the literal events of the play that most critics call attention to an important romantic quality.[74, 75, 76] "Pippa," says one, "is the spirit of beauty, conceived by many men in many ways and pursued by each according to his character and his resultant ideals."[77]

Hauptmann himself has written the following explanation:

> I endeavored to say in this piece, that in all of us lies something for which our souls are yearning. We all pursue something which is dancing before our souls in beautiful colors and attractive forms. This something may be called Pippa. She is that beauty followed by all in whom imagination has not wholly disappeared. . . . .[78]

He says also that in Hellriegel, he is trying to represent the German folk-spirit which is always longing for the soul of beauty.

Charlemagne's Hostage is semi-historical for it is based on a legend connected with the reign of the real Karl the Great in the ninth century.

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[73] Ludwig Lewisohn, op. cit., p. x.

[74] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights, op. cit., p. 295.

[75] Ludwig Lewisohn, op. cit.; p. x.

[76] Current Literature, op. cit., p. 410.

[77] Ludwig Lewisohn, loc. cit.

[78] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), p. 94.

One of the outstanding romantic devices is the use of poetry throughout the play. Because their words and manner of expression are so far removed from those of common life, the famous emperor and his subjects, seem to the reader to be inhabitants of another world. The following passages illustrate both the types of verse and the romantic halo that is set up around the hero!

> Yet lives no mightier swimmer in this world
> Than emperor Karl, unborn is yet that hand
> That reaches beyond his, unborn that head
> Before which his shall bow! His glances hurt!
> In sooth they do when that his anger kindles
> As lightning flashes from a sombre heaven! . . . .[79]

> O thou great David of our table round
> Which, radiant with the spirit's seven gifts,
> Exalted above all mere mortal things,
> Surrounds thee as the gold the flaming gem . . .
> What are we lacking thee? Dost thou not wield
> The plough, the stylus and the sword at once?
> Thou summonest forth what rests in the deep earth!
> That which would live in peace thou nourishest
> And still protectest! That which is above
> Thou honourest--sower of the Saviour's seed!
> The child lisps "Karl" ere its own father's name;
> Karl is not Karl--the word spells might and strength.
> Two neighbors quarrel? Karl! The quarrel's done!
> Great nations are at war? Karl! There is peace.
> The whole world rests in quiet? Karl! The earth
> Thunders, the welkin darkens, and thy name
> Means no more peace and quietude, but war!
> Who would presume to master thy desires?[80]

> Handsome he is, but not by far as Karl!
> Karl is a god, we others are but men.[81]

The character, Gersuind, is as unreal a person as the king. She is of wondrous physical beauty with golden hair and fair skin.

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[79] Plays of Gerhart Hauptmann, op. cit., p. 280.

[80] Ibid., p. 314.

[81] Ibid., p. 351.

> One recognizes in Gersuind the old familiar figure of Hauptmann's favorite spirit-child, of whom Rantendelein was the first incarnation. It is a creature half-wild, half-tame, the body being merely the dwelling place of a spirit, in this case of a devil.[82]

A summary of the romantic elements in Hauptmann's plays shows the following. Poetry is used throughout The Sunken Bell, Henry of Aue, and Charlemagne's Hostage, and in parts of Hannele and of And Pippa Dances. The stories of And Pippa Dances, Charlemagne's Hostage, and Hannele are extremely fanciful and unreal; those of The Sunken Bell and Henry of Aue are quite improbable. The strange and the marvelous are presented by means of dreams and visions in Hannele, The Sunken Bell, and Henry of Aue. It is in a dream that angels appear to Hannele. As medieval legend forms the basis of Henry of Aue, of And Pippa Dances and of Charlemagne's Hostage these plays seem to portray events of long, long ago. One gets the same impression in The Sunken Bell because of the many expressions of belief in superstition, and the presence of fairies, elves, and dwarfs. Characters who are superstitious appear as well in Henry of Aue. Charlemagne's Hostage and And Pippa Dances have characters too exaggerated in certain traits to be real. Unselfish love is exalted, and mysticism is an important factor in Henry of Aue. There and in Hannele occur expressions of faith in the beneficient, protecting power of God. The quest for the ideal is pictured in And Pippa Dances and The Sunken Bell by means of symbolism. In these five plays, Hauptmann has used nearly all the romantic elements listed for study.

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[82] Current Literature, XLIV (April, 1908), 422.

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[82] Current Literature, XLIV (April, 1908), 422.

CHAPTER IV

HERMANN SUDERMANN

Hermann Sudermann has written five romantic plays, but they are "less interesting than his plays of realistic observation."[1] "Versatile though he is to an unusual degree, his genius is hardly adapted to romance and fairy tale."[2] For that reason his romantic plays comprise only about one-fifth of his total number of plays. He has three varieties of romantic drama: The Biblical play, John the Baptist; the fantastic or fairy play, The Three Heron Feathers; and three semi-historical plays,--The Children of the Strand, The Beggar of Syracuse, and Claudian's Songs of Praise.[3]

Only two plays John the Baptist and The Three Heron Feathers are analyzed in the present chapter, translations of the others being inaccessible to the writer.

In these plays Sudermann uses the following romantic elements: improbable incidents, unreal characters, long ago settings, faith, superstition, enchantment, glorified love, and rhetorical language which produces some of the effects of poetry.

The Biblical story of the prophet who heralds the coming of Jesus, Sudermann retells elaborately in his John the Baptist. The Jewish people

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[1] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 310.

[2] Otto Heller, Studies in Modern German Literature (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1905), p. 83.

[3] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, op. cit., p. 311.

oppressed both by the Roman power and by the tyranny of the priests long eagerly for the Messiah of the prophetic message. They welcome John as His herald, but he seems impatient at their questions and importunities. He describes the coming Savior as a kingly lord. "Dost thou know, woman, how He will come? As the Lord of Hosts, arrayed in golden armour, with His sword drawn above His head, so He will come to save His people Israel."[4]

But the war-weary people are not comforted by such a message, for "Many have come in golden armour . . . . and then Israel hath bled. . . . . When kings come, they come to kings! No one hath come as yet to us, the poor--."[5]

John is at Jerusalem, ready to lead the insurrection of the people against Herod, because Herod has taken his brother's wife, Herodias. Then Simon, the Galilean, comes with his message "Greater than law, greater than sacrifice, is love!"[6] One day John hears that Jesus is teaching the doctrine "Love thine enemies." This thought recurs to the prophet when he is leading the attack against Herod. Instead of casting the first stone, he drops it with the words, "In the name of Him. . . Who . . . commands me. . . to love thee--"[7] Then John is taken prisoner to a place adjacent to the Tetrarch's palace. Here Herod visits him, and questions him concerning the Messiah.

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[4] Hermann Sudermann, John the Baptist (New York: John Lane Company, 1909), p. 122.

[5] Loc. cit.

[6] Ibid., p. 48.

[7] Ibid., p. 136.

"Yet tell me, Baptist, when that other cometh, that other--Say, was it in His Name that thou didst not throw the stone at me?"[8]

John is visited also by Salome, the daughter of Herodias, who is infatuated with him. Jealous of her maid, Miriam, as a possible rival, Salome has her put to death. When John the Baptist, however, spurns Salome's advances, she is furious; so that it does not take much urging from Herodias to make the girl ask his head as a boon from the king. The proud Salome hopes that her pride may yet be gratified by John's kneeling to her and asking that his life be spared. But this he will not do, and she callously allows him to be executed.

One of the most romantic aspects of this play is the characterization of the prophet. He is a strange and unreal person.

> We of the twentieth century have little in common with a man who in his far-off desert has weaned himself from all passion and frailty, whose nature is steeped in a frigid forbidding virtue, and whose personal purity is but the lusterless reflection of a gloomy, loveless self-righteousness.[9]

Even to the other persons of the play, his contemporaries, he seems an inhabitant of another sphere. Herodias says:

> He who thinketh himself designed to be a judge over men should take part in the life of men, should be human among human beings. . . . . But thou seemest to me so isolated from thy fellowmen that the throb of a human heart is nothing to thee.[10]

John realizes that he has partly failed in his mission because all the while he has looked for the coming of the princely Messiah,

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[8] Ibid., p. 157.

[9] Otto Heller, op. cit., p. 74.

[10] Hermann Sudermann, op. cit., p. 90.

Christ in his spiritual glory has been walking on earth. Gradually, John has been converted to Jesus' doctrine of love whose corollary is non-resistance to violence. Just before he is executed, word is brought to him that Jesus is on his way to the city. Then the prophet says:

> I hear roundabout a rushing noise, as of many waters, and the divine radiance is near me. . . . A throne has descended out of heaven amidst darts of fire. The King of Peace sitteth thereon in white robes. And His sword is called Love, and His watchword is mercy. . . . Behold He hath the bride, He is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom standeth and listeneth, and rejoiceth over the voice that is coming. The same is my joy. Now is it fulfilled.[11]

The language of this play is not that of common speech. It resembles in some respects that of the Bible, and in that way adds to the impression of remoteness which the play gives to the reader. Figures of speech also add to the strange effect.

> And it was beautiful . . . like the voice of the wind which blows from the sea towards evening.[12]

> There is a light shining over yonder mountains. Lovely is that light, and within me dawns the meaning of a contradiction.[13]

The story of a woman whose great faith kept her waiting in one place for forty years in order to see the Messiah is told to John by another woman who now occupies that place. She says that because the first woman was a prophetess, she recognized Him in a boy-babe who was brought to the Temple by his mother. Then she praised the Lord and laid herself down and died. Now her successor is waiting for Him to come again.[14]

The atmosphere of the East of long ago porvades the entire play. In the last act the hospitality of Herod's palace is extended to the Roman

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[11] Ibid., p. 195.

[12] Ibid., p. 194.

[13] Ibid., p. 166.

[14] Ibid., pp., 120-21.

governor, Vitellius, Herod who is as arrogant to his own subjects as if he were supreme ruler of the earth is, in fact, subjected to the Roman power. His chief purpose in entertaining the governor is to make an impression that will be reported favorably to Caesar. Merokles declaims a new ode, and the Libyan flute players are prepared to charm the Roman with beautiful music. It is for this occasion that Salome dances with the Prophet's head on a dish held high above her. According to the Eastern custom of that day Herodias, the queen, does not appear at the table with the men, but she graciously greets the great Roman. After the dance Herod sends both Salome and her mother from the room. As the play ends, Herod is awed by the shouts of "Hosannah" rising from the street where the people are acclaiming the long-heralded "King of the Jews."[15]

The characters in The Three Heron Feathers are types and not real individuals. The hero himself is but

> the shadowy symbol of the restless, insatiable cravings of an idealist with whose same emotional aspirations which so many German poets have felt tempted to fathom. "The tireless child of Desire" he calls himself, and he is, indeed, a literary cousin of Faust, Don Juan, and Master Heinrich the bell-founder.[16]

Prince Witte spends his life in the pursuit of the happiness which all the time he unknowingly has in his grasp. The Burial-wife, a graveyard witch, sends him to pluck three feathers from a wild heron, worshipped as a god that lives within a crystal house.[17] These feathers are enchanted. When he returns with them he says to the Burial-wife:

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[15] Ibid., pp. 171-202.

[16] Otto Heller, op. cit., p. 78.

[17] Hermann Sudermann, The Three Heron Feathers. Poet-Lore XII, 165.

> What I demand now is that queen of women . . . . by the side of whom my princely dignity shall appear but as a herald; for whose voice my soul starves though I sit in the wisest councils of the world; in whom I see our torturing human weaknesses healed to a joyous beauty; that woman before whom I . . . . must bend my proud knee . . . . whose blushes shall bear witness to me how a longing heart can shield itself in modesty; she who will stand in deepest need and beg with me at the cross-roads; whose love can make death itself pass me by; this woman . . . . --mine--I now demand of thee.[18]

The witch then explains the power of the three heron feathers.

> The first of the feathers is but a gleam from the lights and shadows that brew about thee. When thou throwest it into the fire, thou shalt behold her image in the twilight. The second of the feathers . . . . shall bring her to thee in love, for when thou burnest it alone in the dying glow, she must wander by night and appear before thee. And until the third has perished in the flame, thy hand stretched forth shall bless her; but the third burning brings her death.[19]

After the prince burns the first, the dark outline of a woman's figure appears on the horizon above the sea. Prince Witte begs her to come closer that he may see her distinctly. He wonders if he will recognize her if he ever sees her again.

In his quest he comes to the court of the beautiful widowed queen of Samland, who, to please her subjects, has promised to marry the man who defeats her other suitors. She falls in love with Witte, but he, lost in his dreams, is not even conscious of her presence until the little prince, her son, tells him to rise. In the lists Prince Witte falls at the hand of his bastard brother, Duke Widwolf, who had usurped his dukedom of Gotland, and who now claims the hand of the Queen of Samland. The Duke is driven away by Witte's man, Hans Lorbass, and the queen's warriors.

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[18] Ibid., p. 174.

[19] Ibid., p. 174-5.

Then the queen, contrary to her promise, marries Prince Witte. He is to rule the land until his little stepson is old enough. But Witte still longs for the vague unknown, and his conscience troubles him because of his own and his consort's perjury. He neglects his royal duties, and stands aloof from his people who idolize him. His sword lies unused while he spends his time in revelry. At last Hans reminds him of the second feather. The king hesitates but finally tosses it into the flames. A violet lightning flashes high above the chimney piece, thunder follows, the door opens, and the Queen enters. Witte, even then, does not recognize that the second feather is fulfilling the promise "Thou shalt behold her." He accuses her of spying on him, but she says that he called her.

Steadily he becomes more neglectful of his kingdom, and even refuses to lead his people against Duke Widwolf who comes to seek vengeance. In desperation Hans Lorbass suggests that perhaps Witte would be inspired to fight if it were for his own kingdom instead of for a "borrowed one". So Hans proposes to kill the little prince, and the king consents. Hans is moved by the child's trust and innocence when the little prince tells how much his stepfather loves him. The king, who has been nearly crazy with regret, is overjoyed when Hans returns with the little prince still safe and sound. Then the king is roused at last from his apathy, and springing up he leads the fight against the duke whose army is just approaching the palace. The duke is killed, and the kingdom is saved. Again Prince Witte is offered the throne for himself, but he refuses because a voice seems to be calling him away into the eternal gray, where there is no guiding star. The queen understands and bids him farewell. After fifteen years spent in pursuit of his ideal, Witte again finds himself near the home of the Burial-

wife. He has begun to realize that he has wasted his life in seeking a happiness that was already his. But he still remains ignorant of the fact that his wife is the ideal woman whom the burning of the second feather brought to bless his life. The loving queen still waits for him. And Witte eager to rid himself of the magic spell of the third feather burns it. He thinks that will cause the wraith that has misled him to die. But as the enchanted plume burns the queen sinks down, whispering with failing strength, "Now are we two protected from all mischance. . . . I still . . . have been thy happiness . . . even in death."[20] Then Witte recognizes his ideal at last, and falling down beside her he, too, dies.

The sentence inversion and frequent long, imaginative and figurative passages in this play--as in John the Baptist--lift its language above the level of common speech. One of the queen's speeches illustrates this point.

> If thou hast laden thy life with guilt so heavily, then must thou give me of thy burden a share to bear. . . . . I saw thy misery . . . . and yet I had but one thought . . . . how to beguile him from that path . . . . that he might leave me never again, whether in love or hate . . . . this was my thought . . . and as a bridal pair stands at the altar and exchange their rings, while the deep church-bells lull them into a smiling dream, so we in parting near each other, and offer, smiling, guilt for guilt.[21]

An atmosphere of the Middle Ages surrounds this play. That is achieved partly by details of the story which have already been commented upon, such as the superstitious trust in the words of the witch and the

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[20] Ibid., p. 233.

[21] Ibid., p. 224.

magic of the enchanted heron feathers. Prince Witte was described early in the story as a "brave knight, skilled in arms, who undertook a journey to the Holy Sepulchre in order to atone for his feud with his brother."[22] The battle in which the suitors fought for the queen's hand, and the assault on the royal castle at Samland also belong to that far off time.

A summary of the results of this part of the study shows the following romantic elements. Improbable incidents are imaginatively portrayed in both John the Baptist and The Three Heron Feathers. The chief characters in each play appear to the reader as strange beings of a world far removed from his experience. The power and blessedness of love as a guiding force is exalted in John the Baptist. Idealism dominates the hero's life in each of the plays. Medieval castles, customs, and superstitions, and the presence of knights, princes, and dukes in The Three Heron Feathers help to make it a romantic tale. The Jerusalem of nearly two thousand years ago is portrayed in John the Baptist. The language of both plays is poetic in its general effect because of the word-choice, figures of speech, sentence inversion, and imaginative style. Sudermann's use of these elements is all the more interesting because in the field of romance he is outside of the sphere in which he is best known.

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[22] Ibid., p. 177.

CHAPTER V

AUGUST STRINDBERG

Although August Strindberg is best known as a naturalist, at least half of his fifty plays is made up of plays of historic or romantic imagination.[1] In this phase of his drama mysticism and fantasy are predominant characteristics.[2] One critic speaks of Strindberg as an innovator in the field of imaginative romance because he uses a sort of expressionistic technique in certain of his "wildest fancies".[3] Because Strindberg was so prolific and varied a writer his works cannot be conveniently classified as to type. The four chosen for study illustrate the dramatist's variety of expression. Advent is a fantasy which preaches the redemptive power of love; Swanwhite is a dramatized fairy tale; The Bridal Crown is an imaginative recreation of legend; and The Spook Sonata is a curious essay in expressionism.[4]

Among the many romantic elements these plays contain, superstition, mystery, sentiment, faith, and love are quite important. Swedish legend and folk-lore bring to light many strange creatures--the Neck, the Midwife, the Mewler, and the Mocker; and ghosts, witches, and fairies appear with their magic. Even the Christ-Child and the Other One who is Satan are seen

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[1] Thomas H. Dickinson, An Outline of Contemporary Drama (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), p. 184.

[2] Barrett H. Clark, A Study of the Modern Drama (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925), p. 34.

S. Marion Tucker, Modern Continental Plays (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929), p. 699.

[3] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), pp. 30-31.

[4] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

in Advent. In The Bridal Crown part of the communication between characters is done through snatches of song. In the prose passages rhyme and alliteration sometimes produce the effect of poetry. Roses, lilies, peacocks, doves, and dreams help to create the romantic atmosphere of Swanwhite.

In Advent the Judge and the Old Lady can see a bright spot of sunlight on the mausoleum, which they have had erected in their honor. Because the sun has already set, the place appears weird and ghostly and they interpret the spot as an omen.[5] A few hours later a procession of shadows enters from the mausoleum.[6] The first is Death with his scythe and hour glass. The other eight are persons now dead whom the wicked Old Lady and the Judge have wronged. As the ghosts walk silently and solemnly around, the old couple are filled with terror. They call upon the Other One to help and he appears.[7] To them he says: "I became the Other One because I wanted to be the First One. I was a man of evil, and my punishment is to serve the good."[8] He says that he is the Evil One and that his task is to torment the Old couple into finding the cross before which they are to meet some day.

The Judge and the Old Lady add to their sins by putting their son-in-law out of his house because he has been unemployed and the rent is unpaid. Their daughter, Amelia, is made to do scrubbing and other menial tasks, while the little children, Thyra and Eric, are locked in the cellar. There they

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[5] Edwin Bjorkman, translator, Plays by August Strindberg (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), III, 116.

[6] Ibid., p. 124.

[7] Ibid., p. 126.

[8] Ibid., p. 127.

have an unusual Playmate, the Christ-Child, who frees them from their prison and promises to return the next Christmas.[9]

In the meantime, the Judge and the Old Lady are trying to make their minds easy by reassuring each other that their actions have always been within the law. The Judge speaks lightly of the priest, who had refused to consecrate the mausoleum because of their sins. In jest he raises a glass of wine to drink to the priest's health, but the glass is torn out of his hand and disappears through the wall.[10]

Then the light goes out, and the Other One appears with the message that the two are to be separated. The Other One waves his rattan, and the scene changes from the wine cellar to a beautiful outdoor scene where the children are playing.[11] Playmate is again with them. Like an older brother he answers their questions concerning the birds, and is kind to a poor little chimney sweep whom they see. As the Playmate disappears they see the halo that surrounds him and are filled with awe.

The next scene is a cross-roads surrounded by pine woods. In the moonlight a Witch stands waiting for the Old Lady.[12] She promises the Old Lady that she shall attend a ball. The Witch blows her whistle and a rocky, kettle-shaped chasm appears. It is closed in on three sides by steep walls of black rock. Among the guests who now enter are beggars, tramps, cripples, and the Seven Deadly Sins. The Master of Ceremonies is really the Other One. The Old Lady dances with her dead brother who accuses her of robbing the

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[9] Ibid., pp. 148-9.

[10] Ibid., p. 142.

[11] Ibid., p. 143.

[12] Ibid., p. 150.

dead.[13] The Lady in White is the Judge's first wife and the real mother of Amelia. She says, "You have taken the memory of me away from her. . . . . But now you are to be wiped out."[14] The Old Lady gropes her way from the place.

The next scene is a court room. As the Judge enters he is horror stricken to see the gavel rap on the table, the candles light themselves, and the executioner's axe moves on the wall.[15] Then the ghost of himself, an unrighteous judge, enters to receive his sentence. The sentence is "Guilty!"

In the last act the Judge and the Old Lady are in hell.[16] It is Christmas Eve. When the Judge looks through his stereoscope, he sees a spectacle which horrifies him. It is his life "From the Cradle to the Grave."[17]

The Other One says that they will celebrate Christmas. So they all kneel as voices sing "Gloria in excelsis Deo" and they see the star shining far above and the crib with the child and the mother, surrounded by the adoring shepherds and the wise men.[18]

Swanwhite has been spoken of as "perhaps the most beautiful and most genuine fairy tale for old or young ever written in the Swedish language."[19]

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[13] Ibid., p. 158.

[14] Ibid., p. 159.

[15] Ibid., p. 160.

[16] Ibid., p. 177.

[17] Ibid., p. 174.

[18] Ibid., p. 178.

[19] Ibid., p. 4.

> The play is, in its original shape, as poetical in form as in spirit--even to the extent of being strongly rhythmical in its prose, and containing many of the inversions which are so characteristic of Swedish verse.[20]

The story takes place in a medieval stone castle. Beyond the balcony appear the branches of a rose-garden, laden with pink and white roses. Three closets can be seen through a door of the castle. One is stored with vessels of pewter; the second has all sorts of costly and ornate garments; the third contains piles and rows of apples, pears, melons and pumpkins.

Swanwhite's apartment is richly decked with silks, brocades, linens, and gilded furniture. There is a lamp of gold, vases filled with lilies and roses, two white doves, and a peacock.[21] Swanwhite's father saves her from the whip of her cruel stepmother. Then taking the child in his arms he tells her that when she was still a cradled babe, her troth was plighted to the youthful King of Rigalid whom she has never seen. But since the time for the wedding is now near, the king has sent a prince to teach her the deportment of a queen and courtly manners. She must never ask the beautiful prince's name because it is prophesied that whosoever calls him by his name shall have to love him.[22] Then the duke prepares to leave her as he must go away to war. Swanwhite exclaims:

> Farewell, my great and valiant hero, my glorious father! May fortune follow you, and make you rich in years and friends and victories![23]

The duke says tenderly:

> Sweet flower of mine, grow fair and fragrant! If I return --well--I return! If not, then from the starry arch above my

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[20] Ibid., p. 5.

[21] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[22] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[23] Ibid., p. 19.

> eye shall follow you, and never to my sight will you be lost, for there above all-seeing we become, even as the all-creating Lord himself.[24]

Immediately the prince comes. Swanwhite hides herself and watches him, then she steals out on tiptoe and seats herself opposite him. In answer to her questions concerning the king of Rigalid, the prince says that he is tall, blond, and blue-eyed, with broad shoulders, and that his mind knows no fear.

Swanwhite shows the prince her playthings. Among them is a hobby-horse. She says:

> Here is my steed,--It has saddle of gold and shoes of silver, --It can run forty miles in an hour, and on its back I have travelled through Sounding Forest, across Big Heath and King's Bridge, along High Road and Fearful Alley, all the way to the Lake of Tears. And there is dropped a golden shoe that fell into the lake, and then came a fish, and after came a fisherman, and so I got the golden shoe back. . . . .[25]

Swanwhite puts the prince's helmet to her ears, and hears by magic her stepmother vowing to the steward that Swanwhite shall never be queen, and that the prince shall wed her own daughter, Lena. The stepmother is a witch. By means of her magic mirror she sees everything that happens in Swanwhite's room when the girl guesses the prince's name.

The pumpkin in the fireplace is the witch's ear so she also hears all their conversation.

That night the prince remains at the castle at the command of the witch. She falls asleep when a white swan drops a poppy flower on her. The swan, Swanwhite explains to the prince, "was my mother."[26] While the

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[24] Ibid., p. 20.

[25] Ibid., p. 24.

[26] Ibid., p. 35.

stepmother and the maids sleep, Swanwhite and the prince declare their love for each other. Love seems to transform even the ugly faces of the sleepers. They smile, and appear beautiful, kind, and happy. But when the stepmother awakes and sees Swanwhite in the arms of the prince, she angrily orders him to the Blue Tower and sends Swanwhite to bed.

In the next scene Swanwhite's mother enters. She is all in white. Over one arm she carries the plumage of a swan and on the other a small harp of gold. She takes Swanwhite from the bed, bathes her feet with tears, wipes them with a white linen cloth, and covers them with kisses. Then she puts a sandal on each foot which then appears shining white. She combs Swanwhite's hair with a golden comb, and places a white linen garment on the bed. Before she leaves, the prince's mother also comes from heaven and they talk of their children.

When the clock strikes three the mothers are gone and Swanwhite awakes. She is delighted with her changed appearance. The harp plays a sweet melody.[27]

After more adventures which only increase the love of the prince and Swanwhite, the jealous stepmother is once more kept from harming Swanwhite by the return of the duke. He hears the accusation of misconduct which the stepmother brings against the lovers. He calls on almighty God to render judgment. That judgment is interpreted by means of a strange device. Three lilies and a steaming pie are brought to the duke. The white lily, which is Swanwhite's flower, folds its blossom against defile-

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[27] Ibid., p. 42.

ment so that Swanwhite is declared innocent. The red flower stands for the prince, and it bends its head in reverent love before the white one. The third flower represents the king of Rigalid. It appears to be jealous of the others. Thus the flowers make known that Swanwhite is predestined for marriage with the noble prince instead of with the wicked king.[28]

Then the duke asks for the prince, but news is brought that he has been drowned while crossing the strait. Swanwhite is overwhelmed with grief, but she intercedes for her stepmother when the duke sentences her to be burned alive.

This plea for mercy, prompted by love, frees the stepmother from the evil powers that have held her in their spell. Delighted she exclaims:

> Blessed be love which can work miracles like that! But, child, then it must also have the power to make the dead return . . . . Go, cry the name of your beloved, and put your hand above his heart! Then, with the help of the Supreme One--calling none but Him for helper--your beloved will hear your voice--if you believe![29]

Swanwhite does as she is directed and the prince wakes up.

In The Bridal Crown Strindberg based his story on an old Norse legend to which he added the idea of making the two lovers descendants of hostile families.[30]

Kersti and Mats have fallen in love while herding cattle in adjoining pastures, but they could not marry because of the enmity of their parents. However, after a child is born to them they improvise a marriage ceremony of their own, but Kersti is not satisfied. She wants to be married in

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[28] Ibid., p. 60.

[29] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[30] Ibid., IV, 6.

regular fashion and wear the crown which every Swedish bride who is "worthy" wears at a church wedding. She promises the Neck, a supernatural creature who is usually singing, and who appears frequently, that he may play at her wedding if he will keep quiet now. After he is gone the Midwife, a wood-imp appears. She is angrily ordered away by Kersti, but she returns with a bridal crown which she trades to Kersti for the baby. Before leaving, the Midwife warns Kersti that she will be present at the wedding. As preparations for her wedding progress Kersti is taunted and annoyed by Mats' sister, Brita, who keeps suggesting that perhaps the crown will not fit. At the wedding it falls from Kersti's head into the mill stream just as she is about to dance with the pastor. Then the child's voice is heard as well from the river. It is the Mocker, a bodiless voice which exists in the imagination of the people all over Sweden; in its other form it is an apparition known as the Mewler.[31]

This apparition appears through the trap door to the frightened Kersti. It looks to her like an infant in long clothes, and she presses it to her breast.[32] She then admits that she killed the child. At first condemned to die, Kersti's sentence is changed to imprisonment instead of death because of her faith in God.[33] It is the Child in White, another of the supernatural personages of the play, who brings her the glad news.[34] It was the Child in White also who had brought a ray of hope to the despairing girl after her confession at the wedding.[35]

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[31] Ibid., p. 7.

[32] Ibid., p. 73.

[33] Ibid., p. 87.

[34] Loc. cit.

[35] Ibid., p. 80.

The prison where Kersti is kept is known as the "Castle". It is situated beside a lake in which, the villagers believe, a church sank from sight centuries before because of strife between the mill-folk and the Mewlings. They believe also that every Easter morning, at the hour when the Saviour ascended from the grave, the church rises out of the lake. And he who gets a look at it has peace in his soul for the rest of the year.[36]

The events of the last act happen on Easter. It is the day when Kersti comes from the prison to do her yearly penance at the church. While crossing the frozen lake the ice breaks up and she is drowned. And while the pastor is praying for her soul the assembled families who have long been enemies, find peace, for they see the church rising out of the lake.[37]

One of the interesting romantic devices of this drama is the singing or humming of some of the simple communications between characters. Strindberg has provided the music for each of such verses. Sometimes the tune itself has a sort of code meaning which makes words unnecessary. The following stanzas are sung by Mats and Kersti in the first act.

Mats. Kersti dearest,
Kersti dearest,
Baby sleeps in the forest.

Kersti. Dillery-dell!
Fareth he well,
Fareth he well
Far in the forest?

Mats. . . . . Baby sleeps in his cradle here,
Far, far, in the forest!

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[36] Ibid., pp. 92-93.

[37] Ibid., p. 99.

Kersti. Haste to the house and milk the cows,
And see that baby lacks nothing.
I cannot come, must stay at home,
Helping my folks with the baking.

Mats. Birches nod in the blowing breeze,
But baby slumbers in perfect peace,
Kersti, Kersti, dearest![38]

The Neck is one of the supernatural creatures of the play. Nearly every time he appears, he sings, "I am hoping, I am hoping that my Redeemer still liveth.[39] The first time Kersti sees him in the play, he appears at the foot of the falls surrounded by a bright, white light. He is young and fair, with blond hair that is falling down his back; he has a fiddle of gold with a bow of silver, and plays to his own singing.*

The Midwife or Wood-imp, who gives Kersti the bridal crown in scene one, is another familiar figure in Swedish superstition. When Kersti angrily orders her away she "turns and runs out with the galloping movement of a wild thing; her back which then becomes visible, looks like that of a fox and ends in a sweeping, bushy tail; she hisses rather than speaks."[40]

The characters frequently express a belief in supernatural powers. One evening when the spruces stir in spite of the fact that there is no wind, Kersti says: "Surely the evil ones are abroad tonight."[41] Another

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[38] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[39] Ibid., p. 34.

[40] Ibid., p. 36.

[41] Ibid., p. 29.

* The Neck, or the Man of the Rapids, or the Brookman . . . . exists in popular fancy wherever a peasant has put his plough into Swedish soil. He is a creature of the thousand rivers and brooks that beribbon the land . . . . and always he is associated with an unusual gift of music and the fallen angel's longing for the lost Paradise.

time to convince her mother she exclaims: "I swear! May the Neck get me if I lie!"[42] Whether the creature possessing these strange powers are present invisibly or in person, the characters accept them as naturally as if they were human beings.

"The best example of Strindberg's free imaginative treatment of reality"[43] is The Spook Sonata. The Colonel and his wife were once in love, but now they feel only hate and remorse, for long ago each was disloyal to the other. The wife, from that time on, has lived alone as a Mummy in a closet. She has been carried away by her own imagination until by her speech and actions she gives the impression that she thinks she is a parrot. She has a statue of herself as a girl which she cherishes.

The Colonel invites to a spook banquet a crowd who, as the valet explains, look like spooks and never say a word. On this particular occasion Hummel, the Colonel's avenging rival, comes as an uninvited guest. Hummel reveals the fact that he has bought up all the Colonel's debts, and that the Mummy's daughter is his own and not her husband's. The Mummy tells Hummel that he is worse than all the rest and that he must hang himself in the closet where she has spent twenty years bewailing her one evil deed. Without a word he obeys and the death screen is placed before the door.

The Mummy's daughter spends most of her time in a room talking to and caring for her hyacinths. The student, Arkenholtz, admires her very much. After discussing the flowers he tells her of his family. His father died in a madhouse. An accumulation of unpleasant experiences has disillusioned him. He asks,

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[42] Ibid., p. 32.

[43] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, op. cit., p. 35.

> Where do we find honour and faith? In fairy-tales and childish fancies. Where can I find anything that keeps its promise? Only in my own imagination.[44]

As he expresses his skepticism, the harp which the girl once played remains dumb to her touch. The girl herself droops and dies behind the death screen. Then the student's doubts vanish and he prays for the girl. The strings of the harp then begin of themselves to play a "spook sonata" and he sings some verses from the Poetic Edda:

> Seeing the sun, it seemed to my fancy
> That I beheld the Spirit that's hidden.
> Man must forever reap what he planted:
> Happy is he who has done no evil.[45]

A summary of the romantic elements in Strindberg's plays shows the following. Superstition is a major element in The Bridal Crown, Advent, and Swanwhite. Strange, supernatural beings--witches; fairies; the Neck or river spirit; the Midwife, half human, half extranatural; the Mewler as an apparition and the Mocker as merely a voice; evil spirits; the Christ-Child,--are present to some extent in all the plays. They are especially numerous in The Bridal Crown because it is based on legend and folk-lore. Castles, princes, dukes, moonlight, roses, riches, and dreams create an atmosphere of romance in Swanwhite. An unreal, mysterious, gloomy atmosphere is produced in Advent by the use of omens, shadows, darkness, movements of inanimate objects, and alternate fearful silence and terrifying sounds. The harp which plays itself in The Spook Sonata has a similar romantic effect. Improbability and unreality characterize the plots of Swanwhite and Advent. Part of this effect is secured by means of mystery

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[44] Plays by August Strindberg, op. cit., IV, 145.

[45] Ibid., p. 147.

and magic. In all the plays the characters who are human beings seem strange and unreal because of the fantasy, mystery, and superstition that surround their lives. Sentiment is an important factor in Swanwhite. The use of melody and verse for certain conversations in The Bridal Crown and the rhythm, alliteration, and sentence inversion of many passages in Swanwhite sustain the romantic mood.

CHAPTER VI

HENRIK IBSEN

Henrik Ibsen began his long dramatic career as a romanticist, and his earliest themes he drew from history, ballad and saga.[1] "Here with a freedom of fancy and procedure quite foreign to his later productions, he breathed artistic life into heroic personages."[2] Of the plays chosen for study Lady Inger of Ostrat is based on Norwegian history; The Vikings at Helgeland extols Sigurd, hero of the Volsung saga; Brand portrays two pastors of Ibsen's acquaintance; and Peer Gynt was suggested by Norwegian folk-lore.[3]

The last two plays mentioned are written entirely in poetry, the other two are in prose, but it is a prose which possesses many poetic qualities. All the plays contain much of fancy and improbability: inanimate objects speak, superstitions abound, phantoms appear, and dead men ride through the air. The atmosphere of fairy-land surrounds Peer Gynt with its many strange creatures. Medieval castles with secret passages and with moats surrounding them add to the spectator's impression of a remote time and place. All the plays are rich in sentiment, and love is a major factor in The Vikings at Helgeland. Many of the important characters in Ibsen's romantic plays are unreal, because they are so highly endowed with heroic qualities that they seem superhuman.

The scene of Lady Inger of Ostrat is laid in the long ago.

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[1] Archibald Henderson, European Dramatists (Cincinnati: Stewart and Kidd Company, 1914), p. 116.

[2] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), p. 5.

[3] Loc. cit.

"It is really a remarkable imaginative re-vitalization of the spirit of an epoch centuries past."[4] " . . . . the longing for freedom, the stirrings of revolt which form the motive-power of the action, are invented or at any rate idealized by the poet."[5] Nor is the characterization of Lady Inger according to history. Ibsen makes her a more admirable heroine than the facts would warrant. And there are no grounds for making the pretender her son.[6]

In the play certain patriotic Norwegians are planning an insurrection which, they hope, will result in their country's freedom from the power of the hated Danes. For years they have believed that Lady Inger Gyldenlove is designated by God to break their thraldom. Lady Inger, however, is too vacillating to depend upon. Five years before she had married her eldest daughter to a Danish nobleman; but when the second one some years later fell in love with a Dane, her mother let her die of a broken heart rather than consent to the union, for at that time the Danish governors were abusing the common people and Lady Inger thought it not wise to link herself still more closely with the foreign tyrants. At the time of the play she proposes that her youngest daughter Elina marry the Danish envoy, Nils Lykke. He tells her that the son, whom she worships but has not seen since his babyhood, will be kept safe if she will but reconcile the opposing factions. He hints, too, that she may some day be a king's mother. This is sufficient to make Lady Inger abandon all her plans to assist her countrymen. Jealous of Count Sture,

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[4] Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 102.

[5] William Archer, editor, Ibsen's Prose Dramas (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), III, viii.

[6] Loc. cit.

around whom the Norwegians are now rallying, and who she thinks is at her castle, she has him killed so that her own son can claim the power when the time comes. Too late she discovers that it is her own son who has been killed, and that her daughter has been won by the Dane, Nils Lykke. This last event Lady Inger had not intended to happen. She wanted merely to encourage his wooing and then scornfully refuse him.

The following passage with its fancy and figures of speech is typical of the language of the whole play. It is taken from a conversation between Nels Lykke and Elina, in which he changes her hatred for him into love in so short a time that the reader's credulity is strained.

> I have read in my books of the many-coloured life in far-off lands. To the winding of horns the knight rides forth into the greenwood, with his falcon on his wrist. Even so do you go your way through life;--your name rings out before you whithersoever you fare.--All that I desire of your glory, is to rest like the falcon on your arm. I too was blind as he to light and life, till you loosed the hood from my eyes and set me soaring high over the leafy tree-tops.--But, trust me--bold as my flight may be, yet shall I ever turn back to my cage.[7]

The incidents in The Vikings at Helgeland occur in the year 933. The atmosphere of that time is so skillfully created that the reader is immediately transported to a world in which most of the people are sea-rovers and adventurers, whose physical prowess and feats of valor are praised in song and story.

The style of the original play is modeled on that of the sagas, and the language is clearly distinguishable from everyday Norwegian.[8] After Ornulf's seven sons are killed his grief is somewhat assuaged by his composition

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[7] Ibid., pp. 106-7.

[8] Ibid., p. xvi.

of a poem which tells of his gift of songcraft and honors the memory of his stalwart sons. He recites it as he sits on a stone near the grave of his youngest son while the pine knot torches of his men light the scene. The original poem contains both rhyme and alliteration. The rhyme, Archer comments, seems historically out of place in the mouth of an Icelandic skald.[9] This inaccuracy is an evidence of Ibsen's romantic treatment of the story.

As the drama is founded on the legendary one of Sigurd, the Volsung, he is portrayed as an extraordinary hero--almost a god. When Ornulf, Sigurd's father-in-law, comes to demand three hundred pieces of silver in payment for his daughter, Dagny, whom Sigurd had carried away, he says to Sigurd:

> I knew thy face as soon as I was ware of thee, and therefore I stirred the strife; I was fain to prove the fame that tells of thee as the stoutest man of his hands in Norway. . . . . Thou art a warrior indeed; stouter strokes than these has old Ornulf never given or taken.[10]

When at a feast Sigurd is asked to name the deed which he considers his greatest he says:

> Let it be told, then, that I lay a viking among the Orkneys; there came foeman against us, but we swept them from their ships, and I fought alone against eight men.[11]

Sigurd does not receive credit for his most valiant deed until years afterwards because of his devotion to Gunnar, the husband of Dagny's foster-sister, Hiordis. Hiordis had vowed that the only way a man could win her for his wife was to come to her bower and slay the white bear that stood at the door. The bear was the fiercest of beasts; none but Hiordis might come near it, and it had the strength of twenty men. When Gunnar confessed his love for Hiordis to Sigurd, Sigurd volunteered to do the deed for him

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[9] Ibid., p. xvii.

[10] Ibid., p. 129.

[11] Ibid., p. 160.

because Gunnar was no fighter. So Sigurd did it, but the fame went to Gunnar.[12] When, in the play, Dagny can no longer keep silent to Hiordis's boasting of Gunnar's brave acts she tells the truth concerning the bear-slaying. Then it becomes known as well that Sigurd has always loved Hiordis, but has unselfishly stood aside because Gunnar loves her too.

Hiordis, also, is a very unusual person. She is not content to stay peacefully at home but longs for adventure. Many of her speeches show a belief in superstition.

> Ha, what joy to be a witchwife and ride on a whale's back--to speed before the skiff, and wake the storm, and lure men to the deeps with lovely songs of sorcery![13]

> Think, Dagny, what it is to sit by the window in the eventide and hear the kelpie* wailing in the boat-house; to sit waiting and listening for the dead men's ride to Valhal; for their way lies past us here in the north. They are the brave men that fell in fight, the strong women that did not drag out their lives tamely, like thee and me; they sweep through the storm-night on their black horses, with jangling bells! . . . . Ha, Dagny! think of riding the last ride on so rare a steed![14]

Hiordis has loved Sigurd ever since their first meeting and she tells him:

> All good gifts may a man give his faithful friend--all, save the woman he loves; for if he do that, he rends the Norn's secret web, and two lives are wrecked.[15]

She has made a bow strung with her hair and to Sigurd's statement that their lives can not now be altered she says:

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[12] Ibid., pp. 150-51.

[13] Ibid., p. 156.

[14] Ibid., pp. 156-57.

[15] Ibid., p. 203.

* "Draugon", a vague and horrible sea-monster.

> It shall be altered! We must out of this life, both of us! Seest thou this bow-string? With it I can surely hit my mark; for I have crooned fair sorceries over it! (Places an arrow in the bow, which is strung.) Hark! hearest thou that rushing in the air? It is the dead men's ride to Valhal: I have bewitched them hither;--we two will join them in their ride![16]

Then she shoots Sigurd and he dies. As the storm increases she breaks forth wildly.

> They come! I have bewitched them hither! No, no! I will not go with you! I will not ride without Sigurd! It avails not--they see me; thay laugh and beckon to me; they spur their horses![17]

She throws herself from the cliff. A little later Ornulf, Dagny, Gunnar, and his son Egil arrive at the place. They are filled with dread as the ride of the fallen heroes to Valhal hurtles through the air. Egil cries out in terror that the one in front, on the black horse is Hiordis.[18] Now that both Sigurd and Hiordis are dead the survivors decide to return at once to Iceland, and Ornulf chants:

> Weapon-wielding warriors' meeting
> woeful, by the northern seabord,
> still shall live in song and saga
> while our stem endures in Iceland.[19]

In Brand, which is poetry throughout, Ibsen uses two varieties of metre. These he skillfully fits to the thought. "The trochaic . . . . is used in scenes of passion and poetry, of poignant emotion, of mystic vision, of solitary thought."[20] Iambic is used for the more ordinary passages.

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[16] Ibid., p. 203.

[17] Ibid., p. 207.

[18] Loc. cit.

[19] Loc. cit.

[20] C. H. Herford, translator, The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), III, xi.

The atmosphere of Brand seems strange and unreal to the reader because Brand is an extraordinary man striving towards an ideal which is impossible to reach in a world of compromise.[21] He declares himself the champion of things as they ought to be. "Brand," says one critic, "is the pictorial projection of a splendidly hopeless, idealistic dream."[22] Thus the play contains many passages which show the flights of his imagination in picturing that ideal.

> I see my Call! It gleams ahead
> Like sunshine through a loop-hole shed!
> I know my task; these demons slain,
> The sick Earth shall grow sound again;--
> Once let them to the grave be given,
> The fever-fumes of Earth shall fly!
> Up, Soul, array thee! Sword from thigh!
> To battle for the heirs of Heaven![23]

> I have boldly dared to plan
> The refashioning of Man,--
> --There's my work,--Sin's image grown,
> Whom God moulded in His own.--
> Forth! to wider fields away!
> Here's no room for battle play![24]

Brand's motto is "All or nothing", and he believes that man falls short of his ideal because he does not conquer his will.

> Inwards! In! O word of might,
> Now I see my way aright.
> In ourselves is that young Earth,
> Ripe for the divine new-birth;
> Will, the fiend, must there be slain,
> Adam there be born again.[25]

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[21] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, op. cit., p. 5.
Archibald Henderson, op. cit., p. 115.

[22] Loc. cit.

[23] The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen, op. cit., p. 36.

[24] Ibid., p. 59.

[25] Ibid., p. 61.

That you lacked strength may be forgiven,--
But never that you wanted will.[26]

He builds a new church, but decides that it is not there that God would have the people worship. So he pictures the ideal church to the assembled crowd.

It has neither mark nor bound,
But its floor the green earth is,
Mead and mountain, sea and sound;
And the overarching sky
Is its only canopy.
There shall all thy work be wrought
As an anthem for God's ear,
There thy week day toil be sought
With no sacrilege to fear.
There the World be like a tree
Folded in its shielding bark;
Faith and Action blended be.
There shall daily labour fuse
With right Teaching and right Use,
Daily drudgery be one
With star-flights beyond the sun,
One with Yule-tide revelry
And the Dance before the Ark.[27]

Then he throws the keys of the new church into the river. In the next scene he is high in the mountains and looking backwards says:

From the vale they follow'd thronging,
Never one has reached the height.
Through all the bosoms thrill'd the longing
For a greater Day's dawn-light;
Through all souls subduing strode
The alarum-call of God.
But the sacrifice they dread![28]

As he muses over his past experiences and the limitations of the world, he asks himself whether after all his efforts have followed God's plan. Then from above, mingled with the voice of the storm, he hears an invisible choir answer.

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[26] Ibid., p. 85.

[27] Ibid., pp. 222-3.

[28] Ibid., pp. 243-4.

Dreamer, thine is not His spirit,
Nought to Him thy gifts are worth;
Heaven thou never shalt inherit,
Earth-born creature, live for Earth![29]

Then the apparition of his wife appears, and tells him that he must erase the three words "Nought or all" from his conscience if he ever expects to find peace. The phantom vanishes in a thunder clap; and a piercing scream is heard, "Die! Earth cannot use thee more!"[30]

A little later he sees an avalanche descending upon him and looking up he asks.

God, I plunge into death's night,--
Shall they wholly miss thy light
Who unto man's utmost might
Will'd--?[31]

As the avalanche buries him, the whole valley is swallowed up; and a voice calls through the crashing thunder, "He is the God of Love."[32]

Peer Gynt, according to Ibsen himself, was written primarily as a poem, a work of pure imagination, and as such it should be read.

> There is undeniably an undercurrent of ethical and satirical meaning in the play; but no one can properly enjoy or value it who is not swept along irresistibly by the surface stream of purely poetic invention and delineation.[33]

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[29] Ibid., p. 249.

[30] Ibid., p. 255.

[31] Ibid., p. 262.

[32] Ibid., p. 262.

[33] William Archer, translator, The Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), IV, xix.

The chief figure of the play is one of the Norwegian peasantry's half-mythical, fantastic heroes of recent times.[34] His name was suggested to Ibsen by a folk-tale.

"Peer himself," one writer says, "is a character creation on the heroic scale."[35] He is an amusing rogue, a braggart dreamer, who glows with the desire to be romantic. This point is illustrated by the first episode of the play, in which Peer is relating a hunting experience to Ase, his mother. He tells how he crept close to a buck, a fine, sleek one such as she has never seen. Then:

> Bang! I fired.
> Clean he dropped upon the hillside.
> But the instant that he fell,
> I sat firm astride his back,
> Gripped him by the left ear tightly
> And had almost sunk my knife-blade
> In his neck, behind his skull--
> When, behold! the brute screamed wildly,
> Sprang upon his feet like lightning,
> With a back-cast of his head
> From my fist made knife and sheath fly,
> Pinned me tightly by the thigh,
> Jammed his horns against my legs,
> Clenched me like a pair of tongs;--
> Then forthwith away he flew
> Right along the Gendin-Edge!
> . . . . . .
> Right along the Edge we two
> Clove our passage through the air.
> Never rode I such a colt!
> Straight before us as we rushed
> 'Twas as though there glittered suns.
> Brown-backed eagles that were sailing
> In the wide and dizzy void
> Half-way 'twixt us and the tarns,
> Dropped behind, like motes in air.
> . . . . . .

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[34] Ibid., p. viii.

[35] Ibid., p. xix.

It is mother. She's scolding and screaming: You beast!
Hei you, Peer Gynt-- His eyes gradually close.
Ay, now she is frightened.--
Peer Gynt he rides first, and there follow him many.--
His steed it is gold-shod and crested with silver.
Himself he has gauntlets and sabre and scabbard.
His cloak it is long, and its lining is silken.
Full brave is the company riding behind him.
None of them, though, sits his charger so stoutly.
None of them, glitters like him in the sunshine.--
Down by the fence stands the people in clusters,
Lifting their hats, and agape gazing upwards.
Women are curtseying. All the world knows him,
Kaiser Peer Gynt, and his thousands of henchmen.
Sixpenny pieces and glittering shillings
Over the roadway he scatters like pebbles.
Rich as a lord grows each man in the parish.
High o'er the ocean Peer Gynt goes a-riding.
Engelland's Prince on the seashore awaits him;
There too await him all Engelland's maidens.
Engelland's nobles and Engelland's Kaiser,
See him come riding and rise from their banquet.[37]

Because Peer is regarded as of somewhat doubtful character he can get no one to dance with him when he goes to a party as an uninvited guest. To one girl he says in a low but threatening tone.

I can turn myself into a troll!
I'll come to your bedside at midnight to-night.
If you should hear some one hissing and spitting,
You mustn't imagine it's only the cat.
It's me, lass! I'll drain out your blood in a cup,
And your little sister, I'll eat her up;
Ay, you must know I'm a were-wolf at night;--
I'll bite you all over the loins and the back--[38]

As Peer watches the eagles and wild geese fly over he makes a resolution which helps to explain his subsequent experiences.

I'll fly too! I will wash myself clean in
The bath of the keenest winds!
I'll fly high! I will plunge myself fair in
The glorious christening-font!

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[37] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[38] Ibid., p. 64.

I will soar far over the saeter;
I will ride myself pure of soul;
I will forth o'er the salt sea waters,
And high over Engelland's prince!39

In Morocco, Peer now a middle-aged man, explains to his companions that his goal is to be emperor of all the world through the power of gold.40

One day Peer meets a troll maiden in the mountains. He pretends that he is a king's son; she is the daughter of the Dovre-King. They ride away on a gigantic pig to her home. There Peer sees a great assembly of trolls, gnomes, and brownies. He obligingly consents to observe all the queer customs of the trolls even to the wearing of a tail, but when the King proposes to blind him so that everything will look fine and brave to him Peer refuses and leaves the place.41

Peer has another strange adventure when he meets the great Boyg* whose voice he can hear, and whose teeth and claws he encounters but cannot see.42

The scene in which Peer's mother dies is made very unusual by the fact that Peer holds her fascinated to the last by an imaginative tale of a journey to a feast given by the King. All her fears as she approaches death he easily dispels by mentioning some detail of their make-believe ride. For example when she says: "Oh, mercy, how hollow it's rumbling"; Peer responds, "We're just driving over a fiord."43 In a little while Ase speaks again saying that the journey makes her so weak and tired. "The drive will be over

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39 Ibid., p. 64.

40 Ibid., p. 132.

41 Ibid., pp. 68-83.

42 Ibid., pp. 83-90.

43 Ibid., p. 115.

* The Boyg is a vague, shapeless, ubiquitous, inevitable, invulnerable Thing. Ibsen found it in the folk-tale and was fascinated by its sheer uncanniness.

soon" he assures her, and goes on with his story. When he looks at her again she is dead.[44]

The frequent changes in setting, and the variety of scenes which are presented add to the impression of remote time and place which the reader receives from Peer Gynt. One such scene portrays an encampment of Moroccan troops on the edge of the desert.[45] Another shows a grove of palm trees in the moonlight.[46] Then the reader is carried in imagination to a cabin surrounded by forest far up in the North.[47] Then comes a view of Peer Gynt sitting upon a stone near Memnon's statue amid the sands of Egypt. To Peer's great surprise the statue sings to him of Zeus.[48] Another Egyptian scene discloses the great Sphinx with spires and minarets of Cairo in the distance.[49] Once Peer narrowly escapes drowning when his ship is wrecked on a rocky coast.[50]

Back in his native land Peer Gynt has more strange experiences. An unusual scene here shows a heath with fir trees. A forest fire has been raging and charred tree-trunks can be seen stretching for miles. The withered leaves flying before the wind reproach Peer for his neglect. Dewdrops dripping from the branches say to him that they are unshed tears. And broken straws tell him: "We are deeds; thou shouldst have achieved us." Then he

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[44] Ibid., p. 118.

[45] Ibid., p. 143.

[46] Ibid., p. 156.

[47] Ibid., p. 171.

[48] Ibid., p. 173.

[49] Ibid., p. 174.

[50] Ibid., p. 207.

hears his dead mother's voice asking for the castle to which he had pretended to take her.[51]

At last Peer meets the Button-Moulder who proposes to melt him with other "spoilt goods". Peer protests, but is told:

> You know you are not airy enough for heaven
> . . . . . .
> Yourself you never have been at all;--
> Then what does it matter, your dying right out?[52]

Peer would rather be sent to hell than to be melted and recast. So the Button-Moulder grants him a brief respite to seek for evidence that he has ever been himself, and that he has committed any sins. No one can help him; and at last he comes to Solveig's hut. She has waited for him for years. To her he has sinned in nothing; he has lived in her faith and love. Peer sees in this a ray of hope, but the Button-Moulder warns: "At the last crossroad we will meet again, Peer."[53]

"The whole atmosphere of the first three acts and of the fifth is that of the Norwegian Folk and Fairy Tales," one critic comments.[54] That atmosphere is further enhanced by the use of poetry throughout the play. "Six or eight measures are employed in the various scenes, and the rhymes are exceedingly rich and complex.[55] As the translation has retained as nearly as possible the metres of the original, it has not "robbed fantasy of its pinions" even though the rhymes had to be suppressed.[56]

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[51] Ibid., pp. 230-233.

[52] Ibid., pp. 239-40.

[53] Ibid., p. 271.

[54] Ibid., p. xviii.

[55] Ibid., xxx.

[56] Ibid., xxxii.

A summary of this part of the study shows that Ibsen's plays contain the following romantic elements. Idealized unselfish love appears in The Vikings at Helgeland and in Peer Gynt. Ibsen does not follow the traditional accounts, but allows his imagination to color events and persons with true romantic glamour. The chief characters of all the plays are endowed with heroic qualities. They move in a world so different from and so far away from the present that they seem strange and unreal. Brand is an unusual character striving to follow an ideal which it is impossible to attain in the real world. The lives of the characters in Peer Gynt and in The Vikings at Helgeland are influenced by superstition. Certain characters in the latter believe that dead men ride through the air and that the Norn or Fate guides men's lives. Strange creatures--gnomes, trolls, brownies, and the Boyg are encountered by Peer Gynt. A statue, dewdrops, leaves, and the voice of his dead mother speak to him. The messenger of Death appears as a Button-Moulder. An invisible choir sings to Brand from the air, a phantom speaks, and the voice of some supernatural being announces his doom. The atmosphere of fairyland surrounds Peer Gynt. All the plays contain certain traditional attributes of romance: knights, kings, princes, feudal castles, riches, and moonlight. Both Brand and Peer Gynt are written in poetry, and although the other three plays are in prose they contain so many figures of speech and so much of imaginative picturing of events that the language is not that of common life. The presence of all these romantic elements in the plays studied confirms the statement that Ibsen began his career as a romanticist.

CHAPTER VII

J. M. BARRIE

J. M. Barrie has been described by critics as a highly imaginative writer.[1] His dramas possess among other qualities "the wizardy that sets men's thoughts wandering in forgotten places and their eyes searching for forgotten dreams."[2] "His purpose," another writer comments, "is to apply dramatic action to those unrelated realms of fancy and dreams which occupy a large place in the penumbra of consciousness without being recognized as having any true value."[3]

Although he achieves many realistic effects, Barrie does so partly by the use of certain romantic elements.[4] His imagination creates a wonder world through the use of dreams, of magic, and of sentiment. Mortals, as well as fairies, have strange adventures in charming places where the inhabitants never grow older, and where magical music lures the listener away from the ordinary world. Sometimes nightingales, moonlight, kings and princesses add to the romantic atmosphere, and an occasional ghost appears.

The four plays chosen for study are those which are best representative of Barrie's use of the elements of romanticism--Peter Pan, A Kiss for Cinderella, Dear Brutus and Mary Rose.

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[1] Carl Van Doren, American and British Literature Since 1890 (New York: The Century Company, 1925), p. 238.
Clayton Hamilton, Conversations on the Drama (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 91.
Benjamin Brawley, A Short History of the English Drama (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), p. 226.

[2] Isaac Goldberg, The Drama of Transition (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Company, 1922), p. 23.

[3] Thomas Dickinson, An Outline of Contemporary Drama (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1927), p. 256.

[4] Walter Prichard Eaton, The Drama in English (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 278.

Peter Pan is a fairy tale which opens in the nursery where the three children, Wendy, Michael and John are asleep. Mrs. Darling says that one night as she sat drowsing by the fire, she suddenly awoke to find the window open and a strange boy in the room. Just then Nana, the nurse, returned. She pulled down the window but caught only his shadow. This shadow Mrs. Darling rolled up and kept; and she now displays it to her husband. It has no more material to it than a puff of smoke but it has human shape.[5]

After Mrs. Darling has gone the window opens again and Peter Pan flies into the room. He tells Wendy that he ran away the day he was born to live with the fairies because he wishes never to grow up. The fairies, he tells her, began when the first baby laughed for the first time; the laugh broke into a thousand pieces and went skipping about. He teaches Wendy and the boys to fly after he has sprinkled them with fairy dust. Then they fly out the window and over the tree-tops on their way to Never Land where Peter Pan lives with all the lost boys. In Peter's land mermaids can be seen beside the lagoon.[6] It is summer time on the lagoon, but winter on the river. There, all the four seasons may pass while one is filling a jug at the well. Pirates appear upon the frozen river dragging a raft and singing a "dreadful" song.

As Wendy flies over the island she is injured by an arrow shot by one of Peter's boys at the instigation of the jealous fairy, Tinker Bell. None of the boys may touch Wendy because they fear that would not be respectful; so they build a house around her. This they do in the time it

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[5] The Plays of J. M. Barrie (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 24.

[6] Ibid., p. 38.

him playing his pipes. As he plays the Never birds and the fairies gather closer, till the roof of the little house is so thick with admirers that some of them fall down the chimney.

In A Kiss for Cinderella Barrie provides a romantic escape from the commonplace world through the fancy and dreams of a little girl who is very poor. She works as a servant for an artist. Like the fairy-tale Cinderella she has small, perfectly shaped feet of which she is quite proud. She, too, longs to attend a ball. She wants to visit Buckingham Palace but says she does not know how to get past the police. A policeman hears her say this, and since it is war time he misunderstands the romantic motive behind her wish to evade the police and decides to watch her. He discovers that in her room after working hours she performs many services--from altering coats to bestowing sympathy--for a penny a customer. In four wooden boxes she has four war orphans. Their nationalities are English, French, Belgian, and German, respectively. All know the tale of Cinderella, which they enjoy hearing their little guardian relate. To the policeman Cinderella reveals her firm belief that she is destined for story-book experiences. Her fancy leads her on to paint in glowing colors what will happen when that time comes. There will be loud blasts on the trumpet and people will shout.

> Make way for the Lady Cinderella! . . . . Then loud huzzas is heard from the excited populace, for by this time the fame of my beauty has spread like wild-fire through the streets, and folks is hanging out at windows and climbing lamp-posts to catch a sight of me.
>
> I see it from beginning to end . . . . the gold walls and the throne, and the lamp-posts and the horses . . . . The speeches--everything. If only I had my invite![8]

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[8] Ibid., p. 433.

When the policeman leaves, Cinderella insists on standing outside to wait for the godmother who is to bring her ball dress. The godmother, who appears, wears a Red Cross uniform. She promises Cinderella that she shall have the ball just as she has imagined it. There is an unearthly trumpet sound; then the ball-room appears. Nearly everything is of gold. At the top of a gorgeous throne the four orphans delightedly watch the scene. The place is lighted by four street lamps with red glass. The ladies are all in white, the gentlemen in black, with swords. Down the golden steps come the Lord Mayor, Lord Times, a magnificent person created by Cinderella on learning that the press is all-powerful and that the Times is the press, The Censor, who is long and black and thin and carries an executioner's axe, the King and Queen, attired like their portraits on playing cards, and His Highness Prince Hard-to-Please. The prince is to choose a wife from among twelve beauties, who descend the stairs one at a time. The first test they must pass is for goodness. To dainty music the Lord Mayor trips up to the line of girls and pops a thermometer into each mouth. He is openly gleeful when he finds sinners. These are sent out of the room. Next the prince looks at the beauties but makes no choice. Then the ladies are asked to show their feet. Only two survive this test, but the prince pins tags of "2nd" and "3rd" on them. It is then the Lord Mayor announces: "Another competitor, my King. Make way for the Lady Cinderella." The portals are flung wide, and Cinderella is seen alighting from her lovely equipage. After she has made her bows, she is tested with the thermometer, and the King exclaims: "Marvelous! ninety-nine." The prince does not seem excited until Cinderella shows him her dainty feet enclosed in beautiful glass slippers. Then he falls at her feet and immediately asks her to marry him.

She consents after demanding that he also be tested with the thermometer. The prince requests that the wedding be at once. The children rush down and act as bridesmaids. The regal couple kneel and are married. Then the king has the royal ice-cream barrow brought in and everyone is served with ices. The king proposes a toast to the bridal pair. Irresistible music then sets them all to dancing. When the clock strikes twelve, Cinderella's glorious gown changes into a tattered frock. She rushes from the place.

The ball-room grows dark. The Prince's cries die away. Only a tiny glow is left and it comes from a policeman's lantern revealing not a ball-room any longer but a street, with Cinderella fast asleep on the doorstep of her home.

In the last act, two months later, Cinderella is convalescing from an attack of pneumonia contracted from the exposure she suffered on the memorable night of the ball. She is now reconciled to the fact that she is not the real Cinderella, and she recognizes her prince in the kindly policeman who has become a close friend.

It is evident at once to the reader of Barrie's stage directions for Dear Brutus that he desires to employ the full resources of modern stage lighting and scenic art in creating immediately "an air of suspense, of mystery, of something out of the ordinary, even ominous."[9]

Van Doren's comment is similar.

> The theme and the setting have more than a touch of the weirdness and other-worldliness which the playwright's fancy has tended to embrace with greater warmth each year.[10]

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[9] Walter Prichard Eaton, op. cit., p. 278.

[10] Carl Van Doren, American and British Literature Since 1890 (New York: The Century Company, 1925), p. 241.

> The scene is a darkened room, which the curtain reveals so stealthily that if there was a mouse on the stage it is there still. Our object is to catch our two chief characters unawares; they are Darkness and Light.
>
> The room is so obscure as to be invisible, but at the back of the obscurity are French windows through which is seen Lob's garden bathed in moonshine. The Darkness and Light which this room and garden represent, are very still, but we should feel that it is only the pause in which old enemies regard each other . . . . The moonshine stealing about among the flowers, to give them their last instructions, has left a smile upon them, but it is a smile with a menace in it for the dwellers in darkness.[11]

> In Dear Brutus Barrie took real people into unreality and brought them back shaken; he used the supernatural to illustrate what he considered truths about our souls which he could illustrate in no other way.[12]

There is nothing unusual or extraordinary in any of the characters except Lob, the host.

> Lob is a lineal descendant of Shakespeare's Puck, a little more grotesque in his Dickensish garb, a little less convincing than his out-and-out-fairy ancestor.[13]

He has invited a group of people to be his guests for Midsummer Eve because the villagers say that on that evening a strange wood appears by magic in unexpected places in that part of the country. The wood vanishes before dawn.[14] He has chosen his guests because they possess one thing in common--the desire for a second chance. This they find in the magic wood whither they all go except Mrs. Coade, who is contented with her lot as it is.

Act two opens in the depths of the wood in the enchantment of a moonlight night. Far away a nightingale is singing. There Purdie finds that

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[11] The Plays of J. M. Barrie, op. cit., p. 475.

[12] Walter Prichard Eaton, loc. cit.

[13] "Dear Brutus". The Nation XVIII (January, 1919), 30.

[14] The Plays of J. M. Barrie, p. 487.

> It is but paying the highest compliment to Barrie to say, that no one else but he could possibly be conceived as the author of this lovely phantasy. In Mary Rose there are all the elements which go to the making of a pure and lovable drama. There is the suggestion of the eternal mystery of islands, the horrid feeling that Mary is lost and yet in some remarkable way is not lost. . . . .
>
> We cannot realize from actual fact what would be our feelings if we did not age, while those about us did, but in Mary Rose Barrie gives us a pretty good idea of what such a procedure would be like. . . . .[15]

Mary Rose is the only character in the place who is different from the people of the ordinary world. From the first Barrie surrounds her with an air of mystery. "If there is anything strange about this girl," he explains, "it is an elusiveness of which she is unaware."[16]

> Her mother describes her as a flower touched by a late frost; it is not said, but we feel that she is, as it were, apart, withdrawn from the common human tides, a thing marked, almost consecrated.[17]

Little Mary Rose Morland accompanies her parents one day on a trip to the outer Hebrides. Left alone on a tiny island which superstitious stories have given an eerie reputation, Mary Rose vanishes, but twenty days later reappears. The time to her seems only a moment and her parents carefully avoid any mention of the incident in her hearing. When she is eighteen they tell the experience to Simon Blake to whom Mary Rose is betrothed. After their marriage the couple live very happily until their little son is four years old. Then, while on a fishing trip to the Hebrides,

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[15] Patrick Braybrooke, J. M. Barrie (London: n. n., 1924), pp. 108-9.

[16] The Plays of J. M. Barrie, op. cit., p. 558.

[17] John Pollock, "Mary Rose". Fortnightly Review CXIII (June, 1920), 956.

Mary Rose again hears the mysterious call of the "Island that Likes to be Visited."

> It is at first as soft and furtive as whisperings from holes in the ground. 'Mary Rose, Mary Rose.' Then in a fury as of storm and whistling winds that might be an unholy organ it rushes upon the island, raking every bush for her. These sounds increase rapidly in volume. . . . . Struggling through them, and also calling her name, is to be heard music of an unearthly sweetness . . . . Once Mary Rose's arms go out to her husband for help, but thereafter she is oblivious of his existence. Her face is rapt, but there is neither fear nor joy in it. Thus she passes from view. The island immediately resumes its stillness.[18]

Her husband seeks for her in vain. One day, twenty-five years later, the Morlands receive a telegram saying that Mary Rose has just been found on the island. Her parents and her husband have grown older, but she is as fresh and young as when she went away. She asks in vain for her baby, who of course, is now grown and away at sea. The shock of his absence and the strangeness of the world prove fatal to her. And she is buried down by the church. But her ghost returns to the old house after her parents are dead and gone. The old lady who comes periodically to care for the house tells Mary Rose's son, Harry, who has come back, that she has met the ghost in every room and on the stairs. "And she drew back to let me pass and said, 'Good evening' too, timid-like, and at another time she has gone by me like a rush of wind."[19]

Harry then meets the pale ghost of Mary Rose and talks to her. She cannot rest in the lovely island because she is looking for him. Harry holds her on his knee, and tells her that now she can go away happy for she

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[18] The Plays of J. M. Barrie, op. cit., p. 588-9.

[19] Ibid., p. 605.

has found the thing for which she was seeking. Then celestial music is again heard calling for Mary Rose.

> As it wraps her round, the weary little ghost knows that her long day is done. Her face is shining. The smallest star shoots down for her, and with her arms stretched forth to it . . . . she walks out through the window into the empyrean. . . . . Harry hears nothing, but he knows that somehow a prayer has been answered.[20]

A summary of the study of Barrie's plays shows that they contain a number of romantic elements. The charm of fairies and their land is the central interest of Peter Pan. Events that can happen only by means of magic or of the supernatural occur in Peter Pan, Dear Brutus, and Mary Rose. All the plays are highly imaginative. The strange, extraordinary incident of the ball in A Kiss for Cinderella is the girl's fanciful dream in which she supplies in imagination those things for which she has longed. Sentiment is an important factor in all the plays. Mystery surrounds the disappearance of Mary Rose on an enchanted island, where she is lured by magical music and irresistible voices, and where one never grows older. Her ghost returns frequently to her old home, for she is seeking her son. Mermaids and pirates appear in Peter Pan. Moonlight, nightingales, kings, princesses, and castles are some of the traditional attributes of romance in all the plays. The central character of Mary Rose, and that of Peter Pan, and Lob in Dear Brutus possess certain qualities that make them seem unusual persons, not like anyone in the real world. In all of these plays Barrie is primarily a realist, although he uses many romantic elements to produce his effects.

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[20] Ibid., p. 611.

CHAPTER VIII

LORD DUNSANY

Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, known as Lord Dunsany, is a romanticist, who writes for the sheer fun of the thing. "Something must be wrong," he says in his Romance and the Modern Stage, "with an age whose drama deserts romance." This is Dunsany's attitude toward playwriting. He continues:

> Romance is so inseparable from life that all we need to obtain romantic drama is for the dramatist to find any age and any country where life is not too thickly veiled and cloaked with puzzles and conventions, in fact to find a people that is not in the agonies of self-consciousness. For myself, I think that it is simpler to imagine such a people, as it saves the trouble of reading to find a romantic age . . . .[1]

The scope and power of Dunsany's imagination are such that two critics, writing in 1917 describe him as the most imaginative of living writers.[2] The comments of other critics also emphasize this characteristic, for:

> The scenes of most of his plays are laid in a country of his own imagining. Here the persons of his fancy do fantastic things but with such truly human motives and passions that one can see in them a satire of our own world, satire which is keen at times but seldom bitter and frequently so covered by delightful romance that one hardly knows whether he is being laughed at or not . . . .[3]

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[1] Quoted from Barrett H. Clark, A Study of the Modern Drama (London: D. Appleton and Company, 1925), p. 349.

[2] "The most imaginative dramatist now using the English language." Current Opinion CII (February, 1917), 102.
Emma Garrett Boyd, "Lord Dunsany, dreamer." The Forum LVII (April, 1917), 497.

[3] Dougald Macmillan, Recent Tendencies in the Theatre (University of North Carolina, 1923), p. 20.

The scene of The Glittering Gate is a Lonely Place which shows the golden Gate of Heaven in a granite wall of great slabs that overhangs an abyss hung with stars. There are only two characters, Bill and Jim, both burglars who have recently died. Jim has been there six months wearily opening one beer bottle after another only to find it empty. When Bill comes he has a tool which he decides to use in opening the gates of heaven. There he hopes to find his mother, and Jim is eager to meet a girl he once knew. At last the gate swings heavily open, revealing empty night and stars. Bill gazes into the revealed Nothing in which far stars go wandering and exclaims: "Stars, Blooming great stars. There ain't no Heaven, Jim."[8] Then the cruel laughter which they have heard at intervals from somewhere increases in volume. The curtain falls and the laughter still howls on.

The idea of the vast abyss hung with stars is an illustration of Dunsany's unrivalled power to conceive immensities.

Seven beggars in The Gods of the Mountain, finding that their business is poor because "the gods are drowsy and all that is divine in man is dead," represent themselves as being the seven stone gods of Marma in the guise of men. When one of them speaks of the moon as their little sister, they are first thought to be prophets. Then the citizens declare their willingness to worship them if they be gods. But Agmar quickly dispels all doubt as to their deity by saying with oracular impressiveness:

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[8] Lord Dunsany, op. cit., p. 99.

a procession of seven green men enters. Even their hands and faces are green. They walk with knees extremely wide apart, for they have sat cross-legged for centuries. The terrified beggars recognize them as the real gods of the mountains. The leading Green Thing points his forefinger at each beggar in turn. As he does this a staring look of horror comes into each beggar's eyes and a green light shines upon his face. The beggars are now in truth stone gods.

A sense of the mystic search of the human mind for the infinite dominates this play. Its language exemplifies Dunsany's use of certain poetic devices such as the repetition of words, alliteration, and assonance. A single passage separated from the context can give only a suggestion of the effectiveness of these devices. It should be read aloud.

> Let none who has known the mystery of roads or who has felt the wind arising new in the morning, or who has called forth out of the souls of men divine benevolence, ever speak any more of any trade or of the miserable gains of shops and the trading men.[13]

From the very beginning as well as from the title of The Golden Doom the reader or spectator feels that something disastrous is about to happen. The king whispers with ambassadors concerning future wars, and the sentries speak of the desolation that will come if a doom from the stars fall suddenly upon a king. Two children are playing near the king's sacred door. The boy wants a little hoop to play with. He has a piece of gold with which he writes a verse on the iron door. When the king and

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[13] Ibid., p. 6.

his men return they are troubled by the writing. The prophets interpret it to mean that the stars are angry because the king has scorned them. To prevent disaster from overtaking the whole kingdom because of him, the king renounces his crown. It is placed outside the door. Unseen by the sentries the little boy finds it and pleased with his golden hoop runs away. The king's men believe that the gods have taken it and that the stars are now satisfied.

Here, as in The Glittering Gate, man is portrayed as helpless in the grip of ironic forces of some superhuman power. In this play it is the stars personified to represent sovereign deities.

This passage from the play shows the similarity between Dunsany's prose style and that of the English translation of the Bible which has so long appealed to him. It also reflects the superstitious beliefs held by the characters.

> Even now the sun has set who denies the stars, and the day is departed wherein no gods walk abroad. It is near the hour when spirits roam the earth and all things that go unseen, and the faces of the abiding stars will soon be revealed to the fields.[14]

The characters of this play, like many of Maeterlinck's, do not possess individual traits of character. They are merely types--puppets designed to act in a prescribed fashion.

The Tents of the Arabs is the most poetic and lovely of Dunsany's plays because of its exquisite love lyrics and descriptions of the desert.[15]

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[14] Ibid., p. 58.

[15] Emma Garrett Boyd, op. cit., p. 500.

The time is given as "uncertain", and the scene is outside the gate somewhere in the East. Two camel drivers are speaking of the beauties of the city. Their word pictures of the city at dawn and at sunset are comparable to the imagery of Keats. The camel drivers hate the cruel desert because he (to them the desert is a person) has an enmity with man. "He does not welcome you as the cities do."[16] Bel Narb says that if he were king he would never look at the desert again. Then the drivers go away with the caravan, and the king comes and looks longingly at the desert. To him it is more beautiful than the city, and he wishes he could marry a girl of some family outside royalty and ride with her alone through the desert till they came to the tents of the Arabs. He decides to go to the desert for a year, but his officials are worried over what will happen to affairs of the kingdom while he is gone. After a year in the desert the king is still reluctant to return to Thalanna, but the gypsy girl, Eznarza, consoles him by saying that Memory will prolong their year. The king says:

> We went together then to Holy Mecca. We dwelt alone in tents in the golden desert. We heard the wild free day sing songs in his freedom, we heard the beautiful night-wind. Nothing remains of our year but desolate shadows. Memory whips them and they will not dance.[17]

Then the camel driver who had wished to be king returns to Thalanna saying he is the real king while the latter goes contentedly back to the desert with his gypsy queen.

Mysticism is reflected in this play in the attempt of the camel drivers to interpret the will of God.[18] Superstition is an important factor in the lives of the characters. Eznarza says of Time:

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[16] Lord Dunsany, Plays of Gods and Men (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), p. 14.

[17] Ibid., p. 43.

[18] Ibid., p. 19.

> They say that he loves the Sphinx and does not harm her. They say that he does not dare to harm the Sphinx. She has borne him many gods whom the infidels worship.[19]

The following lines illustrate the many lovely lyrical passages of the play.

> No, no, I do not wish to watch the camels. They can never take me out to the beautiful desert to be free forever from cities. Here I must stay to do the work of a King. Only my dreams can go, and the shadows of the camels carry them, to find peace by the tents of the Arabs.[20]

An atmosphere of grim terror surrounds the scene of The Queen's Enemies, for it opens in an underground temple in Egypt. This story one critic remarks, is a little reminiscent of Poe's The Cask of Amontillado.[21] The beautiful little queen, who cannot bear to have enemies, has invited all her enemies to a banquet. When the enemies arrive they are suspicious and look cautiously around for hidden guards. The queen greets them in a very friendly manner and they sit down at the table. They fear that the food is poisoned so they let their attendants taste it first. This makes the queen cry, but they apologize and the banquet proceeds. Soon they are very merry. Then the queen withdraws saying she goes to pray in secret. At once the men are again suspicious and lay their swords on the table.

Meanwhile the queen has gone up the stairs. She beats with a fan on the wall three times. The great grating lifts outwards and upwards very

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[19] Ibid., p. 36.

[20] Ibid., p. 23.

[21] Clayton Hamilton, op. cit., p. 477.

slowly. The men guard the opening thus made. And the queen prays to the "blessed Nile" imploring a hearing. Then a green torrent descends from the great hole and covers all the enemies. The Nile has answered the queen's petition. Now she can sleep sweetly, for she has no enemies.

The story of A Night at an Inn is briefly told. Three Englishmen have stolen the great ruby from the forehead of the stone god of the East, Klesh. Three black priests of Klesh follow the thieves, but are murdered one night at an inn. With the vengeful priests dead, the robbers feel secure and are talking of selling the ruby, when Klesh himself enters with heavy stony steps. He is a hideous idol who is blind. He gropes his way to the ruby, picks it up and screws it into a socket in his forehead. After he has left the room he calls the three miscreants out one by one to a mysterious and horrible death.

> A Night at an Inn is so irradiated with imagination that the terrible theatric thrill of the immediate performance is survived by a memory that serenely satisfies the soul. . . . . Though a romantic work it has a realistic setting; and the imaginative horror of the narrative is brought so close to the audience that the action is accompanied by audible gasps and groans and a nervous gripping of the arms of all the chairs.[22]

If is a blending of the strange and romantic with the commonplace. One day John Beal misses the 8:15 train to London. He is rather annoyed, of course, but does not realize what else he has missed until ten years later when an Eastern merchant gives him a magic crystal. This crystal is the great treasure of his master, a jade god in the greenest mountains.

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[22] Clayton Hamilton, op. cit., p. 477.

Whoever makes a wish with the crystal in his hand may go back into the past. There he may do anything again or choose to act in a new way. In this magic past, ten years may be lived in one day. John is perfectly happy with his life as it is, but he would like to go back and catch that train. So he lies down on the sofa with the crystal in his hand and wishes to go back ten years, two weeks and a day. Then he is back in the past, and this time he boards the train. There he meets a beautiful young lady, Miralda Clement. She has an investment in a mountain pass in Al Shaldomir from which she has received no dividends. John volunteers to go there to see whether he can settle the matter satisfactorily.

Six months later John has attained a position of importance in Al Shaldomir. He is so influential that the people consent to letting him destroy many of their idols. These idols are objectionable to John because they call for human sacrifices. John has not been able, however, to collect the toll from the pass in the mountains. A man named Hussein is in charge of the pass, and he will not recognize Miralda's claim to the income. At last Miralda herself comes to this strange place. John is horrified because she has no chaperon, but the natives send her two enormous Nubians bearing peacock fans and wearing scimitars. These are to serve as her guards. Miralda asks John to kill Hussein, and he does so.

The next scene is six and a half years later. Miralda wants John to marry her, but he says he has a feeling that he must not marry. He admits that he loves her. "Did not the singer compare our love to the desire of the nightingale for the evening star? All know that you are my queen."[23] But Miralda wants to be crowned queen, so she plots to have John

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[23] Lord Dunsany, If (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), p. 117.

put to death. His faithful servant, Daoud, warns him of the danger, and aids him to escape by means of a secret door which leads to the great Euphrates. Three years later John is back in London near the home where he had been so happy with his wife and children. To his surprise he hears a nightingale singing. It reminds him of Al Shaldomir. Something tells him that he must enter the house, so he goes in and finds that he is now a stranger in his own home. Suddenly a voice outside shouting "Allah! Allah!" startles him into wakefulness, and he realizes that all his experiences since he boarded the train have been a dream.

A decidedly oriental atmosphere surrounds this play. The characters with their beliefs in strange gods, their queer customs, and their poetical way of speaking produce this effect. A few of the gallant speeches of Hafiz, who succeeded John in Miralda's affections, illustrate this last point.

> Lady, O star of these times. O light over lonely marshes. . . . . Lady, I would make you queen of all that lies west of the passes. . . . . Lady, O dawn's delight, let there be a banquet.[24]

A summary of the results of this part of the study shows a number of romantic elements. All the plots are highly imaginative and improbable. Characters are often merely types or abstractions. This is true of all the plays except If. Part of its characters are real. Mysticism is important in The Gods of the Mountain and The Golden Doom. Evidences of belief in superstition appear in all the plays. The desert, the stars, and the

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[24] Ibid., p. 127.

Sphinx are fancifully endowed with human characteristics. The scenes are laid in imaginary places on the borders of the world. The language of all the plays is quite poetical in sentence forms, repetition of words and sounds, imagery, and rhythm. Terror is an important factor in the Gods of the Mountain, The Queen's Enemies, and A Night at an Inn. It is a terror so imaginatively conceived, and equipped with so many theatric devices to thrill the spectator that it creates a feeling of strangeness and unreality. Dunsany is, indeed, a romanticist of the first order.

CHAPTER IX

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

In the English revival of the poetic drama after Tennyson the name of Stephen Phillips alone became outstanding.[1] He is the one English poet of his time whose plays in verse have had any considerable success in the theater.[2]

> ". . . . for originality and virility of imaginative power, for gleams of the diviner charm and tenderness which belong to and are inseparable from impassioned strength, Mr. Phillips' work has stood . . . . alone in its generation."[3]

Phillips is familiar with the types of story that are consecrated to romantic ideas in the minds of all cultivated people, and he is most adroit in presenting to his audiences romantic images, rich costumes, and vivid emotions.[4]

Of his seven plays only Paolo and Francesca and Herod may be said to be truly plays. These two are discussed in the present chapter.

In both plays Phillips places his events in the remote past. Poetry, often of great lyrical beauty, is the language used. The chief characters are endowed with heroic qualities. The atmosphere of romance is sustained by the use of prophecy, superstition, castles, royalty, precious stones,

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[1] Robert Metcalf Smith, Types of Romantic Drama (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1928), p. 481.

[2] Thomas H. Dickinson, A Study of the Modern Drama (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925), p. 285.

[3] Sidney Colvin, "Mr. Stephen Phillips tragedy". Nineteenth Century XLVI (December, 1909), p. 921.

[4] Edmund Gosse, "The revival of poetic drama". Atlantic Monthly XC (August, 1902), p. 166.

music, moonlight and magic. Romantic love dominates Paolo and Francesca.

The story of Paolo and Francesca, as Phillips gives it, opens in the hall of the Malatesta castle at Riminini. In D'Annunzio's version, the story opens at the home of Francesca. In both plays, the Polenta and the Malatesta families are portrayed as allies. Phillips begins his drama with Giovanni's explanation to his assembled countrymen of his hopes for a lasting peace from this marriage with his ally's daughter. She is coming from Ravenna with Paolo, Giovanni's brother, because Giovanni has been too occupied with governmental affairs to go after her himself.

Soon after Francesca's arrival Giovanni's old nurse, Angela, asks permission to speak with him. As she touches him she sees a vision of Francesca reading in a place surrounded by roses. A man comes in and kisses her. Then Angela says:

> I see two lying dead upon a bier--
> Slain suddenly and in each other's arms.[5]

To Giovanni's question concerning the identity of the man, she can say nothing more definite than that he is not far to seek, and that he woos unwillingly.

For a time Giovanni does not suspect that it is his brother who is Francesca's lover, but leaves the two alone while he is away fighting.

Both Paolo and Francesca struggle against the force that is pulling their souls together. And at last Paolo decides to go away so that he will not be disloyal to his brother. But something irresistible makes him look back toward Rimini where he can see the towers of the castle gleaming in the sunlight. And he says:

> I cannot go; thrilling from Rimini,
> A tender voice makes all the trumpets mute.
> I cannot go from her: may not return.
> O God! what is Thy will upon me? Ah!

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[5] Robert Metcalf Smith, op. cit., p. 498.

One path there is, a straight path to the dark.
There in the ground, I can betray no more,
And there for ever am I pure and cold.
The Means! No dagger blow, nor violence shown
Upon my body to distress her eyes,
Under some potion gently will I die;
And they that find me dead shall lay me down
Beautiful as a sleeper at her feet.[6]

When Paolo enters the apothecary's shop to buy the poison, it happens that Giovanni is there also. Giovanni has just purchased a drug that will win him Francesca's love for a few days at least. When he hears Paolo's voice, he hides. He is elated to hear of Paolo's intention to end his life.

But Paolo decides that he must see Francesca once more. It is now nearly dawn, and Francesca, unable to sleep is reading in the arbour of the castle gardens. The story is that of Launcelot and Guenevere whose experiences resemble those of Paolo and herself. After a while Francesca permits Paolo to kiss her.

The next day Giovanni returns and is very much surprised that Paolo is still alive. Filled with jealous rage, Giovanni determines to kill him. But first he wants to secure definite proof of Paolo's guilt. He tells Francesca that he must go away to the battle again, but she, depressed by a sense of coming disaster, begs him not to leave her. He goes, however, in spite of her pleas, leaving her with Lucrezia. Lucrezia, charmed by her innocence and beauty, is sorry that she warned Giovanni concerning his wife's lover, and she decides to find Giovanni and prevent the working out of his plans.

Again alone Francesca struggles in vain against her desire to talk with Paolo who appears outside her window. She admits him for "one moment"

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[6] Ibid., p. 512.

only. Then follows a beautiful scene in which Paolo says:

> I am by music led into this room,
> And beckoned sweetly; all the breezes die
> Round me, and in immortal ecstasy
> Toward thee I move: now am I free and gay--
> . . . . . .
> I'll struggle now no more. . . . .
> You only in this universe I want,
> . . . . . .
> Remember how when first we met we stood
> Stung with immortal recollections,
> O face immured beside a fairy sea,
> That leaned down at dead midnight to be kissed!
> O beauty folded up in forests old!
> Thou wast the lovely quest of Arthur's knights.[7]

Then Francesca confesses her love for him, and begs for death that their two souls may soar away together. They leave the room, and Lucrezia enters anxiously seeking the pair. As she turns to leave the room again she meets Giovanni with blood-stained hands. Lucrezia knows at once what has occurred. Then in nervous frenzy Giovanni calls in all the servants to go into the next room and carry out on one bier the two who are lying there.

The love of Paolo and Francesca is portrayed as a beautiful, ideal love. She is very lovely in appearance "As though new risen with the bloom of dreams."[8] Paolo knows that a moment will arrive when no matter how he has steeled himself for resistance "Our souls will flash together in one flame."[9] To both of them death together is preferable to life apart.

> For what ecstasy
> Together to be blown about the globe!
> What rapture in perpetual fire to burn

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[7] Ibid., pp. 532-3.

[8] Ibid., p. 504.

[9] Ibid., p. 512.

Together! --where we are is endless fire.
There centuries shall in a moment pass,
And all the cycles in one hour elapse!
Still, still together, even when faints Thy Sun,
And past our souls Thy stars like ashes fall,
How wilt Thou punish us who cannot part?[10]

The arbour scene in the dawn amid the roses is a lovely one to which the reading of the old love story adds still more romantic color.[11]

The play has several evidences of belief in superstition. One is Giovanni's procuring of the potion which will make Francesca love him for "some days".[12] A minor character buys syrup at the same place which she is to administer to her lover every seven days to keep him infatuated.[13] Francesca is afraid of ghosts. She tells her husband why she wants him to stay at home.

. . . . I fear the night
And yon great chamber the resort of spirits.
I see men hunted on the air by hounds . . . .
I fear the dead who smile.[14]

Another example of superstition, which has already been mentioned, is Giovanni's acceptance of Angela's vision as a portent of coming misfortune. Blind Angela says after the death of the lovers, "Two lately dead rushed past me in the air."[15]

The language of the play is nearly all blank verse. "The exquisite and passionate music of its lines has not been surpassed by any modern English poet writing for the theater."[16]

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[10] Ibid., p. 534.

[11] Ibid., pp. 520-23.

[12] Ibid., p. 513.

[13] Loc. cit.

[14] Ibid., p. 527.

[15] Ibid., p. 538.

[16] Ibid., p. 483.

The main events of the story, the medieval belief in spirits and in the efficacy of love potions, and the feudal castle with its lord and retainers all help to create the atmosphere of a day long past.

The setting for Herod is in the great palace at Jerusalem in the days when Rome was the strongest governing power in the world.

Herod, King of the Jews, is very much in love with the queen, Mariamne. She loves her brother, Aristobulus, who is the High Priest of Judea and is adored by the people. The popularity of Aristobulus endangers Herod's absolute power; so his councillors persuade him to give a secret order that the High Priest be put to death. Mariamne discovers after her brother's death that Herod issued the command to take his life, and she coldly repulses all his amorous advances, Herod's mother and sister, who hate Mariamne, convince Herod that his wife has attempted to poison him. Then Herod gives directions for her death; but when a moment later messengers from Caesar tell him that he has been given an important political position in the Empire, he rescinds the order, but she is already dead. And he, not knowing that she is gone, rushes out to tell her the glad news of his rise to greater power. All during the last act his physican and attendants try to keep the truth from him because his reason is tottering. At last they can postpone the revelation no longer for Herod is wild with longing to see the queen, and commands that she come to him. When he sees her cold, embalmed body, he is stricken with catalepsy and he stands rigid beside Mariamne as the curtain falls.

One of the interesting romantic devices which this play uses is the prophecy often repeated by Herod--

And it was foretold of me
That I should slay the thing that most I loved
Fate is upon me with the hour, ... [17]

All the riches and powers of the kingly domain are to be used lavishly in beautifying the tomb of Mariamne's brother.

. . . . his tomb
Shall with its golden glory bear strange sails
. . . . There
Aloe and cinnamon and cassia balm
Shall breathe, and mighty poets will I charge
To make their verse in funeral thunders roll
Or wail as women or wind out of the sea.[18]

In the early scenes of the play Herod is portrayed as a great hero, a mighty conqueror behind whom cities crashed, and who wooed Mariamne like wind, and fire, and lighting.[19] He has become fabulously rich with gold, pearls, emeralds, ivory, and marble from barbaric kings and Indian emperors.[20] Herod pictures imaginatively his vision for further glories.

I heard an angel crying from the sun . . . .
And here I'll build the wonder of the world.[21]

Mariamne is of such wondrous beauty that her charm forces the truth concerning her brother's death, from the lips of the unwilling Sohemus.[22] Herod says that she ought to die suddenly because such beauty should vanish instantly like the lightning.[23]

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[17] Stephen Phillips, Herod (New York: John Lane, 1901), p. 93.

[18] Ibid., p. 47.

[19] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

[20] Ibid., p. 108.

[21] Ibid., p. 109.

[22] Ibid., p. 52.

[23] Ibid., p. 87.

CHAPTER X

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

William Butler Yeats is known primarily as a poet, but he is also a playwright and essayist of great importance.[1] In the field of drama he has chosen his themes from Irish legend or history, for he is interested in plays that are remote, spiritual, and ideal. "All his plays are a quest for Beauty . . . . and have the quality of dream rather than reality of everyday."[2]

> In his wandering with the wind among the reeds or by shadowy waters he is one of the music makers or dreamers of dreams . . . . while in his mysticism, his symbolism, and the general quality of his imagination he invites comparison with Maeterlinck. In the midst of one of the greatest political problems of the age, he has held firmly to the creation of beauty. With a temperament so subjective he is naturally more lyrical than dramatic; but his plays are not only fanciful and romantic but characterized by much clever craftsmanship.[3]

Nicoll, too, comments on their preeminent mysticism and their dreamy beauty. They are, she believes, the finest poetic plays of recent time.[4] One of their outstanding characteristics is the author's convincing treatment of the supernatural.

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[1] Carl Van Doren, American and British Literature Since 1890 (New York: The Century Company, 1925), p. 296.

[2] Andrew E. Malone, The Irish Drama (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 131.

[3] Benjamin Brawley, A Short History of the English Drama (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), p. 232.

[4] Allardyce Nicoll, British Drama (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1925), p. 415.

> Yeats, ... when he tells us that he has walked with the Queen of the Fairies, knows that he has walked with her . . . . when he speaks to us of the devil merchants who buy the souls of hungry men and women, he knows that the Spirit of Evil still haunts the wastes and cities of the world.[5]

His passionate love of, and belief in, the spirits of nature is evident throughout his work. The following plays were chosen for study as representative of his drama: The Countess Cathleen, The Land of Heart's Desire, and The Hour Glass. Poetic language characterizes all the plays; and the presence of unseen spirits, devils, angels, and fairies gives them an atmosphere of unreality. Dreams and visions provide a means for the occurrence of improbable, fantastic events. Because folk-lore is the basis for The Countess Cathleen and The Land of Heart's Desire, their events occur long ago. Unselfish love, which is willing to sacrifice even eternal life for her people, is a strong element in The Countess Cathleen. Although poverty and unpleasant incidents in family life are portrayed in all the plays in a very realistic way, the real is subordinate to the romantic spirit created by the imaginative details and literary beauty of the lines.

The Countess Cathleen has come to be regarded as the most beautiful poetic drama of modern times.[6] Yeats took the story from a newspaper where it was given as an Irish legend, but he discovered that it was a translation from a French tale.[7] The scene is laid in Ireland in "old times".

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[5] Shaw Desmond, "Dunsany, Yeats, and Shaw: trinity of magic". Bookman LVIII (November, 1923), p. 264.

[6] Allardyce Nicoll, op. cit., p. 411.

[7] William Butler Yeats, Plays and Controversies (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 285.

digs where the bird has been scratching there one will find a crock of gold. Another says "Dream of gold for three nights running and there's always gold.[10] One Character tells Cathleen a story of a leafy place in the woods.

> A man, they say,
> Loved Maeve the Queen of all the invisible host,
> And died of his love nine centuries ago,
> And now, when the moon's riding at the full,
> She leaves her dancers lonely and lies there
> Upon that level place, and for three days
> Stretches and sighs and wets her long pale cheeks.[11]

It is one character's expression of welcome to the spirits of the wood which calls forth the demon merchants.[12] A porter relates how he heard two owls whisper with human voices.[13] An angelical being appears to warn Aleel, Cathleen's lover, of the danger that threatens her.[14] Another time Aleel sees a vision of the "Archangels rolling Satan's empty skull over the mountain-tops."[15]

The imaginative picturing as well as the poetry of the following lines has a sort of horrible fascination for the reader.

> How can a heap of crowns pay for a soul? . . . .
> Some sell because the money gleams, and some
> Because they are in terror of the grave,

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[10] Ibid., p. 232.

[11] Ibid., p. 241.

[12] Ibid., p. 243.

[13] Ibid., p. 261.

[14] Ibid., p. 252.

[15] Ibid., p. 276.

And some because their neighbors sold before,
And some because there is a kind of joy,
In ceasing all resistance, in at last
Opening one's arms to the eternal flames,
In casting all sails out upon the wind;
To this--full of the gaiety of the lost--[16]

The Land of Heart's Desire deals with the fairy material which Yeats likes so well to bring back from the Celtic past.[17]

Mary Bruin and her husband live in the same house with the latter's parents, Maurteen and Bridget Bruin. Mary is young and pretty and she takes little interest in the commonplace tasks of the household, but loves to dwel in imagination among the story-book creatures of whom she reads. Her mother in-law thinks her lazy and foolish and has no sympathy with Mary's dreams of

How a Princess Edane,
A daughter of a king of Ireland, heard
A voice singing on a May Eve like this,
And followed half awake and half asleep,
Until she came into the Land of Faery,
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue.
And she is still there, busied with a dance
Deep in the dewy shadow of a wood,
Or where stars walk upon a mountain-top.[18]

The father does not blame Mary for her fancies; for he says that she is lonesome when her husband is away in the fields, and that perhaps Bridget sharp tongue has driven her to hide among dreams.

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[16] Ibid., p. 259.

[17] Carl Van Doren, op. cit., p. 288.

[18] William Butler Yeats, op. cit., p. 304.

It is May Eve, and the peasants believe that on that night the supernatural creatures seek to gain power in the people's homes. Mary is not afraid of the spirits, for she has dwelt among them in fancy. She takes a bough of quicken wood and hangs it on a nail on the doorpost, but immediately a child in fairy-green comes out of the forest and takes it away. The family all think that Mary has dreamed that she saw the child. But a little later an arm beckons from around the door post and Mary takes it a cup of milk. Then, Bridget fears that Mary has brought evil on them all because she has given milk away to the supernatural beings of the wood. And she repeats the old prophetic warning "Woe to the house that gives, for they have power upon it for a year."[19] Mary declares she does not care if she has given the house into the power of fairies. But when she hears the voice of a fairy child singing, she begins to feel that she has said some rather wicked things. Fascinated, she listens to the song.

> The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
> The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
> And the lonely of heart is withered away.
> While the faeries dance in a place apart,
> Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
> Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;
> For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing
> Of a land where even the old are fair,
> And even the wise are merry of tongue;
> But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
> 'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung
> The lonely of heart is withered away!'[20]

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[19] Ibid., p. 308.

[20] Ibid., pp. 313-14.

The father brings the singer into the room, and the child tells them that there is one here who must go away. After the little fairy has eaten bread and honey, she rises and begins to dance. It seems to Mary that she can hear other dancing feet and the music of invisible pipes. The child notices how fond Mary is of her husband, and tells her that she can give her something even better. She can let her ride upon the winds. But Mary is afraid. The priest tells her that she will be safe if she prays to the saints. Then the child puts her arms about Mary promising that she may accompany her to the beautiful Land of Heart's Desire where a merry multitude plays. All the members of the family beg Mary to stay, and she is reluctant to leave, but something irresistible draws her to the child and to the land of dancing and joy where she may dwell among spirits forever. She dies. And still there is heard the sound of dancing feet and of voices singing "The wind blows out of the gates of the day."

This play, like The Countess Cathleen, has evidences of belief in evil spirits and in the mystery that surrounds their deeds. The priest says that at the end of time God shall fight with these spirits a great battle, and they will fall, "slain by everlasting peace".[21] It is from the lips of the priest that all the mystic speeches of this play come. His words seem weighted with authority as if he has received the message direct from God. He says that God has permitted power to the evil spirits for some mysterious end,[22] and that God binds us to Himself and to the hearth by love alone.[23]

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[21] Ibid., p. 306.

[22] Loc. cit.

[23] Ibid., p. 312.

The Hour Glass was first produced in prose, but later Yeats revised it in a mixed prose and verse form.

> In The Hour Glass . . . . Mr. Yeats has written the greatest morality play of the contemporary theatre. . . . . The characters are those of the mediaeval morality; the Wise Man symbolising Reason; the Fool, Instinct; and the Pupils those who will accept what they are told.[24]

The Wise Man has denied the existence of any spirit or being which cannot be seen. One day an angel, in a dress the color of embers, and carrying a blossoming apple bough in his hand and with a gilded halo about his head, appears to him.[25] "You will die within the hour," the angel tells him. "You will die when the last grains have fallen in this glass."[26] The angel tells him also that no souls have passed over the threshold of heaven since he came into this country. Now he himself cannot go to heaven because he has denied its existence; he must go to hell. In terror the Wise Man pleads for time to mend his ways, but the angel grants him only until the hour's end. If by that time he can find someone who believes, his sentence shall be changed, and he may come to heaven after the years of purgatory. With nervous haste, the Wise Man questions his pupils, his wife, and his children, but they tell him that he has taught them not to believe. Finally when he is ready to give up in despair, he discovers that Teigue, the Fool, is a believer, for Teigue tells of a time when an angel talked to him.[27] The wise Man rejoices that he is saved, but his hour is up and he dies. The Fool calls all the boys in, and tells them what has occurred.

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[24] Andrew E. Malone, op. cit., p. 137.

[25] Thomas H. Dickinson, Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), p. 212.

[26] Ibid., p. 213.

[27]

> He asked for a sign that you might be saved. . . . . Look what has come from his mouth . . . a little winged thing . . . a little shining thing. It has gone to the door. The angel appears in the doorway, stretches out her hands and closes them again. The Angel has taken it in her hands . . . she will open her hands in the Garden of Paradise.[28]

This request for and the receiving of a message direct from God is another example of mysticism in Yeats.

A summary of the results of this part of the study shows several romantic elements. Superstition is dominant in The Countess Cathleen and The Land of Heart's Desire. There is a strong supernatural element in all the plays, and angels, fairies, and demons appear to the characters. Poetry of great lyrical beauty forms the medium of expression in The Countess Cathleen and in The Land of Heart's Desire. Unselfish love is a moving force in The Countess Cathleen. Dreams and visions are important in all the plays. Mysticism is apparent in the attempts of the characters to understand the will of the Infinite. Thus, Yeats may be classed with the modern dramatists whose work is highly romantic.

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[28] Thomas H. Dickinson, loc. cit.

CHAPTER XI

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

Gabriele D'Annunzio is considered by some as the greatest force in modern Italian literature.[1] "His imagination was perfervid, his love of beauty profound."[2] He is less important as a dramatist than as a poet and novelist; he is above all an artist dealing with words as a medium.[3] His poetry possesses luxuriant imagery and provides an outlet for his passionate expression of romanticism.[4]

The Dream of an Autumn Sunset, La Gioconda, The Daughter of Joric, and Francesca da Rimini will be discussed in this chapter as representative of D'Annunzio's use of certain elements of romanticism. He is interested in the general aesthetic effect of the dialogue; so he uses either poetry or an ornate prose form. The chief characters seem merely unreal persons in a dream world, and they are made more unreal by the far off setting in which they appear. Unselfish, idealized love is found in two of the plays. Witches and a fairy are supernatural personages who appear. And superstition is a major quality in the larger part of D'Annunzio's work.

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[1] Barrett H. Clark, A Study of the Modern Drama (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925), p. 186.

[2] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 547.

[3] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Representative Continental Dramas (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1924), p. 267.

[4] Loc. cit.

In The Dream of an Autumn Sunset, the doge's wife, Gradeniga, having slain her husband by sorcery in order that she can marry her lover, finds that he is infatuated with a courtesan; so she kills her rival by the same magic art that she had used against the doge. But she is greatly disappointed in the final result of her sorcery for the yacht on which the harlot, Pantea, and Gradeniga's lover are sailing is destroyed by fire.

The setting of this play is very elaborately described. It is the domain of a Venetian patrician, whose palace is a wonderful mass of marble with towers, columns, and a marvelous aereal stairway crowned by a loggia.

> The purples and the autumn crocuses shine strangely resplendent under the oblique rays of the setting sun; the shadows are tawny as in a coffer where gold is heaped. Vast clouds, motionless, and radiant, masses of amber hang over the porticos of the lime trees, over the cupolas of pine, over the obelisks of cypress.[5]

The central character of this play is the doge's widow, Gradeniga, who is an unreal witch-like person. She seems a sort of garrulous, hysterical shadow. D'Annunzio does not portray human beings, for he stays in his own world apart from everyday life.[6]

An illustration of his profuse use of words with much of repetition, imagery, and rhythm as in poetry may be found in one of Gradeniga's speeches. It covers more than two pages of the printed play. In this she expresses her fancies on how Pantea, the courtesan, charms her lover; she recalls how she

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[5] Gabriele D'Annunzio, The Dream of an Autumn Sunset, Poet Lore XV (January, 1904), pp. 6-7.

[6] Montrose J. Moses, op. cit., p. 268.

ended her husband's life; and she addresses her absent lover saying how he languished under the spell of her beauty before he ever met Pantea.[7]

In order to end Pantea's life Gradeniga calls in the witch to work her incantations. The witch makes a wax figure to represent Pantea. All that it really has of Pantea's real self is some of her hair stolen by one of Gradeniga's spies. The witch holds a magic book from which she reads imprecations.[8] Then into the wax figure Gradeniga plunges a dagger and innumerable pins. The audience never sees the real Pantea. When the ship catches fire and burns all its passengers, Gradeniga's and her maids' excited cries tell the audience what is happening.

The characters of this play are very superstitious. One tells of Pantea's finding a sleeping siren in a sea cave under the palace of Naples.[9] All of them believe in the power of witches and in sorcery.

The entire play leaves the impression of poetry with the hearer. The following passage in a speech by Gradeniga, is a typical one.

> To you, to you my most precious jewels. I will put a coronet of pearls upon your bleeding forehead. I want to keep you with me. I want you never again to leave my side. You shall always be my delight. Your life from today shall flow like a river.[10]

Gioconda exemplifies the kind of theme that forms the basis for nearly every novel, poem, and drama D'Annunzio ever wrote: it is a portrayal

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[7] Ibid., pp. 9-11.

[8] Ibid., pp. 19-24.

[9] Ibid., p. 18.

[10] Ibid., p. 23.

of the artist at odds with the practical world. Lucio believes that he was born to make statues. Their beauty is all that concerns him. He has a charming wife, Silvia; but he finds inspiration for his work in the person of the lovely model, Gioconda, whose fairness is left to the spectator's imagination, as she always appears veiled. Lucio, the sculptor, torn between duty and desire attempts suicide, but he is nursed back to health by his wife, while his model keeps the clay of his unfinished work wet. The wife becomes jealous of Gioconda's presence in the studio and lies to her saying that Lucio wishes her to go away. This makes Gioconda very angry, and she attempts to destroy the statue. Silvia tries to save it, and she does so but her beautiful hands are crushed. But Lucio does not appreciate her sacrifice, and she is left alone with her child.

This play is written mostly in prose, but it has much repetition of words and sounds and imaginative picturing of scenes and experiences. The little girl who is half beggar and half fairy tells Silvia a story in poetry.[11] It is a tale of her seven sisters and herself. She says the sirens of the bay called her to be their mate.[12] Silvia speaks of the child as "a seer, who has the gift of song; a creature of dream and truth who seems a spirit of the sea."[13]

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[11] Thomas H. Dickinson, Chief Contemporary Dramatists, Second Series, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), p. 599.

[12] Ibid., p. 603.

[13] Loc. cit.

Dalbo gives Silvia some "amulets against every evil, talismans for happiness."[14] He tells her that a monk at the place where he secured them told of another monk who took refuge in a vault and found a mummy there. The mummy told him the story of her life, which had been very happy. When the cenobite wished to convert her the mummy preferred to return to her embalmings. But she gave him the amulets.[15]

Silvia's love for her husband is a very unselfish idealized one. She says of it, "It is stronger than death; it can work miracles; it shall give you all that you ask."[16] Her love is so great that she sacrifices her beautiful hands to save the statue which he has cherished as his masterpiece.[17]

In his Francesca da Rimini, D'Annunzio richly elaborates the famous episode from the fifth canto of Dante's Inferno. His play, like Phillips' Paolo and Francesca, is written in blank verse, but he varies it so much to suit the moods of his characters that it is almost free verse.

Francesca, trapped into a marriage of political convenience with the ugly Gianciotto, falls in love with his brother Paolo, who comes to take her to Rimini. There Paolo immediately takes part in a battle while Francesca anxiously awaits his return. She allows arrows to come in through the open portcullis while she prays for Paolo. Because he is uninjured after the fight she accepts that fact as an omen that God has freed him from guilt.

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[14] Ibid., p. 581.

[15] Loc. cit.

[16] Ibid., p. 582.

[17] Ibid., p. 598.

Their reading of the story of Launcelot prompts them to yield to their desire. It is Paolo's younger brother who is jealous because Francesca has repulsed him who betrays the lovers to Gianciotto. He then surprises the guilty pair and kills them both.

The atmosphere of this play is thirteenth century Italy--one of the bloodiest, darkest, and at the same time one of the most beauty-loving ages of all time.[18] The beautifully furnished castles, the terrifying battle scenes, and the superstition that influences the character's lives all add to the spirit of the Italy of long ago.

The scene in which Francesca bids farewell to her sister is full of beautiful sentiment. And Samaritana's speech in which she asks Francesca to stay illustrates one variety of the poetry of the play.

> O, sister, sister,
> Listen to me: stay with me still!
> O stay
> With me! we were born here,
> Do not forsake me, do not go away,
> Let me still keep my bed
> Beside your bed, and let me still at night
> Feel you beside me.[19]

Paolo has his first sight of Francesca as she stands in the midst of the arbutuses. She picks a large red rose and gives it to him. Their love awakens immediately, and remains a constant, impelling force that causes each to fairly worship the other.

The events of The Daughter of Jorio occur about the sixteenth century. The atmosphere of the play is very strange, for the lives of all the characters

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[18] Archibald Henderson, "The Rimini story of modern drama". The Arena XXXIX (February, 1908), 144-5.

[19] S. Marion Tucker, Modern Continental Plays (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929), p. 272.

and all the incidents are dominated by superstition. In fact, even the people's religious beliefs are inseparably bound up with superstition. The first scene shows a waxen cross at one side of the door jamb to ward off evil spirits.[20] The rites held over the body of the murdered Lazaro are a queer mixture of religious ceremony and pagan customs. Lazaro lies on the floor his head resting on a bundle of grape-vine twigs; the wailers, kneeling, surround the body, one of them intoning the lamentation, the others answering. At times they bow toward one another bending till they bring their foreheads together. All during the long ceremony there are expressions of belief in sorcery and witches along with the prayers to Mary and to God.[21]

Aligi has confessed that he murdered his father; but when Mila comes saying that it was she who killed Lazaro, and that Aligi really does not know what happened because he was under the spell of her sorcery, the people are easily convinced that she is speaking the truth. Even Aligi believes her. And they take Mila away to be burned at the stake.[22]

The entire play is in poetry. The following lines spoken by Ornella after the sacred bread had fallen to the floor illustrate the short line stanza used in the incantations.

San Sisto! San Sisto!
O! hear ye, and list, oh!
Black death, evil sprite,
By day, by night,

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[20] Montrose J. Moses, editor, Representative Continental Drama, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1924), p. 275.

[21] Ibid., pp. 306-317.

[22] Ibid., pp. 314-17.

Chase from our walls!
Drive from our souls!
Oh! crumble and tear
The evil eye's snare,
As the sign of the cross I make![23]

The next passage shows the longer line which is used in most of the play. Aligi's mother is speaking of the security of their home.

No evil spirit can enter our doorway,
Your sisters have drawn the scarlet scarf across it.[24]

Mila and Aligi are truly romantic figures, one critic believes.[25] He gives as an example of their unusual character the fact of their platonic life together in the mountains. Mila possesses a sort of strange fascination which is partly due to her physical attractiveness, for she charms Aligi to the extent that he is willing to overlook her questionable reputation, to disregard his mother's wishes, to abandon his bride, and finally to kill his own father to save Mila from further disgrace. In spite of the strong feeling of aversion manifested by the characters of the play against Mila, the reader cannot help feeling that she was sincere in her desire to live a clean life henceforth and that she loved Aligi unselfishly and devotedly, for she was willing to die to save him.

A summary of the romantic elements found in D'Annunzio's plays shows that he used only a few, but used them repeatedly. The language of all his plays is either poetry or poetic prose with long rhetorical passages, repetition, and imagery. Superstition is highly important in The Dream of an Autumn Sunset, in The Daughter of Jorio and in Francesca da Rimini and for that

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[23] Ibid., p. 280.

[24] Ibid., p. 278.

[25] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, op. cit., p. 555.

reason the witch appears as a character in all of them. Romantic love is found in Gioconda and The Daughter of Jorio. The fairy-beggar child who talks to the sirens is a minor character of Gioconda. The chief characters in Francesca da Rimini are pictured as heroic persons. The Dream of an Autumn Sunset and The Daughter of Jorio and Francesca da Rimini have their settings in the Italy of hundreds of years ago. Many of D'Annunzio's characters appear to be different from the people in the real world. They are mere dream creatures, for he is not interested in portraying human beings. He cares only to create an impression of beauty, and the romantic qualities which he exhibits may be traced directly to his artistic temperament.

CHAPTER XII

EUGENE O'NEILL

Eugene O'Neill has been generally accepted and acclaimed as a realistic writer, but the more discriminating among the critics have come to recognize the fact that his work is not wholly realistic. Clayton Hamilton says:

> You will notice that his method is essentially romantic. Much of his work has a realistic look, because of his habit of adopting a great many details from actuality; but he reasons from the general to the particular, and always there is an abstract idea at the centre of his concept. He is sometimes mistaken for a realist because of the minor fact that his characters talk like those of a realistic author who has kept his ears open; but none of his work is photographic in its method.[1]

> He gives you the impression that he is faithfully repeating the speech of actual people that he has observed; yet there is an emotional pulsation in his style that is not present in the daily speech of the denizens of water-front saloons.[2]

O'Neill says he has set most store by himself as a bit of a poet who has labored with the spoken word to evolve original rhythms of beauty where beauty apparently does not exist.[3]

"He will be finally estimated," one critic believes, "not by his stage devices . . . . but by his profound imaginative interpretation of aspiring humanity struggling upward."[4]

Some of O'Neill's plays which are included in this discussion are

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[1] Clayton Hamilton, Conversations on Contemporary Drama (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 215.

[2] Ibid., p. 217.

[3] Arthur Hobson Quinn, "Eugene O'Neill poet and mystic". Scribners LXXX (October, 1926), 368.

[4] Ibid., p. 369.

necessarily treated very briefly because they contain relatively few of the elements of romanticism. The Emperor Jones, The Fountain and Marco Millions are representative of O'Neill's use of these elements.

O'Neill makes use of several romantic qualities in these plays. He goes to the past for the setting of one. The events of another happen amid strangely unreal scenes. His language at certain times is rhythmical and full of imagery so that it produces the effect of poetry. Superstition is important in all the plays. Inner experiences of the characters are sometimes quite imaginatively conceived and illustrated by unusual devices. His hero in one play is endowed with certain characteristics that make him almost a superman. The magic of a crystal discloses events of thousands of miles away. Sentiment is an important factor in two plays. Moonlight, knights, kings, princesses, fabulous wealth, a guitar and a gondola help to make a vivid, romantic atmosphere.

The action of The Emperor Jones takes place on an island in the West Indies. Brutus Jones, a big stalwart negro has been making a great deal of money as emperor of the island, but his people finally revolt and he flees for his life. During most of the play he is running about in the dark, wild forest and his fears are imaginatively pictured. Superstition is such a dominant element in his mind that the general impression given the reader is one of strangeness and unreality. The forest itself is described as weird in appearance. O'Neill says the road where Jones was at eleven o'clock glimmers ghastly and unreal in the moonlight.

> It is as if the forest had stood aside momentarily to let the road pass through and accomplish its veiled purpose. This done, the forest will fold in upon itself again and the road will be no more.[5]

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[5] Eugene O'Neill, The Emperor Jones (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 177.

This play is expressionistic in its technique of dramatizing Jones' fears and his memories of long past experiences. The beat of the tom-toms that he can hear throughout his flight is used to heighten excitement and "to suggest the throbbing in crescendo of the frightened hero's pulse."[6]

> While his back is turned, the Little Formless Fears creep out from the deeper blackness of the forest. They are black, shapeless, only their glittering little eyes can be seen. If they have any describable form at all it is that of a grubworm about the size of a creeping child. They move noiselessly, but with deliberate, painful effort, striving to raise themselves on end, failing and sinking prone again.[7]

When a tiny gale of low mocking laughter comes from the creatures on the ground in front of him Jones gives a yell of terror, and then shoots his gun. The formless creatures scurry back into the forest. A little later the form of the man he had murdered appears before him and Jones fires to "kill him again."[8]

The savages in Jones domain have long believed that their emperor bears a charmed life because they had seen him once miraculously escape death, and had heard him say that only a silver bullet could kill him.[9] So during the revolt the savages spend all night beating the tom-tom and casting spells while their leader makes a bullet out of money. In all his wandering Jones has merely gone in circles around the place where the incantations are being uttered, and when in the morning he falls, shot by the silver bullet, the savages believe that his charm has been broken by their spells.[10]

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[6] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 386.

[7] Eugene O'Neill, op. cit., p. 171.

[8] Ibid., p. 175.

[9] Ibid., pp. 155-6.

[10] Ibid., p. 196.

In his play The Fountain, O'Neill takes the historical character, Ponce de Leon, and imaginatively enlarges upon his experiences.* The play is set down as a romance and its general tone is poetic.[11] Ponce de Leon, according to O'Neill's account leaves Spain because his affair with a woman there calls down her husband's vengeance upon him. He goes with Columbus to the New World where he becomes a governor. Because he is again in love, Ponce de Leon is seized with the dream of youth, and he seeks for the fountain whose rumor has been spread abroad. In the wilds of Florida, he is betrayed and attacked by Indians. As he lies dying, the girl he has lately loved comes to him accompanied by his nephew. In the young Ponce de Leon she finds the man of her dreams. "The dying man finds his youth in the eternal fountain of the soul."[12]

Part of the language of this play is well fitted to sustaining the romantic mood. The last scene and many of Ponce de Leon's lines are beautiful and exalted.[13]

In Marco Millions, O'Neill goes back to the thirteenth century for his setting. But he produces a queer mixture of that time and the present, for a great deal of the conversation is decidedly modern. He allows his imagination free rein in elaborating on the historical facts concerning the

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[11] Stark Young, "The new O'Neill play." New Republic XLV (December 30, 1925), 160.

[12] Loc. cit.

[13] Ibid., p. 160.

* The text of this play was not available to the writer; so that it was studied only through secondary sources.

experiences of Marco Polo. He paints him as a great hero who acquires extensive political power in the East as well as enormous wealth.[14] Marco is described by the princess as doing well everything that he sets out to do, always succeeding where others fail, and achieving eminence through will-power.[15] In her eyes he is a strange, mysterious, dream-knight from the exotic west.[16] Marco is also a great deal of a braggart. He says as he bids the Chinese goodbye that they should write to him at Venice--"they all know me there."[17] He performs some very unusual services when he escorts the Chinese princess to Persia. "You have been a prodigy of heroic accomplishment,"[18] she tells him. He rescues her from drowning when she is swept overboard by a typhoon; he kills the pirates who attack them; and he tenderly nurses her while she is ill with fever.

At one time in his travels Marco meets a group of natives carrying a coffin in which lies the beautiful embalmed body of a princess. The travelers look at her, and something very strange happens. It grows very dark. "An unearthly glow like a halo lights up the face of the dead girl. From the branches of a tree comes a sound of sweet, sad music as if the leaves were tiny harps strummed by the wind."[19] The dead girl speaks to them and entrusts them with a message to take to Venice.

The romantic mood of this play is enhanced by the descriptions and display of vast amounts of money and jewels.[20] When the Polos return to

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[14] Eugene O'Neill, Marco Millions (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), pp. 97-100.

[15] Ibid., p. 90.

[16] Ibid., p. 92.

[17] Ibid., p. 124.

[18] Ibid., p. 132.

[19] Ibid., p. 22.

[20] Ibid., pp. 70, 143.

Venice they attend a banquet where they toss gold about freely, and empty a perfect stream of precious stones from their sleeves.[21] The emperor in China sees this scene through his magic crystal.

Sentiment is present in this play in connection with Marco's and Donata's love affair.[22] She waits for him for about twenty years to return from China. One scene where they are alone together is very pretty. It is moonlight, a gondola is visible, and a guitar plays softly.[23]

The language of this play is quite poetical at times. Many of the Chinese characters' speeches have that quality.

> Come, Little Flower. You have been fading here. See how pale you have grown! Your eyes are listless! Your lips droop even in smiling! But life at the Court of Persia is gay. There will be feasts, celebrations, diverting pleasures. You will be their Queen of Beauty.[24]

> I shall know the long sorrow of an exile
> As I sail over the green water and the blue water
> Alone under a strange sky amid alien flowers and faces.
> My eyes shall be ever red with weeping, my heart bleeding,
> While I long for the land of my birth and my childhood
> Remembering with love the love of my people.[25]

The whole final scene gives the impression of a poem. It portrays the elaborate rites of the funeral service for the Queen of Persia. Kublai Khan gives questions concerning death and the chorus answers. Then Kublai addresses the little queen as if she were alive, saying:

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[21] Ibid., p. 165.

[22] Ibid., p. 29.

[23] Ibid., p. 31.

[24] Ibid., p. 86.

[25] Ibid., p. 121.

So, little Kukachin--so, Little Flower--you have come back--they could not keep you--you were too homesick--you wanted to return--to gladden my last days--

[He no longer tries to control his grief. He sobs like a simple old man, bending and kissing his granddaughter on the forehead--with heart-breaking playfulness.]

I bid you welcome home, Little Flower! I bid you welcome home!

[He weeps, his tears falling on her calm white face.][26]

With this as a closing scene, the final effect of the play is one of pathos and beauty.

A summary of the results of this part of the study shows a surprising array of romantic elements in O'Neill's plays--surprising because he is so generally regarded as a realistic writer. Marco's Millions and The Fountain are based on historical fact but O'Neill makes no pretense of being historically accurate. He lets his imagination add all sorts of romantic details. Both Ponce de Leon and Marco Polo are described as heroic adventurers. Marco is almost a superman in his speedy rise to political power, to wealth, and to popularity, and in his feats of valor. Sentiment appears in all the plays. Vast amounts of gold and precious stones, moonlight, a gondola, and sweet music help to sustain the romantic mood in Marco Millions. In The Emperor Jones the hero has visions of past deeds; his fears appear to him in bodily form, and the man he had murdered long before rises before him. In Marco Millions a dead queen speaks and laughs. Both Marco Millions and The Fountain have many poetical passages, for O'Neill makes even prose rhythmical and sometimes beautiful. Terror in Emperor Jones helps to create an atmosphere of unreality. The use of these elements by O'Neill shows that he is not wholly a realistic writer.

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[26] Ibid., p. 180.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the writer of this discussion has been to point out the romantic elements which are present in certain selected works of noted dramatists of recent times. The study has shown that there is much romanticism in modern drama.

Edmond Rostand has six highly romantic plays all of which are written in poetry. The events of all occur in the remote past. The characters are endowed with heroic qualities, and they have experiences that are very unusual, often unreal. Birds and animals serve as characters in one play. The plots are highly fanciful and have many improbable incidents. When Rostand bases his story on history he lets his imagination clothe the facts with romantic details. The atmosphere of romance is created through the skillful use of flowers, moonlight, nightingales, castles, pirate ships, balcony scenes, beautiful ladies, knights, troubadors, soldiers, phantoms, and visions. Idealized, unselfish love is exemplified in two plays. Idealism, mysticism, and the glorification of defeat are also important elements in his plays. Indeed, Rostand is a thoroughly romantic writer.

The larger part of all Maurice Maeterlinck's works is romantic in character. Eleven of his plays were studied, and it was discovered that they contain a great number of romantic elements. Two plays are in poetry while several of the others have prose which produces the effect of poetry through the use of rhythm, repetition, and highly figurative language. Legend forms the basis for two plays. All the events are far removed from present day experiences and scenes. The plots are highly imaginative, unreal and improbable; some incidents are impossible except in the lands of

wonder where Maeterlinck sometimes transports his characters by means of dreams. Many of the personages of the plays are mere types of human beings or are entirely imaginary creations. Like Rostand, Maeterlinck creates atmosphere through the use of a number of the beautiful attributes of romance. He is a master also in the creation of an atmosphere of terror, gloom, and tragedy by means of omens, superstition, storms, insanity, silence, darkness and vast unexplored castles. Sentiment and a beautiful, unselfish love are other elements which Maeterlinck uses in interesting variety.

Although Gerhart Hauptmann is known as the initiator of German Naturalism, and his naturalistic plays form an important part of his work, he has written twelve romantic plays of which five were analyzed in this study. They contain an interesting variety of the elements of romance. Poetry is the means of expression in three of them. The plots are extremely fanciful and unreal, sometimes improbable. Dreams and visions present the strange and marvelous. Legend and history as the basis for some of the plays place their events in the long ago. Superstition is an important element in Hauptmann's work, and fairies, elves and dwarfs are present as characters. Other characters are too exaggerated in certain traits to be real. Unselfish love is exalted and idealized. Mysticism has a prominent place in one of the plays. The quest for the ideal is pictured in two plays by means of symbolism. In the field of romanticism as in his other works, Hauptmann appears as a very versatile writer.

Hermann Sudermann's romantic works comprise about one fifth of his

total number of plays and are of relatively minor significance. But he uses several elements of romanticism. Both the plays studied have improbable incidents imaginatively portrayed. The chief characters are strange beings of a world far removed from the reader's experience. Medieval castles, customs, and superstitions and the presence of knights, princes, and dukes add to the romantic atmosphere. Idealism dominates the hero's life in each of the plays, and the power and blessedness of love as a guiding force is exalted in one. Sudermann's language is poetic in its general effect because of the word-choice, figures of speech, sentence inversion, and imaginative style.

August Strindberg is also best known for his naturalistic plays, but about half of his total number of dramas have some romantic characteristics. The four studied were found to contain superstition, mystery and sentiment. Strange, supernatural beings--witches; fairies; the Neck or river spirit; the Midwife, half human, half extranatural; the Newler as an apparition and the Mocker as merely a voice; evil spirits; the Christ-Child appear in the plays. Castles, princes, dukes, moonlight, roses, riches, and dreams create a beautiful atmosphere in one play. In another an unreal, mysterious, gloomy atmosphere is produced by the use of omens, shadows, darkness, movements of inanimate objects, and alternate fearful silence and terrifying sounds. Mystery and magic add to the general improbability and unreality of the plots. Characters seem unreal because of the fantasy, mystery, and superstition that surrounds their lives. Sentiment is an important factor in one play. Rhythm, alliteration, and sentence inversion and the use of melody and verse sustain the romantic mood.

Ibsen's romantic plays are less important than his realistic ones. The former were written early in his career. Idealized, unselfish love appears in one play. When he treats either history or legend Ibsen lets his imagination elaborate on the facts. His characters are often heroic persons. They move in a world so different from and so far away from the present that they appear strangely unreal. Superstition influences their lives. One character follows an impossible ideal. Gnomes, trolls, brownies, the Boyg, a messenger of Death, and a phantom move about as characters. Inanimate objects sometimes speak. Poetry is used throughout two of the plays, and the others have prose which has much imaginative picturing. Thus Ibsen's works contain many evidences of his youthful romantic spirit.

J. M. Barrie uses several elements of romanticism in his plays. Magic, dreams, and the supernatural account for the occurrence of fantastic, impossible events. Fairies, ghosts, mermaids, and pirates are some of the unusual characters to be found. Mystery, magical music, and irresistible voices lure one character to an enchanted island where she never grows older. Sentiment, moonlight, nightingales, kings, princesses, and castles help to create the spirit of romance. Barrie's imagination is indeed a fertile and varied one.

All of Lord Dunsany's plays are romantic in character. His plots are highly imaginative and improbable. Mysticism and superstition are dominant qualities in his work. The characters are often merely types or abstractions. The scenes are laid in imaginary places on the edge of the world. Terror which is so imaginatively conceived that it creates a feeling of strangeness

and unreality often thrills the reader or spectator. The language of all the plays is poetical in effect because of repetition of words and sounds, imagery, and rhythm. Strange personifications, immensities, and moods of nature in harmony with those of man are further illustrations of this romantic dramatist's powers.

Stephen Phillips like Rostand is a romantic dramatist who is also a poet. The fact that his plays are in beautiful poetry is their principal romantic element. His chief characters are endowed with heroic qualities which make them the appropriate creatures for a story-book region or dream world. The events of both plays are highly colored by superstition. Both have their setting in the long ago. Idealized, worshipful love is a strong influence in these plays. Moonlight, visions, love potions, and roses help to create the desired atmosphere of romance. Splendor is added to the scene in one play by means of the imaginative picturing of untold wealth and conquest.

William Butler Yeats is another poet dramatist. His plays have many romantic qualities. He uses Irish folk-lore as a basis for many of his plays and for that reason superstition is an important factor. There is also a strong supernatural element in all the plays, and angels, fairies, and demons appear to the characters. Poetry of great lyrical beauty forms the medium of expression in two of the plays studied. Unselfish love is a moving force in one. Dreams and visions are important in all the plays. Mysticism is another prominent element in Yeats' work. In all his plays the real is made subordinate to the prevailing romantic spirit.

Gabriele D'Annunzio mixes realism and romanticism with strange effects in his plays. His chief object is to produce an impression of beauty; so he expresses himself either in poetry or in poetic prose with long rhetorical passages, repetition and imagery. Superstition is an important element in his plays. A fairy-beggar, witches, and sirens are among the creatures of the plays. Some of the scenes are laid in the Italy of hundreds of years ago. Romantic love dominates two of the plays. His characters are strange unreal beings for D'Annunzio, absorbed as he is in the creation of beauty, is not interested in portraying characters as individuals.

Eugene O'Neill is widely known only as a realistic dramatist, but critics are beginning to recognize the fact that his works have certain strongly romantic features. Although he writes in prose he produces many of the effects of poetry through the constant use of a rhythmic, rhetorical style, and imagery. Part of his scenes are laid in the remote past, and he reconstructs the characters and the events of that day with great imaginative freedom. He paints certain of his characters as famous heroes or idealized superhuman beings. The strange and the terrible help to create a vivid impression of unreality. The characters are often very superstitious, and they have strange experiences in which dead persons appear before them, who speak and laugh. A man's fears appear in visible form to frighten him still more. The riches of the orient, sentiment, beautiful princesses, castles, magic, moonlight and music which proceeds from the leaves of a tree are other romantic elements which are important. Truly O'Neill presents an interesting example of a writer who mixes romanticism with his realism.

In conclusion the author wishes to say again that this is not an exhaustive study of the romantic elements of modern drama. While it is based upon the representative romantic works of twelve famous dramatists, still it is only fair to admit that there are other dramatists whose works might also have been studied. An interesting field awaits the student who cares to survey the works of the remaining dramatists in search of romantic elements. Some of these whom the writer suggests as offering an interesting field for study are as follows: Lady Gregory, Bjornstjerne Bjornson, Josephine Preston Peabody, John Millington Synge, and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

This study has demonstrated that there is a great deal which is romantic in modern drama, even though it is predominantly realistic. Further study would almost certainly reenforce this conclusions by producing more and more examples of romantic plays.

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