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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Robert C. Harvey for the Master of
Science in Speech presented July 29, 1971.

Title: The Rhetoric of Sir Thomas More and Dietrich Bonhoeffer in
Original Work and Dramatic Portrayal.

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CHAPTER I

This is a critical study of the rhetoric of Sir Thomas More and Dietrich Bonhoeffer and of plays in which they are portrayed. The purpose is to discover whether or not the rhetoric of the playwrights preserves the integrity of the ideas of the central characters as evidenced by the rhetoric found in their original works.

CHAPTER II

Rhetorical criticism is rendering a judgment on the fitness, correctness or appropriateness of those discourses, spoken or written,

the aim of which is to influence the readers or hearers. There is much variety in methods of rhetorical criticism. This study will use the dramatistic pentad proposed by Kenneth Burke. Its elements are act, agent, agency, scene and purpose. It will also employ the naming of strategies, another term from Burke meaning methods or attitudes. In addition, judgments will be made on the basis of significant ideas, creative choice of language, integrity and credibility.

CHAPTER III

Sir Thomas More was a lawyer, scholar and public official in England at the time of King Henry VIII. He incurred the King's displeasure by his refusal to support him in his efforts for a divorce. He believed strongly in the need to preserve one's integrity by obeying his conscience. In his trial speech, his main strategies were related to the importance of conscience and his knowledge of the law. He was pronounced guilty of treason and executed.

CHAPTER IV

In A Man for all Seasons, the playwright has used several theatrical strategies that help to focus attention on More, the central character. He is presented as a genial man of firm reliance on the law and obedience to his conscience. On the basis of a comparison of the rhetoric in the play with that of More, it is concluded that the playwright faithfully preserved the integrity of More's ideas.

CHAPTER V

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a theologian, pastor and teacher of Germany during the Nazi regime. He opposed the Nazis on theological grounds, and gradually came to believe that he must become active personally and politically. He joined the resistance movement in a plot to assassinate Hitler. He was imprisoned and executed. His chief motive for action was obedience to God. In selected writings, he is seen to have a strong faith in God, and great hope for the future.

CHAPTER VI

The Cup of Trembling is a play based on the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, though using mostly fictional names. Again, the playwright uses devices that bring out the hero's character. His struggle against the Nazis is seen to involve a corresponding struggle within himself as he makes decisions about his role in the situation. His faith in God and obedience to God are expressed, as well as his hope for the future. On the basis of similar ideas expressed in both media, it is concluded that the playwright succeeded in preserving the integrity of Bonhoeffer's ideas.

CHAPTER VII

The key idea of conscience is seen to have been preserved by both playwrights. A number of major ideas were traced from the original figure to the play, and their integrity was seen to be preserved. Therefore, it is concluded that the playwrights did preserve the integrity

of the ideas of the two men in the rhetoric of their plays. The major implication of this conclusion is that drama is an effective means of expressing the rhetoric of important historical figures.

THE RHETORIC OF SIR THOMAS MORE AND DIETRICH BONHOEFFER
IN
ORIGINAL WORK AND DRAMATIC PORTRAYAL

by
ROBERT C. HARVEY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
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1971

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sir Thomas More was a sixteenth century man, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a twentieth century man. More rose in office to become second only to the King in power and rank in England; Bonhoeffer held no public office. More was a Roman Catholic layman; Bonhoeffer was a Protestant clergyman. Beyond these differences, however, are a number of striking similarities. Both were men of deep commitment to the Christian faith, and both were well-trained, competent theologians. Both exerted considerable influence in their own time, and continue to do so today. Each of them came into conflict with the power figures of his day on the basis of his own personal integrity and conscience. Each of them serves as the central character of a play that deals with the issue of personal integrity versus political expediency in the context of an authoritarian government.

There appears to be very little, if any, rhetorical analysis of the work of these two men. A search of the four-volume bibliography, Moreana,¹ reveals only two articles² connected with rhetoric, and neither of them is rhetorical criticism as it is generally understood. There are a number of works that offer literary criticism and linguistic study.³ Bonhoeffer has attracted a great deal of attention in theological circles, but none of record in the field of rhetoric.

One reason for this neglect is that, in spite of the fact that

one was a lawyer and the other a preacher, they are both known primarily for their writings. However, because their words and lives have had and continue to have such a profound effect upon so many people, they are properly the subjects of rhetorical criticism, as it is defined in the following chapter.

The purpose of the study is to determine whether or not the rhetoric of the playwrights preserves the integrity of the ideas of the central characters as evidenced by the rhetoric found in their original works, and if so, in what way. More specifically, we will look at the way in which the historical figure expresses himself rhetorically in matters of conscience, and how well the playwright reflects that rhetorical emphasis in his play.

To achieve this, we will first review some of the relevant literature in rhetorical criticism and adopt a critical apparatus for use in the study. Using that apparatus, we will examine selected works of Sir Thomas More from a rhetorical standpoint, make a similar examination of a play in which he is the central character, and compare the resultant assessments. The same procedure will be followed for Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Finally, comparisons will be made between the two studies, and some conclusions drawn from the project as a whole.

Drama was chosen as a crucial part of this study because, for one thing, its potential as a rhetorical medium is often overlooked. As art, as literature, as entertainment it receives well-deserved attention. Plays are often more than all of those, however. They are often moving experiences for their auditors--experiences that have an effect on their subsequent behavior. If we can determine how effectively and how faith-

fully drama may be the vehicle for the rhetoric of significant persons and movements, we can employ it to better effect for persuasive purposes.

Material to be analyzed includes the trial speech of Sir Thomas More and other short passages that help to elucidate it; selected portions of Letters and Papers from Prison, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer; and two plays, A Man For All Seasons, by Robert Bolt, and The Cup of Trembling, by Elisabeth Berryhill. Other sources will be consulted as indicated to complete the necessary framework for the study.

NOTES

1. Frank and Majie Padberg Sullivan, Moreana (Los Angeles: Loyola University, 1964).
2. R. J. Shoeck, "Rhetoric and Law in the Sixteenth Century England," Studies in Philology, 50 (1953), 110-27; Thomas Wilson in R. H. Bowers, ed., The Art of Rhetoric (Gainsville, Fla.: Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1962).
3. R. W. Chambers, On The Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and His School (London: Oxford University Press, 1957); Charles Letherbridge Kingsford, English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913); et al.

CHAPTER II

A METHOD OF RHETORICAL CRITICISM

"Words, words, words!" cries Elisa Doolittle to her high-born suitor. "All I ever hear from you is words!"¹ Elisa wanted action, and while there must be action in human affairs, there must also be words. They are a part of almost every transaction; they come at us from a multitude of sources; they form a large part of our own equipment for social intercourse. Put into meaningful patterns, words are our most important means of communication with ourselves, and with other people.

There are many uses to which we put meaningful combinations of words. Andersch, Statts and Bostrom offer a list of thirty-two words that describe what we are doing when we speak.² It represents only a few of the many words so used, and contains these, among others: inform, persuade, illustrate, illuminate, sway, set forth, reveal, make aware of, suggest and relate.

When we use words in a conscious attempt to influence the behavior of others, we are entering the field of rhetoric. It may be argued that all communication is designed to influence and, in some way, modify the behavior of others. Borden, Gregg and Grove, for example, state, "One of the primary ways by which a man establishes contact with his fellows and either achieves cooperation and mutual gain or falls into conflict and disarray is through the process of communication."³ Stevens says,

Communication is the discriminatory response of an organism to a stimulus. . . .

This definition says that communication occurs when some environmental disturbance (the stimulus) impinges on an organism and the organism does something about it (makes a discriminatory response). If the stimulus is ignored by the organism, there has been no communication. The test is differential reaction of some sort. The message that gets no response is not a communication.⁴

According to the definition of rhetoric which will be given shortly, all communication has rhetorical elements. It merits the name "rhetoric" if it is designed for the primary purpose of persuading others to some action or point of view. Rhetorical criticism, therefore, can be concerned with either discourse designed to be persuasive, or the rhetorical elements in any discourse.

This chapter will review some of the dominant themes in the literature of rhetorical criticism. From these we will extract and explain the methodology which will be used in this project. As we consider various techniques, we will be looking for those that are especially suited to the study of a variety of rhetorical material. In this study of Sir Thomas More and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, selected portions of original works, both spoken and written, as well as dramatic portrayals will be examined. The method used must, therefore, be flexible and comprehensive.

The history of rhetorical criticism is long and varied. At times it has flourished, at times it has languished. Thonssen, Baird and Braden point out,

The criticism of speeches is old; and yet it is new. Plato, Cicero, Quintilian, and a host of other scholars of antiquity engaged in the art. Prior to 1925, however, relatively few students in the modern tradition took time to formulate doctrines of rhetorical evaluation or compose critiques that dealt unmistakably with the assessment of speechmaking. Happily, a lively concern for speech criticism is currently evident, as witnessed by the considerable number of books on

the subject and the even more considerable number of critical studies of orators and oratory published in professional journals or separate monographs.⁵

Among those who have undertaken to go beyond the study of speeches in the search for rhetorical devices and the analysis of them is the critic, Kenneth Burke. He finds rhetorical motives at work in a wide variety of literary forms. Their purpose, he states, is to induce identification between individuals and groups. "Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity."⁶ The motifs of identification appear in prose fiction, poetry, drama, and other literary forms as well as oratory. It requires the special insights of rhetorical analysis to recognize these motifs and the effects they are designed to have.

An individual does in actuality compete with other individuals. But within the rules of Symbolic, the individual is treated merely as a self-subsistent unit proclaiming its peculiar nature. It is 'at peace,' in that its terms cooperate in modifying one another. But insofar as the individual is involved in conflict with other individuals or groups, the study of this same individual would fall under the head of Rhetoric. . . . One need not scrutinize the concept of 'identification' very sharply to see, implied in it at every turn, its ironic counterpart: division. Rhetoric is concerned with the state of Babel after the Fall. Its contribution to a 'sociology of knowledge' must often carry us far into the lugubrious regions of malice and the lie.⁷

If this broader view of rhetorical criticism is taken seriously, it may very well help us to understand the power and pervasiveness of literature and other human interaction in a new light. Recognizing the rhetorical elements in a wide spectrum of communicative activities

should sharpen our insight into not only their basic structures, but also their style and general impressiveness.

Any work on rhetorical criticism should proceed on the basis of a clear definition. Criticism, according to Webster's Dictionary, is "the art of judging with knowledge and propriety the beauties and faults of works of art or literature; hence, similar consideration of moral or logical values." Not many writers in the field of rhetorical criticism offer any definitions of criticism, apparently assuming a common understanding on the part of those who are interested. The widely divergent views on the art suggest that this is not the case. Thonssen, Baird and Braden describe it as follows: "Rhetorical criticism is a humanistic enterprise. It is concerned with analysis of the free choices men make in adapting the spoken word to practical problems."⁸ Black⁹ uses several phrases that help clarify the meaning of criticism: the critic tries to become a pure perceiver; "Beyond perception is appraisal;" "Criticism is concerned with humanity;" "The critic makes criticism a force in society;" "A critical statement is, in some sense, verifiable;" that is, reasons can be given for it.

Criticism, then, is rendering a judgment on the fitness, correctness or appropriateness of the object being criticized; it requires both subjective and objective appraisals; it deals with the context of the object as well as the object itself; it makes use of previously established criteria so that reasons may be given for the judgments that are made.

There is also a problem in defining rhetoric, though not because it is not often defined. It is not the paucity but the abundance of

definitions that causes confusion. Beginning with Aristotle, most of the major figures in the history of rhetorical theory have offered definitions. Aristotle's probably forms the basis of more subsequent definitions than does any other. It is: "Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."¹⁰ This is widened, though not substantially altered, by Nichols: "I take rhetoric to mean the theory and the practice of the verbal mode of presenting judgment and choice, knowledge and feeling."¹¹ Judgment, choice and feeling all presuppose some sort of value expression, which would have as a stated or unstated focus the recommending of the thought or action to the hearer; in other words, persuasion. Presenting knowledge can be done without any intent to allude to value expression. About all this definition adds to Aristotle's, therefore, is an indication that rhetoric need not be confined to those situations in which change of attitude, position or action is consciously and openly advocated.

Black cites Bryant's definition: ". . . Rhetoric must be understood to be the rationale of informative and suasive discourse both spoken and written,"¹² and bases his own upon it: "Rhetorical discourses are those discourses, spoken or written, which aim to influence men."¹³ Brockriede¹⁴ moves in a somewhat different direction. "Rhetoric," he says, is "the study of how interpersonal relationships and attitudes are influenced within a situational context. . . ." Persuasion is still focal, but the context of it has been broadened to include a wide range of human activities. We may assume that any of the arts might be used rhetorically under this definition; certainly non-verbal communication

could be so used. While this may be too broad to serve definitive purposes, it reminds us that there are many factors other than verbal discursive ones that enter into the rhetorical situation so integrally that they must be considered to be rhetorical.

Kenneth Burke says: "For rhetoric as such is not rooted in any past condition of human society. It is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."¹⁵ "Inducing cooperation" is a persuasive activity. "The use of language" suggests a limitation to verbal expression. However, Burke retains a very broad view of the context of rhetoric. All of the elements of a given situation come within his purview, though symbol using is foremost. His existential emphasis points toward rhetoric as an ongoing part of the human situation, rather than an isolated, occasional function.

The definition of rhetoric which will be used for this investigation is basically that of Black: rhetoric is the rationale of those discourses, spoken or written, the aim of which is to influence the readers or hearers. Rhetorical criticism, by definition then, is tendering a judgment on the fitness, correctness or appropriateness of those discourses, spoken or written, the aim of which is to influence the readers or hearers.

It should be clear that the uses of rhetorical criticism are much broader than passing judgment on speeches. For one thing, it is helpful in education. It assists in the transmission of the techniques and traditions of outstanding persuasive discourse. A disciplined, critical

approach to rhetoric makes possible the analysis, comparison and contrast, and creative imagining that are required for improving an art. The great speakers have been those who studied their art, and we can learn from them if we have the necessary critical tools.

This implies a relationship between rhetorical practice and rhetorical theory. Probably no one ever became a truly outstanding speaker by following meticulously every detail of some theory of rhetoric. It is of the very essence of art that an individual must bring to it his own creative gifts; that he must put into it those highlights, emphases and structurings that are peculiarly his own. However, he does so on the basis of a sound knowledge of what is best in the field. It is this sound knowledge that rhetorical criticism can help to formulate, preserve and transmit.

Rhetorical criticism also gives us a systematic way of approaching the material presented in discourses. Knowledge can then cease to be haphazard bits gleaned here and there, and be reduced to recognizable and repeatable forms. A great deal of information is presented in various sorts of discourses, rather than in systematic treatises, and would be subject to severe attrition if there were no way of gathering it into more accessible form. The same is true of communication methods. The whole range of communication media benefits from systematic analysis of material derived from critical investigation. What, for example, is there in common among King Lear, Plato's Symposium, Churchill's "Iron Curtain Speech" and the campaign speeches of Spiro Agnew? Is there commonality in what is said and how it is said? Are there important differences? If so, what factors may be said to account for them? Which is

more effective? These are among the questions that will be asked later in this study of the rhetoric of Sir Thomas More and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. They are not idle questions; they are the kind that make rhetorical criticism a channel to organized information from the vast world of discourse.

In addition to these, another use is to determine what historical trends are active, either in rhetorical theory and practice itself, or in the subject matter of rhetorical discourse. Thus, while becoming informed on the course of the history of influential discourse, one can also illuminate the wider history of the human affairs with which the discourses deal. As Nichols says, "I assume that the theory of rhetoric has something to do with the logical, emotional, and ethical dimensions of language, and that close examination and study of these dimensions would be eminently rewarding in the understanding of human nature."¹⁶

The matter of method in rhetorical criticism is even more diffuse than that of definition. All sorts of suggestions are made by rhetoricians and others as to what constitutes adequate rhetorical criticism. There is strength, however, in this very multiplicity of possibilities. For one thing, it testifies to the fact that rhetoric is dynamic and artistic. "To say that criticism cannot be formulated in advance is only another way of saying that rhetoric belongs to the humanities and not to the natural sciences."¹⁷ Just as the speaker or writer who would be genuinely moving must put something of his unique personality into his discourse, so the rhetorical critic must be able to deal with it as a unique creation, and not as another model from a universal mold. For another, this multiplicity allows the critic to select from a wide

variety of techniques those that are most suited for his particular task.

Black¹⁸ lists three main approaches to the subject: movement study, psychological study, neo-Aristotelian study. The first uses "techniques fashioned for the analysis of argument on a large scale, for widening the scope of the rhetorical critic from the individual performance to the sweep of a persuasive campaign."¹⁹ A statement from Burke²⁰ may serve to characterize the kind of thinking behind the psychological study: "As for the relation between 'identification' and 'persuasion': we might well keep it in mind that a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience." Thonssen, Baird and Braden furnish a good example of the neo-Aristotelian approach: ". . . The critic proposes to look at the larger questions of social reality . . . as the speech relates to it--and to investigate not only the means by which the address is accomplished, but also the ends and purposes which it is intended to serve."²¹

Black then notes Green's three constituent parts of criticism:²² historical, re-creative (apprehending what the artist has actually succeeded in expressing), and judicial (its value). He then asserts that the neo-Aristotelians cannot re-create because they are too objective, too concerned with the immediate context.²³ He believes that neo-Aristotelianism "allows no place for the personal revelations of the critic,"²⁴ and that "Aristotelian criticism has a narrow view of human behavior."²⁵

His own method is to analyze rhetorical transactions in terms of

strategies, situations and effects. "A critic's analysis of a rhetorical transaction is merely a way of talking about it and understanding."²⁶ He gives²⁷ four assumptions that will make it possible to place rhetorical evaluations on a scale. They are:

. . . There will be a limited number of ways in which rhetorical situations can be characterized. . . . There will be a finite number of rhetorical strategies available to a rhetor in any given situation. . . . The recurrence of a given situational type through history will provide the critic with information on the rhetorical responses available in that situation, and with this information the critic can better understand and evaluate any specific rhetorical discourse in which he may be interested. Congregations of rhetorical discourses will form, but will be arbitrary.

He reminds us that a rhetorical transaction is not a "thing," but a process. Given this and other complicating factors, evaluating discourse on a scale will not be easy or exact, but it will yield a large amount of helpful information. He gives two rules for critical writing: "First, even though a statement may be so framed as to appear to be about only one constituent of a rhetorical transaction, the statement must really apply to the character of the whole transaction. Second, even though a statement may be so framed as to appear to be about a stable entity, the statement must, in some way be applicable to a process if it is to be significant for rhetorical transactions."²⁸

Black has been discussed at length because he represents a forceful criticism of the prevailing neo-Aristotelian approach, and because he gives some helpful suggestions in the direction of another method. Unfortunately, his methodology is not sufficiently complete to be used as a single method.

Thonssen, Baird and Braden have produced a very systematic and

comprehensive treatment of rhetorical criticism. Mostly using Aristotelian categories, they give step-by-step methods of analyzing and criticizing speeches. For example, the three essential elements of the rhetorical situation are²⁹ 1) speaker or communicator; 2) medium of expression; 3) recipient of message. The three stages in the critical process are 1) a searching examination of the facts relating to the particular speech; 2) formulation of criteria by which the speech is to be judged (derived from accepted works on rhetoric and the critic's interpretation of their contents); 3) critical evaluation of the data.³⁰ They are concerned primarily, though not solely, with the effect of discourse. "By means of analysis and synthesis, the critic hopes to determine the effect, immediate and/or long range, upon the particular audience and society. The word 'effect,' or 'response,' is significant. It supports a central reason for rhetorical criticism."³¹ For logos and pathos they give long checklists of criteria that may be used for judgment. For ethos, they are more general.

Thomssen makes additional comments elsewhere³² that add a re-creative dimension (to use Greene's phrase) to his critical method, specifically in these two questions with their implied recommendation of affirmative action: "Do our criticisms make interesting reading? Are we capturing the living presence of the orators we evaluate?"

Dell³³ offers this criterion: ". . . criticizing the truth of a speaker's philosophic assumptions should be the ultimate objective of speech criticism." Fisher³⁴ and Holland³⁵ adopt Burke's categories of motives and strategies. In defining strategies, the latter writer says, ". . . the critic would do well to consider strategy as synonymous

with method. . . . A strategy may be thought of as a plan of attack."³⁶
 Sentences, paragraphs, and entire speeches have strategies, as does
 society in any given milieu. Burke approaches rhetorical analysis
 dramatistically through his pentad: act, scene, agent, agency, purpose.³⁷
 We will say more about Burke later in this chapter.

James T. Boulton has summed up the responsibility of the rhetorical
 critic in a compelling way:

The ideal critic--of rhetorical as of all literary dis-
 course--must concern himself not only with the 'facts'
 alluded to, but also with the orator's primary meaning and
 the subtle suggestiveness communicated by his tone; the
 patterns of thought and argument which sometimes reveal
 themselves in clearly definable ways but sometimes in a
 manner of which the speaker himself may have been only
 dimly aware; his idiom and imagery; his sense of the
 rhythm and sound of language; and with his understanding
 of the character--in the fullest sense--of his intended aud-
 ience.³⁸

In short, the rhetorical critic must be concerned with anything
 and everything that will enable him to analyze and evaluate the per-
 suasive discourse under discussion.

The rhetorical critic should not be confused or dismayed by this
 plethora of methodological suggestions. Rather, he should see in it
 clear evidence that responsible criticism is not a matter of hewing to
 a narrow line but of gathering from a wide field. His procedure must
 be consistent and comprehensive, but it need not be limited to one
 scholar or one tradition. As Professor Walter put it,

To assume that rhetorical theory can furnish a formula complete
 with a step-by-step procedure to be followed by the otherwise
 thoughtless critic, is likely in error. Formulas may work well
 in elementary physics, but in the humanities, formulas somehow
 result in mindless mechanicalness, giving evidence sometimes of
 hard work but less often of brilliance. Scholarship and hard

work are not the same thing; but criticism that is brilliant is always criticism that could not be easily prescribed, that is somewhat unexpected, that fits the unique speech for which it is designed and perhaps no other speech, that is the most appropriate thing to say at this time about that speech. To say that criticism cannot be formulated in advance is only another way of saying that rhetoric belongs to the humanities and not to the natural sciences.³⁹

Unfortunately, eclecticism will not ensure brilliant criticism; but eschewing rigid formulas may at least discourage mechanical criticism.

The methodology used in this project will consist of the dramatic pentad, the naming of strategies, and, where appropriate, the application of four standards of good speech to specific passages. It borrows most of its primary terminology from Kenneth Burke. The dramatistic pentad is used because it emphasizes the relationships that exist between various elements of the rhetorical situation. Holland says,

For Burke, the pentad does the same thing that a 'Grammar' does. That is the pentad reveals relationships between things or situations and their causes or motives, just as a grammar reveals the relationship between the meaning and the structural aspects of a language.⁴⁰

Particularly in a rhetorical analysis of such diverse materials as the speeches of Sir Thomas More, the sermons and letters of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and modern plays that deal with the lives of these two martyrs, it is necessary to use a device that is flexible and that encourages the exploring of relationships that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Burke gives this preliminary definition of his pentad:

In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the act (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another than names the scene (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (agent) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (agency), and the purpose. Men may violently disagree about the purposes behind a given act, or about the char-

acter of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted; or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself. But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose).⁴¹

Burke's pentad covers about the same points as Hochmuth does when she spells out the six areas a critic must cover in analysing a rhetorical event:⁴² speaker, audience, place, purpose, time, form. The advantages of the pentad are its adaptability to all rhetorical situations, not just speeches; and its greater emphasis on relationships between factors.

The pentad also has some affinity with Boulton's modification of Williams' question which can be posed by the rhetorical critic: "Why does who say what to whom with what effect?"⁴³ Burke's approach goes considerably beyond that of Thonssen, Baird and Braden, who name three elements in the speech situation.⁴⁴

It must be emphasized that the important thing about Burke's pentad is not the terms, but the dramatistic approach which explores the relationships among the various factors named by the terms.

Another Burkean term that is to be used is strategy, already referred to as a method or plan of attack.⁴⁵ It is, of course, the speaker's method or plan of attack that is at issue. The task of the critic is to name the strategies of the speaker. Holland amplifies her description of Burke's meaning by stating, "The accurate naming of the strategies obviously depends upon a careful analysis of the speaker's language pattern to determine what words most realistically name the associative grouping of ideas which the speaker makes in his

language."⁴⁶

Burke intends this term to serve as an aid to discovering what is going on in the total situation surrounding the event (or act) under scrutiny. The rhetorical nature of the act is derived from man's attempt to identify with his fellows, particularly when he is trying to influence their behavior, or persuade them to a point of view or course of action. This identification is possible because man shares a common substance. Their division from one another is an aberration of their essential nature, and it is in bridging this division that rhetoric is born.⁴⁷ Such rhetorical endeavors make use of a great variety of strategies to bring about the desired identification. Using familiar proverbs to illustrate his point, Burke comments on his concept of strategy:

Proverbs are strategies for dealing with situations. In so far as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them. Another name for strategies might be attitudes.⁴⁸

The naming of strategies is up to the critic. How closely he approximates the intention of the speaker depends upon how well he has analysed the total situation. Doubtless different critics will produce different "namings" for the same strategy, but this is no different from the variations one would find in the critical appraisals of critics using any other approach. The purpose of using the term "strategy" is not to try to come up with the same term Burke would use, but to get "inside" the material in a way that another approach might not suggest. It is an attempt to take seriously a point that was made by Boulton:

. . . Williams stresses the central and complex nature of the relationship that exists between a writer or speaker and his audience, whenever an act of communication takes place. He rightly emphasizes that, whatever the subject or occasion of the discourse, criticism cannot properly function unless this relationship is explored.⁴⁹

These Burkean approaches seem to offer an adequate means of making such an exploration. This does not preclude reference to other scholars and other terminologies when these can be cited to clarify the importance of a particular element of the rhetorical situation.

So far we have been mainly concerned with the means of finding out what is going on in a given rhetorical event. We have maintained that adequate rhetorical criticism must also include judgment, or evaluation. Evaluation must be considered in the light of all that is discovered through the aforementioned analytical devices. For example, an act (let us say, the wording of a phrase) might be judged mediocre when taken out of context; but when viewed in the scene in which it was placed by the author, or when related to the purpose for which it was uttered would have to be judged as excellent. But, in addition, there are four standards that will be applied to the material, so that there can be comparisons between the two principle subjects of the investigation; and judgments made on the general quality of their rhetoric.

The first of these standards is that good discourse should present significant ideas. As one speech text puts it, "The speaker . . . must justify that investment of precious, limited, and fleeting time by giving the audience real values: new information, new points of view, stimulation of thought, or a refreshing or enriching esthetic or emotional experience."⁵⁰ The themes of good discourse should be important, at least in the context in which they are delivered. Many of them

will also be important from the longer view of the history of ideas. They may be basic social or personal themes. Ordinarily, they are ideas which the listeners or readers deal with in the depths of their being; ideas that have a profound influence on their fundamental orientation to life.

A second standard is that good discourse employs creative choice of language. The very concept of creativity implies an element of surprise, of finding things that one had not thought of before. To be creative is to do something new, or in a new way. Obviously, the utterly new cannot be defined in advance. However, there are some criteria which can introduce at least a modicum of objectivity to evaluation of creative language in rhetorical discourse. One such criterion is that creative language should accurately inform the audience of the speaker's meaning. Obscurity is not ordinarily to be identified with creativity. Another is that it will attract the hearer or reader enough to make him consider the ideas being presented. It will induce new ways of perceiving the meanings of the speaker. It will bring fresh insights to the material presented. It will utilize combinations of words that are striking and that catch the imagination of the hearer. Creative choice of language means that a speaker uses:

. . . new ways of presenting the familiar so that his listener perceives it freshly; he uses concrete words that enable others to see what he has seen, to experience in imagination what they have never known in the flesh; he finds the precise word that dispels the fog of confusion and leads to clearer views of problems; he reveals what had been hitherto hidden relationships.⁵¹

In evaluating creativity in choice of language, the critic must draw on his own experience with effective style in addition to utilizing such criteria as these, and try responsibly to relate it to the subject at

hand; for the judgment that is made is ultimately the responsibility of the person who makes it.

A third standard is credibility. Is the speaker believable now, and was he believable to his original audience? What relationship, if any, exists between the two situations? This standard has to do with the methods of inquiry or assertion that are used, with how they are related to the entire message, and with the nature of the arguments that are used to support ideas. The critic must examine not only the lines of reasoning, but also the warrants on which they are based.

A fourth standard is integrity. McBurney and Wraga are talking about this standard when they say, "The listener's attitude toward the speaker is unquestionably a factor of great importance in speech. In many situations it is the critical factor. If the audience dislikes the speaker or mistrusts him, all else may go for naught."⁵² One crucial ingredient in audience reaction to a speaker or writer is the way in which they perceive his integrity--whether or not they believe him to be honest in dealing with known data, and consistent with what they know from other contexts to be true of him. This is particularly true of such men as Sir Thomas More and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for whom fidelity to conscience is a key characteristic. The way in which their integrity is perceived is crucial to the over-all assessment of their rhetoric.

The foregoing critical tools--the four standards, the naming of strategies, and the dramatistic pentad--will be used for this research. They will be applied to the selected works of Sir Thomas More and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as well as to the plays that deal with them. Through the use of these tools, we can assess the nature of their rhetoric, trace it from one medium through another, and discover whether or not the play-

wrights faithfully reflect the rhetorical effectiveness of the men themselves.

It is to be hoped that these guidelines will be servants of the writer and not masters; that there will be room to account for the unexpected and liberty to accept the exception. When important rhetorical elements that elude these classifications appear, they will be noted and discussed in the most appropriate way available.

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CHAPTER III

SIR THOMAS MORE

On Tuesday, July 6, 1535, Sir Thomas More, Knight of the Realm, formerly Lord Chancellor of England, long-time friend and confidante of King Henry VIII was beheaded for treason on Tower Hill in the City of London. This event was greeted with considerable dismay in England, and perhaps even more abroad.¹ For Thomas More was generally acknowledged by his contemporaries who knew the literary and political scenes to be one of the finest men of his or any age. Robert Whittinton wrote of him,

More is a man of an angel's wit and singular learning. I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness, and affability? And, as time requireth, a man of marvellous mirth and pastimes, and sometime of as sad gravity. A man for all seasons.²

Behind that execution lies an exciting story of intellectual and political adventure, and within it are elements of persuasion that should be of great interest to rhetoricians. The act that is central to our interest is Sir Thomas More's refusal to take the oath of supremacy because his conscience forbade it. In connection with that refusal are several events of consequence for this study, particularly More's trial and the speech he gave on that occasion. In using the dramatistic pentad to analyze the act, we will look at the following elements: the agent, Sir Thomas More; the scene, Sixteenth Century England and the immediate environs of More's career; the purpose, More's determination to obey his conscience; and the agency, some of his words, primarily his

trial speech.

Thomas More was born in February of 1478³ to John More, a lawyer of London, and his wife Agnes. He learned Latin at St. Anthony's School, and was sent at the age of twelve or thirteen to the household of Archbishop (later Cardinal) John Morton at Lambeth Palace. This kind of servitude was normal for boys of that day. In the houses of great men they learned the kind of manners required for progressing in society and in their professions, or at court. They also, if they were bright and congenial, earned the influence of their hosts when opportunities for advancement came along later. Certainly Thomas was bright and congenial enough, and Cardinal Morton was his good friend throughout his life.

More was sent to Oxford University at about the age of fourteen. The University was scholastic in emphasis at that time,⁴ so Thomas would have continued his studies in Latin, using it for his work in grammar, rhetoric, logic and dialectic. He remained at Oxford for about two years, at the end of which he was admitted to New Inn. The Chancery Inns, of which New Inn was one, were preparatory training schools for young men who were preparing to practice law. From them one went to one of the Inns of Court, and Thomas More was admitted to Lincoln's Inn on February 12, 1496. Along with his study of law, he found time to study Greek and theology, especially the early Church Fathers. He also began some friendships that had a profound influence upon him, and to which he was to contribute immensely. Among these friends were Desiderius Erasmus, John Colet, William Lily, William Grocyn and John Fisher. Individually and together, they represent the finest scholarship of the period. They

stimulated the love of learning and writing that helps to account for the importance of Thomas More to England and to the history of ideas. It is important also to remember the very great influence that religion had in More's life. He seriously considered becoming a priest, but decided that his desire for a wife was stronger than his religious calling.⁵

More married Jane Colt in 1504 or 1505, and they had four children: Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily and John. Jane died in 1511, and within a month, More remarried.⁶ His second wife was a widow, Alice Middleton, and was six or seven years older than Thomas. She proved to be an excellent manager and a good mother to More's children as well as to her own daughter. That she was somewhat outspoken and not altogether sympathetic to all of More's intellectual interests seems pretty generally accepted.⁷

More's natural wit and intellect, and his great learning opened up rapid progress for him in his chosen profession. His son-in-law, William Roper, summarizes his advancement:

After this he was made one of the undersheriffs of London, by which office and his learning together (as I have heard him say), he gained without grief not so little as four hundred pounds by the year, sith there was at that time in none of the prince's courts of the laws of this realm any matter of importance in controversy wherein he was not with the one part of counsel. Of whom, for his learning, wisdom, knowledge, and experience, men had such estimation that, before he came to the service of King Henry the Eighth, at the suit and instance of the English merchants, he was by the King's consent made twice ambassador in certain great causes between them and the merchants of the Steelyard. Whose wise and discreet dealing therein, to his high commendation, coming to the King's understanding, provoked his highness to cause Cardinal Wolsey, then Lord Chancellor, to procure him to his service.⁸

Roper also tells us of the delight that King Henry and Queen Catherine found in More's company.⁹

By the time he came to the King's service, More had published a good many verses, a history of the reign of Richard III, and his famous Utopia. In a most unusual way, he combined the work of a scholar with the busy life of a lawyer and, later, a member of court.

At this point we must supply part of the scene against which the agent, Thomas More, carried out his actions. Arthur, heir to the throne, was married to Catherine of Aragon in 1501, but died six months later. Upon the death of Henry VII in 1509, the second son, Henry, became King Henry VIII. Shortly before his coronation, he was married to Arthur's young widow, Catherine, in order to preserve the ties that had been established between England and Spain. Since Catherine had been married to Henry's brother, a papal dispensation was required to regularize her marriage to Henry. This was granted by Julius II. As the years went by, a number of sons were born to Catherine, but all of them were either still-born or died immediately after birth. In 1516 a daughter was born and lived. But there were still no sons, and the King began to think about divorce. Hostile relations with Spain and a growing passion for Anne Boleyn made such a divorce increasingly attractive. Moreover, Henry became convinced that, in spite of the papal dispensation, he had sinned in marrying his brother's widow and was being punished by God by being denied sons.

Another papal action was sought, this time to set aside the marriage to Catherine. The pope considered the matter for seven years, and then said no. In the meantime, the "King's matter" was the burning issue in England, occupying the center of attention in almost every

national and international matter. Henry decided that the pope was only the bishop of Rome, a bishop among bishops rather than the supreme head of the church, and therefore had no authority over the King of England. He sought the opinion of people all over England and the continent, and, not surprisingly, most of it was favorable to himself. Sir Thomas More told him very early in the discussion that, in his judgment, the original dispensation was valid and could not be put aside. After that More carefully refrained from taking any part in the debate. Bishop John Fisher publicly and persistently made known his opposition to the King's action.

Cardinal Wolsey, then Lord Chancellor of England, was doing his best to secure an outcome favorable to the King. He was also doing his best to become Pope. He was unsuccessful in both cases, and was removed from office in 1529. His successor was Sir Thomas More.

It is interesting to conjecture about the reasons for Henry's appointment of More, knowing More's attitude toward the divorce. For one thing, More was an excellent jurist. For another, Henry may have felt that he had a better chance of changing More's mind if More was in this position so close to the King, physically as well as influentially. Henry clearly intended to have his own way, and probably could not imagine that More, whom he had befriended so consistently, would not eventually come around to his side, particularly if he held the second-highest office in the realm.

More wisely spoke to no one but the King about his views on the divorce. Henry began to push for legislation that would solidify his position on the succession, and on his position as head of the church.

When the Convocation agreed with Henry that bishops should no longer have the power to seize heretics, the King was well on his way to obtaining the power he desired. The day after that action was taken, May 16, 1532, More resigned as Lord Chancellor.¹⁰

An additional force that exerted great pressure during these crucial years was the stirring of reform in the church. People other than Henry had disavowed the supremacy of the Pope. England was continually receiving Protestant ideas from abroad and from some of her own clergy. Many of these ideas fitted into Henry's various schemes, and complicated the issues for conscientious churchmen such as Fisher and More.

Archbishop Cranmer, one of Henry's appointees, granted Henry a divorce from Catherine, and he was married to Anne Boleyn on May 28, 1533. Their daughter Elizabeth was born soon after. Parliament met in January, 1534, and passed the Act of Succession which spelled out clearly that the throne would pass from Henry to his lawful bodily heir by Queen Anne. To it was attached an oath that covered not only the succession, but everything in the act "--the annulment of the marriage with Catherine, the validity of the marriage with Anne, the rejection of the authority of the Pope in matters of marriage--everything in it."¹¹ The oath was to be taken by the whole population. Sir Thomas More refused to take the oath and was imprisoned in the Tower of London on April 17, 1534. Reynolds gives us an insight into More's attitude toward taking the oath:

Cranmer then argued that since More had said that he did not condemn any who took the oath, he must have some doubts on the matter and, in such a case, he should obey the King as a matter of duty. This argument for a moment

made More hesitate, but he replied, 'that in my conscience this was one of the cases in which I was bounden that I should not obey my prince, since that, whatsoever other folk thought in the matter (whose conscience and learning I would not condemn nor take upon me to judge), yet in my conscience the truth seemed on the other side.¹²

Regardless of how he felt about the divorce and the marriage, regardless of his stand as a loyal churchman, Sir Thomas finally made his stand on the basis of conscience. More told an interesting story to a group of bishops who requested him to accompany them to the coronation of Anne, and also to accept money to buy a gown. It expresses well his determination to follow conscience rather than official pressure.

My lords, in the letters which you lately sent me, you required two things of me; the one whereof, sith I was so well content to grant you, the other therefore I might be the bolder to deny you. And like as the one--because I took you for no beggars and myself I knew to be no rich man--I thought I might the rather fulfill, so the other did put me in remembrance of an emperor that had ordained a law that whosoever committed a certain offense (which I now remember not) except it were a virgin, should suffer the pains of death. Such a reverence had he to virginity. Now so it happened that the first committer of that offense was indeed a virgin, whereof the emperor hearing was in no small perplexity, as he that by some example fain would have had that law to have been put in execution. Whereupon when his council had sat long, solemnly debating this case, suddenly arose there up one of his council--a good plain man among them--and said: 'Why make you so much ado, my lords, about so small a matter? Let her first be deflowered and then after may she be devoured!'

And so, though your lordships have in the matter of the matrimony hitherto kept yourselves pure virgins, yet take good heed, my lords, that you keep your virginity still. For some there be that by procuring your lordships first at the coronation to be present, and next to preach for the setting forth of it, and finally to write books to all the world in defense thereof, are desirous to deflower you; and when they have deflowered you, then will they not fail soon after to devour you. Now, my lords, quoth he, 'it lieth not in my power but that they may devour me. But God, being my good Lord, I will provide that they shall never deflower me.'¹³

Two additional acts were passed by Parliament while Fisher and More were imprisoned in the Tower. The first, the Act of Supremacy, acknowledged Henry to be the Supreme Head of the Church in England. The second made words that spoke against the king's person or his various titles and estates an act of treason. Within the provisions of the three acts, it was not difficult to draw up accusations of treason against Fisher and More, even though More maintained his silence until after the verdict had been brought in at the trial.

Various delegations visited More in the Tower, attempting to get him to agree with the oath; and one attempt was made by Richard Rich, Solicitor-General, to trick him into saying clearly that he did not accept the king as head of the church, in order that their accusation would be less equivocal.¹⁴ More's reply, which plays a key part in his trial was as follows:

. . . the cases are not similar, since the King can be made or unmade by Parliament; to which every subject being at the parliament may give his consent; but, as to the supremacy, the subject cannot be bound, since he cannot give his consent in Parliament, and though the King be accepted as such in Parliament, there are many other countries that do not agree.¹⁵

The agent, Sir Thomas More, and the scene are now before us in general terms. The purpose behind the act has been seen to be More's determination to stand on the convictions of his conscience rather than yield to official pressure, even at the expense of his life. The act itself has been sketched in in broad strokes. So far, it has not been an action at all, as Sir Thomas himself repeatedly pointed out to his interrogators. It was, rather, the refusal to act.

The agency which is central to this study is the speech of Sir Thomas More at his trial. We will take a close look at the speech, and

then explore further some of the relationships among the various aspects of the total rhetorical event, using the naming of strategies as our critical device.

Some textual difficulties must be acknowledged. There is no extant record of the complete proceedings, such as would be made of a modern trial. A good discussion of the earliest records is given by Reynolds in The Trial of Sir Thomas More.¹⁶ Only one of these records, that of Roper, was available to the writer, and he does not give a full account. Reynolds quotes from several of the sources but does not reconstruct all of More's speech. The only complete speech available is found in The World's Best Orations.¹⁷ Its sources are not listed, though it obviously draws heavily from the authentic records named in Reynolds. All further quotations from the speech in this chapter are from that source unless otherwise noted.

More had suffered ill health for several years before his imprisonment, and the months in the Tower had weakened him considerably. He began his speech with a reference to this condition, fearing that "memory and understanding. . . should now fail me so far as to make me incapable of making such ready answers in my defense as otherwise I might have done." His strategy here is two-fold: to explain his weakness of physical presence and perhaps of argument, and to establish his humbleness before the King's court. This latter strategy was typical of More, who was never one to appear arrogant; indeed, he often deprecated his very great learning and ability.¹⁸

Weak or not, he proceeded to give an orderly account of his indictment, and to answer each count in turn, as befitted a fine legal

mind. He appeals first to the consistency with which he had always spoken to the King on the matter of his opinion of the divorce. He declares that maintaining his integrity by following the dictates of his conscience rather than basely flattering the King with dishonesty certainly ought not to be called treason. If his honesty can have offended the King, he considers the punishment he has already undergone sufficient.

His strategy here is an appeal to personal integrity. Its effectiveness is based upon two conditions: his own reputation as a man to whom integrity is important; and the acceptance of the basic assumption that it is more important to follow God's law according to one's conscience than to follow the laws of man. The first of these conditions would probably have been granted by virtually everyone in the courtroom. The second they may have held in principle, but were certainly willing to abandon in practice. Whatever its effectiveness, to More it was of chief importance and, just as he must rely on it himself, he must testify to it before his jury.

The second charge was that More would not, "out of malignant, perfidious, obstinate, and traitorous mind, tell them [his] opinion, whether the king was supreme head of the Church or not. . . ." His strategy first was refutation. He replied that he had always remained silent on the matter, so that no "word or action of mine [can] be alleged, or produced, to make me culpable." More had indeed been very careful to speak to no one, not even to his wife, in such a way that his words could later be used against him. What he did answer to this question in the Tower was "that I would think of nothing else hereafter but of the bitter passions of our blessed Savior and of my exit out of this miserable world."

This is a witness to faith that would not sound at all out of place in Westminster Hall in 1535. Everyone was part of the church, and religious matters and matters of state were always intertwined and sometimes identical. A learned man would be expected to express himself on religion as on other contemporary issues. More's statement would add to the impression of one determined to remain aloof from the vexing argument going on around him. However, its persuasive effect on the jurors was probably not great, for the sentiment could hardly be thought important enough to countermand the King's wishes.

More's next statement reveals a very appealing simplicity. He said, "I wish nobody any harm, and if this does not keep me alive, I desire not to live." This is an important affirmation about the way he lives, as well as about his attitude toward death. If the law of man rewards mischief between men and punishes innocence, better to die by that law than to live in submission to it. This is the strategy of declaration, by which the speaker intends not so much to persuade people to acceptance of an idea, as to present them with a character portrait that will remain in spite of the disposition of arguments. It is, in the long run, a powerful rhetorical device. It provides one reason why men like Sir Thomas More are remembered and venerated whereas their triumphant opponents are either forgotten or deplored. The statement is also a good example of creative choice of language, not in the distinctiveness of the words, but in the breadth of meaning encompassed in such a short and simple sentence.

In the next several arguments, More mingles the strategies of appeal to law and appeal to conscience. He maintains that no law can

punish a man for his silence. On the contrary, "it is a maxim" that "he who holds his peace seems to give his consent. . . ." Furthermore, it is "the duty of every good subject . . . rather to obey God than man, to be more cautious to offend his conscience than of anything else in the whole world." He continues to build two cases for his audience: one, the legality of his position; the other, the moral rectitude of his position, whatever the legal disposition of it. Each of these ideas is significant in itself, for men must always be concerned with both law and morality if government is to preserve liberty. Equally as significant is the tension between the two ideas. It is this tension which keeps law from becoming tyrannous, and morality from becoming sentimental.

More refers to letters he wrote to John Fisher while they were both in the Tower, in which, it was alleged, he had shown evidence of conspiracy between them. He says, "I do insist that these letters be produced and read in court, by which I may be either acquitted or convinced of a lie; but because you say the Bishop burnt them all, I will here tell you the whole truth of the matter." This may be labeled *innuendo*, since More, as a good lawyer, would know that evidence which cannot be produced may very well be non-existent. "Who is more to be trusted," he seems to be asking, "I who wrote the letters or those who say the letters condemn me but cannot produce them?"

Secretary Richard Rich then gave sworn testimony that Sir Thomas More had said to him in the Tower that the King could not be the Supreme Head of the Church. We have already seen¹⁹ that More's answer could not be considered a denial of the King's supremacy without greatly distorting it. More's reply at the trial brings out not only his eloquence, but also, for the first time, his wrath. "If I were a man, my lords, that

had no regard to my oath, I had had no occasion to be here at this time, as is well known to everybody, as a criminal. . . ." There is a dual strategy here, irony and appeal to common reason. How ironic that he who refused out of honesty to take an oath should be accused by one who must take an oath dishonestly to do it. More goes on to employ some swearing of his own: ". . . and if this oath, Mr. Rich, which you have taken be true, then I pray I may never see God's face, which, were it otherwise, is an imprecation I would not be guilty of to gain the whole world." Sir Thomas is again depending on his reputation to establish the truth of this statement; he is making an ethical appeal. For of themselves, the words could carry no weight.

He proceeds skillfully to demolish the effect of the witness that has been brought before him. He disavows any confidence in Rich's integrity. Speaking directly to the witness, More said, ". . . you very well know. . . you always lay under the odium of a very lying tongue, of a great gamester, and of no good name and character. . . ." We cannot help but wonder just how many men who stood accused in the King's court would have dared to speak to their accusers in that fashion. That More did so without reproof is evidence that he still retained considerable stature among these nobles who had so recently been below him in rank.

More turns next to the strategy of establishing probability. He asks the court if it seems probable that he would confide in a person he esteemed so lightly about a matter which he had not entrusted to anyone else in the world, not even, after the act had been passed, the King himself. He turns to legal arguments again in asserting that, even if Rich's testimony were true, the conversations were informal and no

malice could be proved.

In a very touching passage, he turns to gratitude and praise to express his relationship to the King. He talks of "the unspeakable goodness of His Majesty towards me. . .," of him "who has so dearly loved and trusted me. . . ." Considering the fact that it was clearly the will of the King that More be brought to this trial, these are amazing sentiments. They reveal the depth of More's loyalty to his sovereign. His personal feeling for Henry Tudor may have suffered (though there is no record of his having said so), but the subject-sovereign relationship was intact. Sir Thomas's expression of gratitude was part of another strategy, however. He uses probability to bring in the weight of the King's long-time favor to establish the unlikelihood of Rich's testimony having any authenticity:

. . . I say all this, his Majesty's bounty, so long and so plentifully conferred upon me, is enough, in my opinion, to invalidate the scandalous accusation so injuriously surmised and urged by this man against me.

More's appeals were unavailing, for, as Reynolds puts it, "The jury brought in the foreseeable verdict of guilty."²⁰ After the sentence of death was announced, More finally spoke freely of his opinion of the Act of Succession. At this point Reynold's text is much fuller than that of Brewer, and will be referred to for the remainder of the speech.²¹ What followed was much more representative of Sir Thomas at his best than were the necessarily spontaneous replies to the indictment. To quote Reynolds again, "The speech More made was a carefully thought-out statement, for at last he could break the silence he had imposed on himself."²²

The strategy he employs in these closing paragraphs of his speech is authority. He finally declares openly his opposition to the Act of Supremacy. His first appeal is to the authority of the law of the Church. The indictment, he claims, "is grounded upon an Act of Parliament directly repugnant to the laws of God and his Holy Church. . . ." ²³ He showed further that the Act was contrary to England's own statutes, and to the King's oath of office. The Chancellor remarked that it was strange that More refused to take the oath when "all the Bishops, Universities and best learned men of the Realm had to his Act agreed. . . ." ²⁴ More's reply shows that his great wit had not left him, appeals to the wider authority of mankind, and touches upon one of the points that indicate how important More's opinion was. He said, among other things,

But if the number of Bishops and Universities be so material as your Lordships seemeth to take it, then see I little cause, my Lord, why that thing in my conscience should make any change. For I nothing doubt but that, though not in this Realm, yet in Christendom about, of these well-learned Bishops and virtuous men that are yet alive, they be not the fewer part that are of my mind therein. ²⁵

The importance of More's opinion, to which he calls attention here, cannot help but engage our attention. It appears that Henry could not tolerate in his kingdom one of More's reputation for honesty and virtue who did not support his actions. It was not so much unanimity the King was seeking as Sir Thomas More's approval, or his removal.

More closed his speech with the wish that he and his judges might "in heaven merrily all meet together, to our everlasting salvation. . . ." ²⁶ He was able to accept his inevitable fate in the context of his faith that the life he was gaining was more important than the one he was losing. In a similar vein, he could look with calmness upon those who

sentenced him, believing that a greater Judge than any of them had the⁴²
final say. His behavior at this point gives added point to a poignant
story told by Roper. He is describing More's last departure from his
home before his imprisonment.

Wherein sitting still sadly a while, at the last he suddenly
rounded me in the ear and said: 'Son Roper, I thank our
Lord the field is won.' What he meant thereby I then wist
not, yet loath to seem ignorant, I answered: 'Sir, I am
thereof very glad.' But as I conjectured afterwards, it
was for that the love he had to God wrought in him so
effectually that it conquered all his carnal affections
utterly.²⁷

We have seen that More made brilliant use of the law, and of
appeals to plain reasoning. His over-all strategy in the courtroom
appearance is that of testimony. This is in line with the broad nature
of the appeal More is making. He had served the King long enough to
know that the outcome of his refusal to take the oath could hardly be
anything but death. His rhetorical purpose, then, is not to persuade
the jury, though he made it as difficult for them to bring in a "guilty"
verdict as he could. His purpose was to lay a foundation for people of
later generations who faced similar issues, and had to decide on the
basis of conscience how they would stand. His testimony was to be one
more support for those who would obey conscience rather than men.
Accordingly, More's language is plain and straightforward, though never
banal. For purposes of comparison, here is a short passage from his pam-
phlet, The Supplication of Souls, written in late 1528 or early 1529.
The souls speaking here are speaking from purgatory.

If any point of your old favour, any piece of your old
love, any kindness of kindred, any care of acquaintance,
any favour of old friendship, any spark of charity, any
respect of Christendom, be left in your hearts, let never
the malice of a few fond fellows, a few pestilent persons

borne towards priesthood, religion, and your Christian faith, rase out of your hearts the care of your kindred, all force of your old friends, and all remembrance of all Christian souls. Remember our thirst while ye sit and drink; our hunger while you be feasting; our restless watch while ye be sleeping; our sore and grievous pain while ye be playing; our hot burning fire while ye be in pleasure and sporting. . . .²⁸

Here the language and the syntax are more polished. The repetition of phrases builds carefully the desired impression. The contrasts are moving and forceful. Nevertheless, it is the simple, direct language of the trial speech that is the more compelling after these more than four centuries. Part of the reason for this is found in the relationships among the various aspects of the event. We will now turn our attention to a closer examination of these relationships.

Clearly, the act was a product of its times. There is no need to make an issue of conscience when its dictates are officially approved. But when official policy forbids the act that a man's conscience would have him make, then sides are taken and battle is waged. It is by no means universally true that men suffer for the sake of their consciences. Sometimes official exceptions are made; sometimes the conscience is changed to accommodate the situation; sometimes men violate their conscience. Sir Thomas More apparently grew stronger in his resolve to keep himself from being "deflowered." His purpose was to keep his integrity inviolate, and the act was thus inevitable. That the agency would be some form of discourse seems also a foregone matter. More was trained in the use of words, both in writing and speaking. He was a prominent public figure, and a notable response would be expected of him at his trial. It was, in fact, Sir Thomas who made the trial a notable event. His loyalty to King Henry had been unswerving,²⁹ and he deserves much of

the credit for the smooth administration of justice and the statesman-like qualities of the earlier part of Henry's reign. In another age, with another monarch, More might have been able to make his stand with impunity; but Henry was driven by an assortment of strong passions that he could not or would not check. So, one of the noblest men of his realm fell.

In following his conscience and heading for fairly certain personal disaster, More did the best he could to leave a legacy of honesty to his successors in the struggles for freedom. The means he took to do so were about the only ones open to him. Had he spoken out sooner against the King's matter, his obedience to the King would have been sullied and his best legal argument destroyed. His silence, followed, after his conviction, by his clear denunciation of the Act of Supremacy, was appropriate to his purpose. His purpose was sharpened as the scene about him became more and more one of accommodation to the King's wishes, regardless of the changes of mind and government it entailed.

The "man for all seasons" lived and died the King's good servant, "but God's first."³⁰ In his speaking and in his actions, he provides an example of powerful rhetoric. Its effectiveness must be judged on the basis of its inherent worth and More's ultimate purpose for it. We have seen that that purpose was to add support for the primacy of conscience over law when those two conflict. By his strategies of testimony and his appeal to the law he succeeded in giving that support in a very substantial way to any who wish to appropriate it. Its inherent worth has been spelled out in choice of language, significant ideas, the credibility and integrity of the speaker and his message.

That his rhetoric did not win his release is the consequence of the scene in which he lived and spoke. As Reynolds says of the jury,

They must have been over-awed by a Commission that included the Chancellor, the two Chief Justices, the Chief Baron and other judges, together with Anne Boleyn's father, her uncle and her brother, the King's brother-in-law, and, not least, Thomas Cromwell. It would have been out-of-keeping with the times for the jury to have brought in a verdict of Not Guilty. Thomas More did not expect acquittal.³¹

NOTES

1. Judge John O'Hagan, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, Utopia and Dialogue of Comfort (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. 1910), pp. xxxiv-v.

2. Quoted in R. W. Chambers Thomas More (Ann Arbor Paperbacks: The University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 177.

3. The date is uncertain. See E. E. Reynolds, The Field is Won (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1968), appendix I, p. 383.

4. Ibid., p. 4.

5. Ibid., p. 33.

6. Ibid., p. 76.

7. Ibid.

8. William Roper, The Life of Sir Thomas More, in Richard S. Sylvester and Davis P. Harding, eds., Two Early Tudor Lives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 200.

9. Ibid., p. 202.

10. See Reynolds, op. cit., p. 253 for a discussion of More's reasons for resigning.

11. Reynolds, op. cit., p. 298.

12. Ibid., p. 303.

13. Roper, op. cit., pp. 229-30.

14. Reynolds, op. cit., p. 341.

15. E. E. Reynolds, The Trial of Sir Thomas More (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1964), p. 69.

16. Ibid., chs. 1 and 2.

17. David J. Brewer, ed., The Worlds Best Orations (St. Louis: Ferd P. Kaiser, 1900), vol. viii, pp. 362-367.

18. See Reynolds, The Field is Won, pp. 118 and 237.

19. See above, p. 6.
20. Reynolds, The Field is Won, p. 366.
21. Reynolds, The Trial of Sir Thomas More, pp. 120ff.
22. Ibid., p. 120.
23. Ibid., p. 121.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 124.
26. Ibid., p. 132.
27. Roper, op. cit., p. 238.
28. Reynolds, The Field is Won, p. 215.
29. Reynolds, The Trial of Sir Thomas More, p. 141.
30. Ibid., p. 151.
31. Ibid., pp. 118-19.

CHAPTER IV

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

The life of Sir Thomas More was a dramatic one. It had the elements of wit, suspense, intrigue, strong character, and greatness that combine to make exciting and moving drama. In the context of his times, his stand provided the vivid contrasts so necessary to good theatre. The events of those times were pageant-like in scope; overwhelming passions could easily be gratified, especially by the great; the extremes of human behavior were seldom moderated by the touches of humanitarianism later ages have come to expect. It is not entirely coincidental that this was the age that would shortly produce Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare.

More was interested in drama, both as entertainment and as a teaching tool. Hogrefe tells us,

The record of drama in the More circle began in the household of John Morton, Archbishop, Chancellor, and later Cardinal Morton. There Henry Medwall lived from 1490 to 1500, and there his Nature and Fulgens and Lucres were probably performed. There More, as a boy, about 1490 to 1492, used to step in among the players and delight Morton and others with his extempore speeches, and there, perhaps, More wrote plays and acted in the little comedies which Erasmus mentioned.¹

This was, of course, a childhood interest. But it seems to have carried over into maturity. Hogrefe goes on to say,

More perhaps carried on his dramatic interests in other places. In his letter of 1501 to John Holt, he spoke of a comedy called Solomon, which 'we' wrote, probably to help teach boys their Latin. Probably More kept up his

connections with Lincoln's Inn, since it was usual for gentlemen to do so; he may have been the person meant in an item of 1528-29: 'Master of the Revels: Arnold. If not, More.'²

Hogrefe demonstrates that More and the other scholars with whom he was closely associated presented many of their leading ideas in dramatic form. They recognized in the theatre a powerful tool for making their ideas acceptable and attractive.

It was almost inevitable that More would himself become the subject of dramatic portrayal. One of the earliest of such portrayals was a play entitled Sir Thomas More. Its date and authorship are obscure. The manuscript, which seems to be original, bears the hand writing of several different writers. One of these was a writer of marked excellence, and is thought by some, though not all, to have been William Shakespeare.³ Gregg assigns it to a fairly early date, probably around 1592 or 1593.⁴ A large portion of it deals with two events: the riot in the City of London in which More played a major pacifying role;⁵ and More's imprisonment and execution. In this play, More's conscience is a central theme. In one speech he says:

No Mr. Lieutenant, I thanke my God,
I haue peace of conscience, though the world and I,
are at a little odds: But weele be euen now I hope,
ere long: when is the execution of your warrant?⁶

A modern play in which More is the main character is A Man For All Seasons, written by Robert Bolt and first presented in New York City on November 22, 1961. The play was well received by both public and critics, and will serve very well as a tool for the investigation of how faithfully drama can recreate the rhetoric of historical figures.

When we begin to apply the dramatistic pentad to a play, we

immediately become aware that we have two agents: the central character⁵⁰ and the playwright. Consequently, we have two acts: More's refusal and Bolt's statement; two agencies: the speech and the play; two scenes, one historical, the other theatrical; and two purposes: More's desire to stand on conscience, and whatever can be discovered or surmised to be Bolt's purpose in writing the play. The first set of elements we have dealt with already as we found them in the data derived from the study of More. Now, they must be considered as they are found on the pages of the play. The second set, those that derive solely from Bolt, must also be examined to see how they reinforce or modify the rhetorical force of More himself. It is acknowledged that the line between these two sets is often hard to distinguish, and that their relative importance varies some from one relationship to another.

We begin with the play and the playwright. We can gain valuable insight into the play as a whole if we look first at Mr. Bolt's purpose in writing it. In an interview, Bolt said, "It is a play about the self. We are losing the idea of what a self is. We lack courage--mental courage. It seemed to me More had it, and that's why I wrote about him."⁷ He elaborates this in the preface to the play:

At any rate, Thomas More, as I wrote about him, became for me a man with an adamant sense of his own self. He knew where he began and left off, what area of himself he could yield to the encroachments of his enemies, and what to the encroachments of those he loved. It was a substantial area in both cases, for he had a proper sense of fear and was a busy lover. Since he was a clever man and a great lawyer he was able to retire from those areas in wonderfully good order, but at length he was asked to retreat from that final area where he located his self. And there this supple, humorous, unassuming and sophisticated person set like metal, was overtaken by an absolutely primitive rigor, and could no more be budged than a cliff.⁸

Apparently Bolt wanted to get an idea across; to influence people--or at least to present an influential idea in the theatre. He sees a social need and believes that More's life can contribute a significant idea that will help to meet that need. The need, he describes in terms of emptiness: "Both socially and individually it is with us as it is with our cities--an accelerating flight to the periphery, leaving a center which is empty when the hours of business are over."⁹ His purpose, in other words, was rhetorical.

Walter Kerr gives a slightly different perspective on Bolt's purpose, though the focus remains the same. He says:

For it is dramatist Robert Bolt's most vigorous intention to put the common man back into his very common place and, by centering our attention upon a superb mind in motion, to restore wit to the world.¹⁰

By wit, Kerr means perception, powers of intellectual precision, sense of values. If Robert Bolt means for his play to restore this to the world, he surely has a rhetorical purpose, and one that concentrates on the self through the medium of a man whose conscience bade him preserve his self at all costs.

Bolt's act, then, is his statement of this important truth. The agency by which he makes his statement is a play. Rhetoric is no stranger to drama. Indeed, one writer says, ". . . rhetoric can be regarded as an essential ingredient of theatre. As long as a play offers a histrionic view of character and situation, rhetoric is its natural concomitant and means of expression."¹¹ A play has several advantages to offer for the presentation of material of rhetorical import. It can not only be read, it can also be produced and seen. It will be read and seen by people other than just those who are interested

in its theme, which is not always true of an essay or a book. Since the theatre is seen by most people as an entertainment medium, its messages reach many people who expect to be entertained, but may be moved or persuaded as well. It shares with rhetoric a common focus on identification.

In one sense, the scene of the playwright's act, is the theatre--any particular theatre in which the play may be produced. This means that the act is repeated over and over again. When a play is as successful and popular as A Man for All Seasons, it may well be repeated for several decades; even several centuries. Consider Shakespeare! In this sense, the scene helps to shape the act by providing an interchange between one particular set of people--the cast, and another particular set of people--the audience. Every audience is different, so every performance is different. The acoustics of the auditorium, the size of the stage, the temperature inside and outside the building, even what else is going on in town that night will all affect the performance; and, consequently, they will affect its rhetorical qualities.

In another sense, the scene is the scenery--the stage setting for a particular performance, representing the physical surroundings with which Thomas More was familiar in Sixteenth Century England. Bolt intended that his play should use "overtly theatrical means of switching from one locale to another."¹² This means that the curtains are not used to indicate change of scene, except at intermission. One set is used throughout the production, with change of scene indicated by changes in the lighting. Kerr said of the Broadway production, "The play looked as it reads: spare, pointed, piercing."¹³

The author intended that the scene have a metaphorical reference.

He says,

As a figure for the superhuman context I took the largest, most alien, least formulated thing I know, the sea and water. The references to ships, rivers, currents, tides, navigation, and so on, are all used for this purpose. Society by contrast figures as dry land.¹⁴

The superhuman context, for the characters, is the divine, over-arching Church. Bolt takes that as a metaphor which he expresses in the figure water. Some of the speeches and actions may be clearer when this relationship is kept in mind.

The agent ("Robert Bolt, 37 years old, of stocky build, author of Broadway's greatest critical and popular success since Death of a Salesman, English, a former school teacher, and a born conversationalist. . .")¹⁵ is best discovered, for our purposes, through a study of his play. Whether or not he faithfully preserves the rhetoric of his central character will determine how effective he is in this rhetorical event. In this case, the agent is subsidiary to the agency.

We turn now to some of the strategies used by the playwright as dramatist (as distinguished from the strategies used by the characters in the drama). One is isolation. Whereas in discussing the actual events one must be aware of all the forces that are at work in a particular situation, in a play the writer can, when he wishes, focus upon only those forces that add to the point he is trying to make, leaving others only dimly present or completely ignored. For example, Cardinal Wolsey appears in only one scene with More.¹⁶ Aside from a few references to him in the scenes immediately preceding and following, all we know of the Cardinal is what we learn in this scene. We are told nothing of the

Cardinal's ambitions to be Pope, of his avarice or his manipulation of Church property to his own advantage. But in the brief view we are allowed, the playwright manages to create a picture of a corrupt church and an infinitely accommodating Cardinal, contrasted with the integrity and suavity of Sir Thomas More.

Another, similar strategy is that of giving More added prominence and King Henry less. Even More's biographers can hardly avoid making the King seem more important than More a good deal of the time. While his presence is felt constantly, Henry appears in only one scene.¹⁷ His somewhat whimsical nature and his intense determination to have his own way are established in that scene, so that his extreme displeasure and final rejection of More later are understandable. It is clearly More's show. It is his characterisation that is carefully built up before us; the others serve mainly to highlight him. This can be called the strategy of emphasis.

A strategy that follows this is contrast. More's steadfastness is seen against the opportunism of Cromwell and Rich, the depravity of Wolsey, the adaptability of Norfolk. Granted, the contrasts were there in real life, but the playwright arranges scenes and dialogues so that the contrasts are compressed into vivid and memorable episodes.

An important strategy is embodied in the character of the Common Man. Sometimes he turns from the action to address the audience directly. At other times he takes various utilitarian parts, mostly of servants (though also of the executioner). Kerr says of him:

The common man, of our own and every century, is kept in view by means of a knowing, impudent, hardheaded stage manager who hauls fresh costumes out of the hamper of time, whips the furniture about with slapdash

efficiency, plays any small role that requires no hair-splitting, and in general gets through the world with a wink, a tickle, and a shove. The philosophizing of stricter, more stubborn men is not for him; he is philosophical about all that, trusting only such gratuities as he can hold in his hand. When he turns to the audience and offers us the pious hope that we will all die in our beds, he is insulting us and he knows it. It is men of compromise who die in their beds.¹⁸

This strategy has an important rhetorical function, for it tends to draw the audience into the action of the drama, thus exposing them even more fully to its persuasive elements. Even if the viewer fails to identify with the common man, he is led to take a sharper look at what is going on when he is addressed directly. This strategy may be called alienation, if we understand by that, not hostility, but what Bertold Brecht has described as "a technique which confers on the human events to be presented the stamp of the conspicuous, of something requiring an explanation, something not obvious, not simply natural."¹⁹ Bolt made it clear that this was what he had in mind when he told Dr. Driver: "In A Man for All Seasons I used Brechtian techniques. They broke up the narrative and allowed me to expand the play, so that its comment becomes very broad."²⁰ By allowing the Common Man to introduce locations and situations, this strategy also simplifies the stage setting and makes it possible for the entire production to highlight the characterization of More.

We have seen how the playwright uses the strategies of his art to bring into sharp focus the picture of Sir Thomas More as a man of conscience and integrity, living by the law, but willing to die when obeying the law would betray his conscience. We will now turn to an analysis of Sir Thomas More as a character in the play.

The first thing to observe is that act, agent, agency, scene and purpose remain much the same in the play as in history. Bolt has taken some liberties with history in order to keep the story and the size of the cast manageable for theatrical purposes. For example, it was not Norfolk but Audley who presided at More's trial and pronounced the sentence.²¹ However, he has adhered very closely to the main points of the historical story. Thus, the act remains More's refusal to take the oath to the Act of Supremacy and his stands related to his refusal; the agent is More; the agency is More's speaking; the scene is Sixteenth Century England and, speaking generally, the Court of Henry VIII; the purpose is More's determination to keep his conscience inviolate. One important modification concerns the agency. Whereas in narrative accounts of the events we see mostly excerpts from letters, books and speeches, with only a few brief reports of conversations; in the play we are almost entirely limited to conversation. Thus, the trial speech which was the chief agency in Chapter Two, is represented by only three or four short speeches in the play. The agency, in the play, is any speech of More's that bears upon his concept of conscience. We will now look at the strategies employed in that agency.

In the first scene, More is discussing positions with Richard Rich. "A man should go where he won't be tempted,"²² he tells Rich. His strategy is warning. He has reason to believe Rich needs the warning for himself, but he also makes it one of his own principles. As he tells Rich, "Richard, I was commanded into office; it was inflicted on me. . ."²³

We are very quickly moved into the heart of the conflict over the desired divorce of Queen Catherine in a scene between More and Cardinal Wolsey. The Cardinal says, "You're a constant regret to me, Thomas.

If you could! just see facts flat on, without that horrible moral squint; with just a little common sense, you could have been a statesman."²⁴

The strategy is disparagement, and it works in two directions. It shows the Cardinal's compromising nature, and it helps to establish More as one who will not compromise at certain important points. So far in the play, those points have not been clearly set forth. There are indications later that More is willing to go along with the intrigues of state within the limits that he must set for himself. He never would have become Lord Chancellor, for instance, if he had not had considerable willingness to adapt to the deviating necessities of the King's various enterprises. At this point, we know that More's "moral squint" definitely effects the way he looks at the matter of the divorce.

But More is not concerned only with keeping his conscience intact. He is convinced that there is a larger issue involved. A few lines later he answers a question from the Cardinal by saying, "Well . . . I believe, when statesmen forsake their own private conscience for the sake of their public duties . . . they lead their country by a short route to chaos."²⁵ Here the strategy of testimony is employed to put a personal belief in a larger context. This speech shows several of the characteristics of good speaking named earlier.²⁶ Creative choice of language is shown in the contrast between "private conscience" and "public duties." It catches the attention and puts two large and important concepts into juxtaposition in a way that makes the relationship between them natural and manageable. Both phrases refer to significant ideas and the tension between them is one that has always been crucial to the process of government. "They lead their country by a short route to chaos," is vivid and direct, emphasizing with short, strong words the idea being expressed.

The next several scenes serve to show the warm, happy relationship within the More family circle; and the intrigue that is building up around Cromwell, Rich and Chapuys, the Spanish Ambassador. We then see the King in a visit to the More home at Chelsea. In the midst of some general socializing, the King asks Sir Thomas if he sees his way clear to support the King in the matter of his divorce. More replies, "Oh, alas. As I think of it I see so clearly that I can not come with Your Grace, that my endeavor is not to think of it at all."²⁷ His strategy is testimony to his convictions, and to his anguish at having to take the stand he does.

Henry gives a very eloquent tribute to More when the latter asks him why he needs his poor support if everyone else sees the point. The King says,

Because you are honest. What's more to the purpose, you're known to be honest . . . There are those like Norfolk who follow me because I wear the crown, and there are those like Master Cromwell who follow me because they are jackals with sharp teeth and I am their lion, and there is a mass that follows me because it follows anything that moves--and there is you.²⁸

More replies, "I am sick to think how much I must displease Your Grace."²⁹ Henry's strategy is tribute for the purpose of persuading; More's is apology; but most important at this point is the playwright's strategy, which is to heighten More's attributes of integrity and conscientiousness.

In trying to justify his stand to his angry wife, More refers to the limits of his adaptability. He tells her, "But there's a little . . . little, area . . . where I must rule myself."³⁰ In defense of that "little area," More is willing to give his life.

More puts himself on the side of the law and expresses his confidence in its protection in a speech to his family. His daughter, Margaret, has asked if he can't be plain with them. His answer is, "I stand on the wrong side of no statute, and no common law. I have not disobeyed my sovereign. I truly believe no man in England is safer than myself. And I want my supper."³¹ He persists in this silence in the face of repeated attempts by family and friends to get him to declare himself. He was confident that his silence would be his legal refuge. But the law can be manipulated, and others did not look kindly upon his silence. As Cromwell says to Norfolk, "This 'silence' of his is bellowing up and down Europe!"³²

In rapid sequence, England's ties with the Pope were severed, Sir Thomas resigned as Lord Chancellor, Parliament passed an Act of Succession with an oath attached, More refused to take the oath and was imprisoned. His stand remained constant: he appealed to the law and his conscience. When Norfolk asked, "Can't you do what I did, and come with us, for fellowship?" More replied, "And when we stand before God, and you are sent to Paradise for doing according to your conscience, and I am damned for not doing according to mine, will you come with me, for fellowship?"³³ The strategy is partly testimony to the ultimate importance, in More's mind, of conscience. It is also a clever way of pointing up the contrast between More's seriousness about the issue and Norfolk's easier adaptability.

In another use of the strategy of testimony, More elucidates the act-scene relationship. He says to Margaret,

If we lived in a State where virtue was profitable, common sense would make us good, and greed would make us saintly. And we'd live like animals or angels in the happy land

that needs no heroes. But since in fact we see that avarice, anger, envy, pride, sloth, lust and stupidity commonly profit far beyond humility, chastity, fortitude, justice and thought, and have to choose, to be human at all . . . why then perhaps we must stand fast a little--even at the risk of being heroes.³⁴

In another time or another place More's act might not be necessary or meaningful. But where he is, it is both meaningful and necessary--for him.

At his trial, More continues his refusal to speak out on the matter of the divorce, maintaining that "the world must construe according to its wits. This Court must construe according to the law."³⁵ Silence cannot be construed to be denial. Yet, even if the law be turned against him, "in matters of conscience, the loyal subject is more bounden to be loyal to his conscience than to any other thing."³⁶ Once again he refers to his underlying purpose in remaining faithful to conscience as he says to the court, "Is it my place to say 'good' to the State's sickness? Can I help my King by giving him lies when he asks for truth? Will you help England by populating her with liars?" The strategy of irony is here employed to expose the shallowness of the position of More's accusers, while at the same time the implied negative answers gives More's rationale for remaining steadfast.

After he has been pronounced guilty, More finally speaks his mind. "The indictment is grounded in an Act of Parliament which is directly repugnant to the Law of God. The King in Parliament cannot bestow the Supremacy of the Church because it is a Spiritual Supremacy!"³⁷ More's final strategy is denunciation. Now there can be no question about where he stands, and why. If that be treason, then More is resigned to betrayal.

With the analysis of the play before us, we now proceed to examine the rhetorical strategies we have found, and discuss whether or not they are faithful to More's own rhetoric.

It should be acknowledged that a good deal of information about the provisions to which More objected has been omitted for the sake of dramatic simplicity. The Acts of Supremacy, Succession and Treason were all involved, and their implications were far-reaching. There were many forces on both More and the King that are not mentioned in the play. Yet the rhetorical force is not lessened thereby, and may even be increased. Sir Thomas More emerges as a man of tremendous courage and lofty conviction, standing against a formidable display of sheer force that masked an abysmal moral vacillation.

The over-all strategy by which this picture of More is achieved is testimony. Repeatedly, he testifies to his convictions and his faith when there so seems to be every reason why he should bend his will to that of the King. Testimony is a witness to what one believes to be true, and the truth to which More witnesses is of such a nature that he can only testify to it--he cannot prove it. To be sure, he appeals to authorities--canon law, common law and statute law--but the "little area" of himself on which he makes his stand is, in the final analysis, unavailable to anyone but himself. So he must make his testimony whether or not it earns him a verdict of innocent.

His secondary over-all strategy is legality. He makes witty and sophisticated use of the law. He knows it well, has dispensed it, argued by it and lived by it, and now he expects it to shelter him. That it did not is no discredit to the law, but to those who manipulate it for ends that are inimical to it.

How effective were his strategies? In terms of winning More his freedom, of course they failed. However, there is little the playwright can do about that! He is not at liberty to recast history to such degree. But we have seen³⁸ that Bolt wrote the play to present a picture of a man who had the mental courage to be true to his self. For that purpose the strategies are effective. The picture is clear and persuasive. As the issue becomes sharper and the probable outcome more apparent, More defines the territory he is unwilling to give up, and the audience is invited to do the same. The integrity and credibility of the position are convincing. His theme is significant in terms of the time in which he lived and in terms of humanity in general. We conclude, then, that his rhetorical strategies were effective.

The two strategies are identical with the two named as most important to the historical Thomas More. In the play, they are put into more conversational form and placed where they will be most effective. Yet they remain believable in the light of what we saw of the scene of the original act. In the original trial speech, we discovered more specific kinds of strategies in relation to the law, whereas those in the play are more general. This is not surprising; indeed, it is a mark of faithfulness to history. If in the play we find a general representation, we would expect it to be bolstered by the details of the actual event.

The conclusion we reach is that the playwright did remain faithful to the rhetoric of the man himself in translating his rhetoric into the dramatic medium. By choice of words (often using phrases of More himself³⁹), presentation of significant ideas, preservation of integrity

and credibility of character and use of strategies, Bolt gives his audiences an honest representation of the rhetorical elements that made More's discourse effective.

NOTES

1. Pearl Hogrefe, The Sir Thomas More Circle (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1959), p. 253.
2. Ibid.
3. W. W. Gregg, ed., The Book of Sir Thomas More (Oxford University Press: Malone Society Reprints, 1911), p. xiii.
4. Ibid., p. xix.
5. See E. E. Reynolds, The Field is Won (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1968), p. 120ff.
6. Gregg, op. cit., p. 57.
7. Tom F. Driver, "Seeing Man as Man," Christian Century, 79 (1962), p. 576.
8. Robert Bolt, A Man For All Seasons (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. xi.
9. Ibid.
10. Walter Kerr, The Theatre in Spite of Itself (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), p. 161.
11. John Gassner, Directions in Modern Theatre and Drama (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967), p. 237.
12. Bolt, op. cit., p. xvii.
13. Kerr, op. cit., p. 164.
14. Bolt, op. cit., p. xv.
15. Driver, loc. cit.
16. Bolt, op. cit., pp. 10-14.
17. Ibid., pp. 27-33.
18. Gassner, op. cit., p. 164.
19. Bertold Brecht, in Toby Cole and Helen Crich Chinoy, eds., Directors on Directing (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1953), p. 240.

20. Driver, op. cit., p. 577.
21. Reynolds, op. cit., p. 366.
22. Bolt, op. cit., p. 5.
23. Ibid., p. 6.
24. Ibid., p. 11
25. Ibid., p. 13
26. See above, pp.
27. Bolt, op. cit., p. 30.
28. Ibid., pp. 32-3.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 34.
31. Ibid., p. 39.
32. Ibid., p. 57.
33. Ibid., p. 77.
34. Ibid., p. 81.
35. Ibid., p. 88.
36. Ibid., p. 89.
37. Ibid., p. 92.
38. See above, p.
39. See Bolt, op. cit., p. xv.

CHAPTER V

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

On April 9, 1945, a number of executions took place in Germany. Among those whose lives were ended by the Nazi regime that day was a Protestant theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.¹ The story of how a Lutheran pastor and teacher came to be executed for political reasons by the officials of the Third Reich is a long and absorbing one. It is told in considerable detail by Bethge in his lengthy biography.² For the purposes of rhetorical analysis, we will apply the dramatistic pentad and tell enough of the story to clarify the relationships between the five elements.

The agent is Dietrich Bonhoeffer; the act is his opposing of the Nazi regime; the scene is Germany during the Third Reich; the agency is selections from Bonhoeffer's writings that express the meaning of obedience to God; the purpose is to instruct and encourage his friends. There is a special relationship among these elements in Bonhoeffer's case. Apart from all five constituents there is no rhetorical "event." Act, agency and purpose are meaningless apart from the agent and the scene and their relationship. The selected writings we shall examine as the agency do not of themselves elucidate the act or the purpose. Only by relating them to Bonhoeffer and the situation in which he lived will they be seen to be rhetorically related to Bonhoeffer's purpose and to the act which cost him his life.

In order to make the relationships as clear as possible we shall look first at the scene, then proceed to the agent, the act, the purpose and the agency.

The rise to power of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party took place gradually during the years of the Weimar Republic, 1918-1933.³ When the long-awaited moment for Hitler's take-over arrived, it could rightly be said that "Hitler's assumption of the Chancellorship of the Reich on January 30th, 1933, took place within the correct forms prescribed by the Constitution."⁴

The events that took place during the next few months ended any necessity for the Nazis to stay within constitutional bounds. As the March 5 Reichstag elections approached, they felt the need of strengthening their position, since their party had never yet received a clear majority of votes in any election. They conspired to have a fire set in the Reichstag building and blamed it on their opposition.⁵ In the general confusion and alarm that followed, the Nazis pushed through an edict entitled "Protection of State and People," the effect of which was virtually to make Germany a police state. However, the German people seemed convinced that it was for their own good, for together, the Nazis and the German Nationalist Party elected a majority to the Reichstag. Less than three weeks later, that body adopted an Enabling Bill, thus dissolving itself and putting "the Government" in complete charge of the country.⁶ On July 14, the Nazi Party was declared the only legal political party in Germany.⁷ On October 14, 1933, Hitler announced Germany's withdrawal from both the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference,⁸ thus opening the way for rearmament and freeing Germany from foreign obliga-

tions that might stand in the way of the ventures Hitler had in mind.

Within the Nazi party, there was some opposition to Hitler, particularly with regard to his desire to avoid an armed revolution. Hitler silenced this dissent in a manner that was to become typical: he had them murdered. Between June 30 and July 2, 1934, somewhere in the vicinity of two hundred men were killed, including several highly placed leaders.⁹

When, on August 2, 1934, President Hindenberg died, Adolf Hitler assumed his position, retaining the Chancellorship, and became in title as well as in fact, the dictator of Germany. (Shirer records that the law by which Hitler assumed both offices had been passed by the cabinet the day prior to Hindenberg's death.)¹⁰ This maneuver was submitted to the German people for approval, and "in one of those plebiscites which the Nazi regime handled with so much virtuosity, the arrangement gained the consent of 38.4 million out of 45.4 million voters."¹¹

From that point on, the way was relatively clear for Hitler to do whatever he wanted with and through the German nation. He achieved a succession of brilliant accomplishments in foreign policy. "He . . . shattered the system of European collective pacts initiated by France, and . . . gained the partnership of Poland, Italy and Japan with his policy of bilateral agreements."¹²

He also encouraged and vigorously pursued a virulent and brutal anti-Semitism. Hitler's own anti-Jewish feelings can be traced back to his youth in Austria.¹³ Those of the German people who supported him are probably more complicated. Perhaps the Jews provided a handy scapegoat for the guilt feelings of a nation that was dejected after its

humiliating defeat in 1918.¹⁴ At any rate, oppression and persecution of Jews in the Nazi regime progressed until the "final solution"--the genocidal gas chambers--was implemented.

Responses to the Nazi regime from the churches were varied. At the very beginning of the Third Reich, it was represented as a Christian government. Mau and Krausnick say of Hitler:

In his proclamation of February 1st he gave an assurance that his Government would 'firmly protect Christianity, which is our moral basis;' and he concluded with the words: 'May Almighty God show mercy on our work, guide our will, bless our understanding, and favour us with the confidence of our people.' On February 11th, in the Berlin Sportpalast, Papen spoke of the 'new Christian Reich of the German nation.' Whole SA (Brownshirt) formations went to church. In the Voelkischer Beobachter, the official organ of the Nazi Party, there appeared a leading article headed: 'Christianity: the basis of Adolf Hitler's Government.'¹⁵

This illusion did not last long. Nevertheless, there was a large segment of the State (Lutheran) Church that continued to profess its loyalty to Hitler right up to the final defeat of the Reich. When, in 1938, an oath of allegiance to Hitler was required from the Protestant clergy in the diocese of Hanover, the vast majority of them took it.¹⁶

A fairly sizeable number of clergymen refused from the beginning to support the Nazis, and formed what was called the Confessing Church. As time went by, they became the target of special persecution, and gradually had considerable internal difficulty because of the restrictions and harassment they suffered.¹⁷ In spite of the persecution, however, many clergymen remained adamantly opposed to Hitler, since his program had the effect of putting the state in the place of God.¹⁸

Hitler's call for lebensraum¹⁹ led to the occupation by Germany

of Austria in March, 1938, and of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939; the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939; and Britain and France's declarations of war against Germany on September 3, 1939. In April of 1941, Hitler's armies overcame Yugoslavia and Greece, and in June they attacked Russia, with whom Hitler had signed a non-aggression pact only two years before. With the entry of America into the war in December, 1941, German military resources became overextended, and, in spite of the efforts of the Japanese to keep America too busy in the Pacific to be effective in Europe, Germany's enemies gradually got the upper hand and forced her and her military allies to unconditional surrender on May 7, 1945.

During these war years, the capacity of Hitler and his followers to inflict horror became monumental. The systematic murder of thousands of mental defectives and other "worthless" people was carried out, especially in Poland.²⁰ Millions of Jews were exterminated, a ghastly process that went on right up to the time of the final capitulation of the Reich.²¹ The full extent of this massacre was kept from the public, but its existence was justified by blaming the war on the Jews and proclaiming them the sworn enemies of Germany. The Nazi Propaganda Minister, Joseph Goebbels, said such things as these in an editorial in 1941: "The Jews are our destruction." "Every German soldier's death in this war is the Jews' responsibility." "The Jews enjoy the protection of the enemy nations."²²

Hitler himself became more erratic. One of his closest advisors, Albert Speer, has written his impression of Hitler during the later war years:

In the past Hitler had had a fine sense of discrimination and was able to adapt his language to the people around him. Now he was unrestrained and reckless. His speech became an overflowing torrent like that of a prisoner who betrays dangerous secrets even to his prosecutor. In his talk Hitler seemed to me to be obeying an obsession.²³

In the light of all these factors, it is not surprising that a strong resistance movement grew up within Germany, and within the Nazi Government itself. There were some efforts to establish contacts with other governments so that negotiation could be conducted if the Nazi regime could be overthrown.²⁴ Eventually, resistance centered in the plot to assassinate Hitler. An attempt to do so was made on July 20, 1944, in Hitler's headquarters near Rastenburg.²⁵ The attempt failed, and an estimated 4,980 people were executed by the Nazis in reprisal.²⁶

It was this discordant, chaotic setting that was the scene of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and work. It was a scene of authoritarian oppression, of strident militarism and of values ordered only one way--the state's. We will now look at the agent, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Bonhoeffer was twenty-seven years old when Hitler came to power, having been born in Breslau on February 2, 1906.²⁷ Thus, much of the direction of his life was set before the Third Reich spread its pervasive influence over Germany. Nevertheless, his thinking and activity would be greatly altered by Nazi philosophy and programs.

Karl Bonhoeffer, Dietrich's father, was a famous psychiatrist and professor. The family home, both in Breslau and in Berlin, to which the Bonhoeffers moved in 1912, was comfortable, happy, cultured and well-appointed. Through both family and friendship there were contacts with some of the most prominent families in Germany.²⁸

Dietrich decided while he was still a boy to become a theologian, and apparently never seriously entertained any other possibility. He studied at the University of Tübingen, spent several influential weeks in Rome as a student, and graduated from Berlin University. During these years, he became acquainted with the theology of Karl Barth, who was to remain one of the strong influences on his thought. He served as assistant pastor in a German congregation in Barcelona, Spain, during the latter part of 1928 and the first part of 1929.²⁹ He returned to lecture at the University of Berlin for a year, and then spent a year studying at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Though Bonhoeffer was distressed by the rising nationalism and anti-Semitism during these years, he made no political commitment at this time. Bethge says,

. . . in 1929 he took little interest either in right- or left-wing politics, but devoted himself solely to theology. Indeed after his first practical commitment to Church and society in Barcelona, he returned to his studies with greater zeal.³⁰

Theologically, he was advancing rapidly. His ideas were being clarified, and he was developing concepts and a style of his own. He continued to lecture in Berlin, and became active in the growing ecumenical movement.³¹ Through his work on its behalf he made many important contacts with church leaders in various countries, contacts which became highly significant to the German resistance movement. From the standpoint of his theology, he took issue with the adulation being accorded Hitler. On a radio broadcast on February 1, 1933,

. . . his theological insight enabled him to warn his listeners that, should the leader 'allow himself to succumb to the wishes of those he leads, who will

always seek to turn him into their idol, then the image of the leader will gradually become the image of the "mis-leader" . . . This is the leader who makes an idol of himself and his office, and who thus mocks God.³²

The last sentences were cut off the air for reasons that are not clear.³³ Bonhoeffer had the complete speech published in a journal, and circulated copies to his friends.

As conditions worsened, particularly with regard to anti-Semitism, Bonhoeffer pondered how information about the true situation in Germany might be gotten to America, so that support could be obtained there for the Confessing Church. He cast his lot with those who opposed the State Church's collaboration with the Nazi regime, and began to speak and write of the Church's responsibility to challenge the State when it believed the latter to be usurping its proper authority. His main concern was over the Jewish question.

From late in 1933 to early in 1935, Bonhoeffer served as pastor to a German congregation in London. Bethge says of this period:

Thus the eighteen months he spent in London were dominated by the church struggle and its indirect effects upon the ecumenical movement. The latter took up a great deal of Bonhoeffer's time. His parish work, although not neglected, became increasingly involved in the struggle. His deepest commitment at this time, however, was to his reflections on the Sermon on the Mount and on 'discipleship.'

Hence from now on there were to be two different sides to Bonhoeffer. On the one hand, the man who was to dare more for the sake of the Church than most of his friends; to whom the German church opposition's plans--from which, before long, the Confessing Church would spring--were to mean just that little bit more than they meant to his fellow militants; the man who behaved as though the ideas of tomorrow were the realities of today and who, when the inevitable setbacks came, was always ready to renew the attack. On the other hand, there was the Bonhoeffer who sometimes seemed so reserved as almost to be a stranger to these struggles, who might suddenly be irritated by the limitations of his Confession; who was driven by quite different visions

of the realization of the Gospels.³⁴

Upon his return to Berlin, Bonhoeffer took over the leadership of a Seminary for the Confessing Church. He developed there a close-knit community with a rigorous devotional life, and a profound involvement with theology. He wrote two books during this period, Life Together and The Cost of Discipleship. One of his translators says of these books: "These two works are the distillation of his fundamental message--What it means to live with Christ."³⁵

State suppression of the churches increased in intensity, and the Seminary was declared illegal. It was some time, however, before it was actually forced to close. Bonhoeffer's activities on behalf of the Confessing Church continued, especially his contacts with Christians in other countries. Largely as a result of such conduct, in 1936 he was forbidden by the State to preach or lecture in Berlin.³⁶ More and more strictures were adopted against the Confessing Church with the result that

. . . church activities came to a virtual standstill and barely a day went by without either the administration or the pastors of the Confessing Church contravening one law or another, or falling into some form of trap. By now it had become quite impossible to serve the Confessing Church while remaining within the law.³⁷

The Seminary was closed in September of 1937, but its activities were transferred to local parishes where the work was continued pretty much as before, though the students were more scattered.

Early in 1938, Bonhoeffer was forbidden to enter Berlin. His father was able to get this modified some, but Bonhoeffer was no longer free to attend meetings there.³⁸ He had many contacts with those who were working in the resistance movement, and had already been of help to

them by making frequent trips out of the country to visit friends in the ecumenical movement who could provide valuable assistance. As the effectiveness of the Confessing Church lessened almost to the zero point, Bonhoeffer became more and more active politically until he was a full-fledged part of the resistance.

Bethge tells something of what this meant to the young theologian:

For Bonhoeffer, as a German theologian and a Lutheran Christian, the step into political action, over which he still hesitated, meant going into new and untravelled country. It was certainly a momentous step when one went over from silent opposition to open ideological protest and direct warning, as did individual bishops and that memorandum of the Confessing Church; but it was a further and more critical step into that politically accountable revolutionary planning for the future. But that is what happened in Bonhoeffer's case. For a long time he merely knew and approved of what was going on, till that knowledge and approval developed into cooperation.³⁹

Bonhoeffer's work was interrupted in the summer of 1939 by a trip to the United States. Concerned over the likelihood of being called for military service which he could not bring himself, ideologically, to accept, he consented to return to Union Seminary in New York where he expected to resume his theological and ecumenical work. However, the arrangements in America were not what he had expected, and he felt a compulsion to be with his own people when the time of the worst suffering came. He returned to Germany before the summer was over. His own words, in a letter to Reinhold Niebuhr, best explain his feelings:

I have made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people. . . Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that

Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization. I know which of these alternatives I must choose; but I cannot make that choice in security.⁴⁰

He returned to a growing involvement in the conspiracy to overthrow the Nazis. His brother-in-law, Hans Dohnanyi, was an influential lawyer in Berlin and a leader in the resistance. Much of Bonhoeffer's work was done in conjunction with him. He began a double life. His substitute for military duty was a position in the Abwehr, or Intelligence Bureau of the High Command of the Armed Forces. At the same time he served as a courier for the resistance movement and assisted its leaders with his considerable talents wherever he could. Bethge says of Bonhoeffer's attitude toward one of his fellow conspirators, an informer:

It seemed to him appropriate in a situation into which a presumptuous German had manoeuvred his country, and in which all those who were capable of action were suffering from paralysis of the conscience. So the patriot had to perform what in normal times is the action of a scoundrel. 'Treason' had become true patriotism, and what was normally 'patriotism' had become treason.⁴¹

Typically, Bonhoeffer's political activism was grounded in acute theological insights. He found the reality of the Christian life in suffering for the sake of a just cause, even though it be an illegal one.

He wrote later:

Man is challenged to participate in the sufferings of God at the hands of a godless world.

He must therefore plunge himself into the life of a godless world, without attempting to gloss over its ungodliness with a veneer of religion or trying to transfigure it. He must live a 'worldly' life and so participate in the suffering of God.⁴²

The resistance movement finally put all its energy into the plot to assassinate Hitler and take over the government. Bonhoeffer was involved in this, of course, but took no direct part in the July 20, 1944, attempt. By that time, he and Dohnanyi had been arrested and imprisoned. The arrests were made on April 5, 1943, at just about the time Dietrich Bonhoeffer was to announce his recent engagement to Maria von Wedemeyer!⁴³

The first few months of Bonhoeffer's imprisonment were not as bad as they might have been. He won the friendship of many of the warders, and managed to continue his reading and writing. Some of his most provocative theological ideas were sketched during this time, and are preserved in Letters and Papers from Prison. After the failure of the July 20 plot and the discovery of materials that clearly implicated Bonhoeffer, he was moved from prison to prison. As the Allied armies neared Berlin, Bonhoeffer was executed on April 9, 1945, at the Flossenburg concentration camp.

His long-time friend, Bishop Bell of London, said of him in a memorial service on July 27, 1945, in London:

His death is a death for Germany--indeed for Europe too . . . his death, like his life, marks a fact of the deepest value in the witness of the Confessional [sic] Church. As one of a noble company of martyrs of differing traditions, he represents both the resistance of the believing soul, in the name of God, to the assault of evil, and also the moral and political revolt of the human conscience against injustice and cruelty. He and his fellows are indeed built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets. And it was this passion for justice that brought him, and so many others . . . into such close partnership with other resisters, who, though outside the Church, shared the same humanitarian and liberal ideals. . . .⁴⁴

The scene and the agent are now before us. In describing them, we have inevitably been describing the act as well. For during the last several years of Bonhoeffer's life, agent and act were one: opposition to the Nazi regime. Zeller notes: "Dietrich Bonhoeffer . . . once remarked: 'A man who thinks and acts responsibly need not worry about approval. His only concern must be the imperative need of the hour.'"⁴⁵ Elsewhere he is spoken of as follows:

In a summing-up at the turn of the year 1942-3 he put the truth succinctly when he wrote that 'the great masquerade of Evil' appearing 'in so many honourable and seductive guises' had confused all traditional ethical conceptions. 'The safe road of duty,' of obedience to orders, appeared to the German individual as a way out of the disconcerting abundance of possible decisions. But in fact it meant that he was satisfied with 'a safe conscience instead of a clear one,' and ultimately that his readiness to serve the community was misused for evil. The power of evil could not be fought with the simplicity of a principle; only the 'risk of an action undertaken on one's own responsibility' could 'strike at the heart of the evil and overcome it.'⁴⁶

Bonhoeffer saw his anti-Nazi activities as his duty to God in that particular situation, and he took every means available to carry it out. There were, of course, a whole series of individual acts, not many of which were directly connected to a particular discourse. But taken together, they illustrate much of what he said during his later years, putting into real action what he stated in more contemplative and theological terms.

The purpose behind both the act of opposition and the agency by which he expressed his opposition, was to instruct and encourage his readers in the midst of their common peril. Underlying all of Bonhoeffer's life and work was his determination to obey God at all costs.

When this meant opposing the Nazis, that is what he did. At first, he believed that this should be done within his duties as a churchman. But when he became convinced that his opposition must be carried into the political arena if he were to continue to obey God, he did so whole-heartedly. Drawing on his conviction, he wanted to give every possible support to his friends and others who needed it. With that purpose, he wrote of the meaning of obedience to God in such a time as his.

Bonhoeffer wrote something in his Ethics that helps us to understand his purpose:

God's commandment is the speech of God to man. Both in its contents and in its form it is concrete speech to the concrete man. God's commandment leaves man no room for application or interpretation. It leaves room only for obedience or disobedience. God's commandment cannot be found and known in detachment from time and place; it can only be heard in a local and temporal context. If God's commandment is not clear, definite and concrete to the last detail, then it is not God's commandment.⁴⁷

For Bonhoeffer, God's commandment was opposition to the Nazis, even to the plot to assassinate Hitler; and there was no question whether or not to obey. It was this view of God's command that he wished to share with his readers.

The agency in our rhetorical investigation is selected writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. These selections are made on the basis of the following criteria: they have rhetorical intent; they are related to the purpose already stated; they represent a period or event that was significant to Bonhoeffer. We will analyze them by means of naming strategies.

The first passage is from an essay entitled "After Ten Years."⁴⁸

It was written at the end of 1942 and sent to a few friends as a Christmas message. Its purpose was evidently to clarify the confusing times in which they lived, and to encourage his friends to remain steadfast in the midst of oppression. Hence he says, "I believe God will give us all the power we need to resist in all time of distress."⁴⁹ It had been almost exactly ten years since Hitler's accession to power, and now Bonhoeffer's arrest seemed imminent.⁵⁰ It was an appropriate time for a brief but important statement of his unwavering obedience to God.

He begins, "The great masquerade of evil has wrought havoc with all our ethical preconceptions."⁵¹ His strategy here is exposure in a two-fold sense. He is exposing the "masquerade," and he will proceed to expose the ethical preconceptions which evil has undermined. Using the strategy of parallelism, he goes on, "This appearance of evil in the guise of light, beneficence and historical necessity is utterly bewildering to anyone nurtured in our traditional ethical systems."⁵² "Light, beneficence and historical necessity" clearly refer to the Nazi propaganda by which Hitler attempted to convince the Germans of the indispensability of his leadership (an attempt which was largely successful). But Bonhoeffer's phrase "appearance of evil in the guise of light" is intended to expose it for what it was: depravity. His choice of language sets the two opposites in stark contrast and prepares the reader for the exposition which follows.

He then refers to the "Traditional ethical systems" one at a time and uses a strategy of systematic attack to support his original state-

ments. The first is rationalism. He charges the rationalist with "a naive lack of realism."⁵³ Using a military metaphor, he asserts:

. . . in the melee of conflicting forces he gets trampled upon without having achieved the slightest effect. Disappointed by the irrationality of the world, he realizes at last his futility, retires from the fray, and weakly surrenders to the winning side.⁵⁴

This strategy is close to name-calling. Disappointed, futility, retires, weakly--these are pejorative terms.

The second system is moral fanaticism. He immediately warns his readers against accepting the validity of this system by charging it with "total collapse."⁵⁵ He imputes to the advocates of this system a moral purity, which might sound like a positive value. But Bonhoeffer makes it clear that its value is illusory, that it is in fact a detriment. Its strength exists only in the imagination of the one who believes he has it. He uses a simile to expose the weakness of this system: ". . . like a bull he goes for the red rag instead of the man who carries it, grows weary and succumbs."⁵⁶ Evil is indeed stronger than this kind of righteousness, he infers.

He next attacks conscience. Conscience is a crucial concept in this study. We have used it to refer to an ultimate commitment to the highest value of one's life; in the case of both More and Bonhoeffer, God. It represents a commitment which cannot be abrogated without a degree of self destruction. In that sense, conscience can symbolize Bonhoeffer's obedience to God and his determination to remain faithful to the Christian Gospel as he understands it.

That is not the way he uses it in this passage. Here it means an entity in itself, roughly synonymous with one's highest knowledge, or

best intentions. It is something on which one relies solely, rather than a guide to a higher authority, such as God. It is an ethical system, and as such Bonhoeffer calls it insufficient. Evil approaches the man of conscience "in so many specious and deceptive guises that his conscience becomes nervous and vacillating."⁵⁷ A strategy of derogation is apparent in "specious and deceptive," while "nervous and vacillating" are put in a consequential relationship to such an encounter with evil. He warns, "In the end he contents himself with a salved instead of a clear conscience."⁵⁸ The close proximity of "salved" and "clear" form another of the contrasts by which Bonhoeffer underscores the evilness of the enemy that is being faced. An important clue to his general attitude toward conscience is found in the statement: "If a man relies exclusively on his conscience he fails to see how a bad conscience is sometimes more wholesome and strong than a deluded one."⁵⁹ In other words, conscience must not be ultimate; only God is ultimate for Bonhoeffer.

Duty is the next ethical alternative of which he disposes. He points out that "the responsibility for the imperative rests upon its author, not upon its executor."⁶⁰ But this is a way of evading decision and responsibility, and "the man of duty will in the end be forced to give the devil his due."⁶¹ The strategy is warning: he who follows blindly will discover that the one he follows will eventually be wrong.

"What then of the man of freedom?" he asks. He values this position highly, but warns, "He must beware lest his freedom should become his own undoing. For in choosing the lesser of two evils he may fail to see that the greater evil he seeks to avoid may prove the lesser."⁶² The

"failure" here would again be making oneself his highest authority.

The last ethical system he examines is private virtue. He introduces this with the pejorative phrases: "Some seek refuge . . . in the sanctuary, . . ." ⁶³ thus setting this position aside as undesirable for the person who would resist evil. Such men "are compelled to seal their lips and shut their eyes to the injustice around them." ⁶⁴ Such a reaction to injustice is the opposite of true ethics. If they are to remain "pure from the defilements incurred by responsible action," ⁶⁵ they can do so only "at the cost of self-deception." ⁶⁶ He is using the strategy of ridicule to attack this position. He warns that "that which they leave undone will still torment their peace of mind. They will either go to pieces in face of this disquiet, or develop into the most hypocritical of all Pharisees." ⁶⁷ This is the harshest judgment of any he makes against the various ethical systems. It reflects his own commitment to active obedience in the concrete situation.

An alternate name for the strategy used throughout these examinations could be iconoclasm. Iconoclasm is the shattering of idols, and each of these systems might be considered sacred by its adherents. Thus an attack on them could appear to be the breaking of something holy, whereas to Bonhoeffer it is the removal of false gods.

Having disposed of them all to his satisfaction, he gives the only position he considers tenable. It is quoted here in full.

Who stands his ground? Only the man whose ultimate criterion is not in his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all these things when he is called to obedient and responsible action in faith and exclusive allegiance to God. The responsible man seeks to make his whole life a response to the question and call of God. ⁶⁸

The strategy is personal testimony. The last sentence, which states the theme of the passage, is a faith statement. That is, it comes out of Bonhoeffer's faith and his relationship to God, rather than reason or logic. It is a belief to which he bears witness, and which underlies all of his writing and his activities.

If faith in God be granted as a worthy ultimate commitment, then what Bonhoeffer says here is consistent, and, to that extent, credible. Those who received this material would recognize that the very act of circulating such ideas was an act of courage. They would know further that he had been busy practicing what he preached for those ten years. The way in which he put his theology to the test in his own actions would establish his credibility. To the extent that the readers realized the relationship between word and deed, they would accept Bonhoeffer as a man of integrity.

According to the previously noted criteria of creative language, significant ideas, integrity and credibility, this is good rhetorical discourse. In terms of strategies, it employs several, with the general strategy being problem solving. That is, he presents a situation which he represents as bad; he systematically demolishes the traditional responses to it; then he gives his constructive answer.

The second selection to be analyzed is a portion of an essay written while Bonhoeffer was in prison and entitled "Thoughts on the Baptism of D.W.R."⁶⁹ It is written as though addressed to the child (Bonhoeffer's Godson), and was sent to the child's father.⁷⁰

Bonhoeffer begins by referring to the ancient Christian ritual being performed over the child without the child's knowledge. "But,"

he says, "we too are being driven back to first principles." The use of analogy serves to turn the message toward the contemporary situation.

He goes on:

Atonement and redemption, regeneration, the Holy Ghost, the love of our enemies, the cross and resurrection, life in Christ and Christian discipleship--all these things have become so problematic and so remote that we hardly dare any more to speak of them.⁷¹

To name those traditional Christian theological categories and then say that "we hardly dare to speak of them," is a rather abrupt way of using a strategy of unveiling. For to the sensitive reader the truth of what he said must have been known, yet it would be easier to let it remain unsaid. It is evidence of the profound intellectual searching which Bonhoeffer was undertaking. He continues, "In the traditional rite and ceremonies we are groping after something new and revolutionary without being able to understand it or utter it yet."⁷² He creates a strong contrast between the traditional and the new, thus pointing to the foundations and the future of faith. Permanence and ferment, stability and hope are intermingled. However, the "lack of understanding" leaves the emphasis on uncertainty. "That is our own fault," he says,⁷³ and proceeds to tell why.

During these years the Church has fought for self-preservation as though it were an end in itself, and has thereby lost its chance to speak a word of reconciliation to mankind and the world at large.⁷⁴

This is intended to be condemnation of the strongest sort. For it is precisely this "word of reconciliation" which is the Church's primary function.⁷⁵ Its selfishness has negated its function. It hardly needs to be added that the world in which Bonhoeffer was writing needed that word of reconciliation in the direct way imaginable.

As a consequence of this loss, the Church will, for the time being, confine itself to prayer and doing right by all men. But a new day is coming.

It is not for us to prophesy the day, but the day will come when men will be called again to utter the word of God with such power as will change and renew the world. It will be a new language, which will horrify men, and yet overwhelm them by its power.⁷⁶

The strategy of prediction is employed here, along with the strategy of testimony. For no such prediction can be made on the basis of available "facts;" but only on the basis of faith. The language is simple and clear, and creative because of its strong combinations of ideas. There is nothing unusual about the words, "men will be called again," but in the context of the desperate times and the sombre tone of the words preceding, they have a special vigor and optimism. This optimism is reinforced by "change and renew." That the language which will come will "horrify men, yet overwhelm them by its power" points to the extraordinary nature of the expected event. "It will be," he goes on, "the language of a new righteousness and truth, a language which proclaims the peace of God with men and the advent of his kingdom."⁷⁷ Here is the strategy of reassurance, for these are more traditional concepts, and though the language may be new, it will be speaking of known realities. "Until then the Christian cause will be a silent and hidden affair, but there will be those who pray and do right and wait for God's own time."⁷⁸ The reassurance is continued, but there is added an implied warning; for there was still a very visible and vocal Church, even in Germany. Bonhoeffer is saying that visibility and vocalness will not be marks of the Church.

The whole passage is a realistic appraisal of the grim situation of the Church at that time, and an optimistic look ahead. It seems an appropriate message for the occasion, impressive in the same way that the birth of a child is itself a poignant and a hopeful event in the midst of tragedy. The rhetorical value of the passage comes from a combination of strength and clarity of language and the way in which it builds on the meaning of the event to which it is addressed.

The last passage to be considered is a portion of a letter written from prison on July 21, 1944. This was the day following the failure of the long-awaited attempt to assassinate Hitler. Since his activity in connection with that attempt was largely the cause of Bonhoeffer's imprisonment, the failure must have been a terrible disappointment to him. Had it succeeded and the resistance leaders been able to take over the government, he and others would have been freed to begin the task of building a new Germany. As it was, the danger of their position was greatly increased. The letter is written to Bethge and published in Letters and Papers from Prison.⁷⁹

He begins by saying that he will not discuss theological problems this time. "There are times," he says, "when I am just content to live the life of faith without worrying about its problems."⁸⁰ In light of the circumstances, this indicates that Bonhoeffer had achieved considerable mastery over any emotional turmoil he may have been suffering. Of course, he could not have said anything that directly referred to the events of the previous day because of prison censorship,⁸¹ but even so his words show a tremendous inner unity that could not be shattered by outer disaster. His strategy is testimony, not, probably, designed

to be persuasive, but powerful in its simplicity.

In spite of his disclaimer at the beginning, he turns to theological matters: "During the last year or so I have come to appreciate the 'worldliness' of Christianity as never before."⁸² He uses a strategy of paradox, because he attempts a synthesis of two concepts, worldliness and Christianity, that have traditionally been thought to be in opposition to each other. He explains further, "The Christian is not a homo religiosus, but a man, pure and simple, just as Jesus was man."⁸³ The strategy used is a shock tactic, for to say a "Christian is not a religious man," goes against the ordinary way of thinking of Christianity. Though it may not have shocked the recipient, who shared many of Bonhoeffer's views, it would still have that effect on many readers today. The worldliness he has in mind is "something in which the knowledge of death and resurrection is ever present."⁸⁴ This is the strategy of explication, for he is now showing that there is more depth to his use of words than might at first appear.

Later he says, "I thought I could acquire faith by trying to live a holy life, or something like it."⁸⁵ He is still disassociating concepts that had traditionally been linked together. Then, he says, "I discovered and am still discovering up to this very moment that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to believe."⁸⁶ The use of the phrase "this very moment" is significant in view of the day on which he used it. Did he consider the catastrophic events of the day before a learning experience? Evidently he did. When he says that "it is only by living . . . that one learns to believe," he is once again doing a complete about-face with traditional concepts. A dogmatic

approach would be that one learns to live by believing. Bonhoeffer shows by this recurring strategy the originality and freshness of his thinking. The language is creative in that it makes these novel points of view clear and arresting.

He makes a further explanation of his point:

This is what I mean by worldliness—taking life in one's stride, with all its duties and problems, its successes and failures, its experiences and helplessness. It is in such a life that we throw ourselves utterly in the arms of God and participate in his sufferings in the world and watch with Christ in Gethsemane. . . .How can success make us arrogant or failure lead us astray, when we participate in the sufferings of God by living in this world?⁸⁷

He employs the strategy of clarification to show that to be worldly is not to abandon God, but to come closer to him. The reference to Christ in Gethsemane is an identification strategy which would remind his readers of a specific time of emotional and spiritual suffering in the life of Jesus. This would serve as encouragement by example, and support Bonhoeffer's point concerning Christian worldliness. The last sentence, the rhetorical question, employs the strategy of reassurance, asserting that the life Bonhoeffer is espousing is the life that brings man in closest touch with God.

He says of the point he has been discussing: "I am glad I have been able to learn it, and I know I could only have done so along the road I have travelled."⁸⁸ This is a testimony to his personal acceptance of all that has happened to him, even his gratitude for what it has brought to him intellectually and spiritually.

The ability of this letter to influence people is found partly in the language and the strategies, but also in the total situation it

represents. Knowing that Bonhoeffer had participated fully in the sufferings of the world, and that he did so convinced that he was obeying God, gives added authority and credibility to what he says. From a theological point of view, his ideas are far from completely worked out, but the great amount of attention given to them in books and journals shows that they have the power to move people to further investigation of his thought and its meaning. In that sense, then they are rhetorically effective.

With these three examples of Bonhoeffer's discourse before us we will now consider the total effect of his rhetoric. Here the dramatic pentad is of particular help. For Bonhoeffer's rhetorical power is a product of all the elements we have examined. Though he showed signs very early of great theological ability, some of his most provocative insights were directly related to the struggle against the Nazis. Would they have come out of a quiet, sheltered university existence? We do not know. What we do know is that they came from the cauldron of persecution and resistance that Bonhoeffer lived in for twelve years. Not only was that scene an integral part of the source of Bonhoeffer's thought, it was the testing ground for it. He not only said what he believed, he lived it and he died because of it. This is a very influential witness. As we put words and acts together, we discover a compelling commitment that moves us to consider it carefully. Bonhoeffer called it obedience rather than conscience, but it is for him an ultimate commitment upon which nothing can infringe. It is an outstanding example of how theology wedded to practice can have rhetorical effectiveness.

In review we may see that the following ideas emerge as central to Bonhoeffer's convictions: First, he recognized evil in the Nazi regime

where many saw good. This is made especially clear in the discussion of Bonhoeffer as agent in relation to the scene. It also comes through in the strategy of exposure in the passage from "After Ten Years." Closely related to this, secondly, he believed that the church in Germany had been unfaithful. We find this in the attack on traditional ways of reacting to evil in the essay, "After Ten Years," and even more in the strategy of unveiling in "Thoughts on the Baptism." There he also uses the strategy of condemnation against the church. Third, he has a profound faith in God. This is one of the main themes of the analysis of Bonhoeffer as agent, and is found in the rhetoric in the many examples of the use of testimony as a strategy to show his personal faith. It is particularly striking in the letter of July 21st. A consequent of this is, fourth, his determination to obey God in all situations and at whatever cost. This is set forth in "After Ten Years" as the solution to the problem of meeting evil, and underlies the testimonies of all three passages. It also is prominent in the analysis of the agent. Fifth, he believed that there was genuine hope for the future, based on the goodness of God. This idea is expressed in the Baptism essay by the strategy of prediction, and in the letter through clarification and identification.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law wrote a very apt summary of this kind of persuasiveness:

Thus Bonhoeffer's life and death have given us great hope for the future. He has set a model for a new type of true leadership inspired by the gospel, daily ready for martyrdom and death and imbued by a new spirit of Christian humanism and a creative sense of civic duty. The victory which he has won was a victory for us all, a conquest never to be undone, of love, light and liberty.⁸⁹

NOTES

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5. Ibid., p. 23.
6. Ibid., pp. 25-7.
7. Ibid., p. 19.
8. Ibid., p. 61.
9. Ibid., p. 52.
10. Shirer, op. cit., p. 226.
11. Mau and Krausnick, op. cit., p. 54.
12. Ibid., p. 66.
13. Shirer, op. cit., p. 25-7.
14. Mau and Krausnick, op. cit., p. 69.
15. Ibid., p. 15.
16. Shirer, op. cit., p. 238.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 240. See also Bethge, op. cit., pp. 483-5.
19. Mau and Krausnick, p. 72.
20. Ibid., p. 123.

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22. The Nazi Years: A Documentary History, ed. Joachim Remak (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 156.
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34. Ibid., pp. 256-7.
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37. Ibid., p. 484
38. Ibid., p. 503.
39. Ibid., p. 526.
40. Ibid., p. 559.
41. Ibid., p. 529.
42. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. Reginald Fuller (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1953), p. 222.
43. Bethge, op. cit., pp. 691, 695.

44. Ibid., p. 833.
45. Zeller, op. cit., p. 207.
46. Mau and Krausnick, op. cit., pp. 135-6.
47. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1955), p. 278.
48. Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, pp. 15-34.
49. Ibid., p. 27.
50. Bethge, op. cit., p. 686.
51. Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, p. 17.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
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55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 18.
58. Ibid.
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60. Ibid.
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64. Ibid., pp. 18-9.
65. Ibid., p. 19.
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67. Ibid.
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69. Ibid., pp. 179-188.

70. Bethge, op. cit., p. 612.
71. Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, p. 187.
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73. Ibid.
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79. Ibid., pp. 225-7.
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83. Ibid.
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86. Ibid.
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CHAPTER VI

THE CUP OF TREMBLING

Eberhard Bethge tells us that Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a play while he was in prison.¹ Even though he was a prolific writer, this aspect of his creativity is somewhat unexpected, since all of his published work is fairly scholarly. That someone should write a play about him is not at all surprising. He lived in a cataclysmic era, a time and place of real tragedy. He made a most notable stand from a point of view that was, in that time and place, unusual. He was a man of personal charm and he said some very quotable things.

The Cup of Trembling² was written by Elisabeth Berryhill, playwright-in-residence at San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California. It has been produced by a number of theatre groups in various parts of the country. Miss Berryhill states that it "is an attempt to tell, in dramatic form, the story of the life of a man who, the author imagines, was very like or might almost have been Dietrich Bonhoeffer."³ The name of the central character in the play is Erich Friedhoffer, but many of the words he uses are those of Bonhoeffer.

The playwright uses several interesting theatrical devices. In the opening scene the various characters introduce themselves to the audience as though they were the actual people of the story; except for Erich, whose part is taken by an actor who was the executioner at Flossenbug, since Erich has been killed. In addition, each of the

characters fills one or more other roles. This doubling strategy reduces the number of players and furthers the sense of reality by making it appear impossible for some of the people who participated in the events to be present.

A wide variety of locales is suggested by having scene change indicated by lighting devices. Scenery and costuming are intended to be kept simple. The purpose of this is to focus the attention on the characters and their story.

In applying the pentad to the play as agency, we have the playwright as agent, the statement of Bonhoeffer's life and message as act, the theatre-going public as scene, and the sharing of information about an unusual life as purpose. We may suspect a more profound purpose than that, but the author gives no such information in the notes. She does say that the play "is intended for performance in either a theatre or a church."⁴ This may well mean that the playwright connects the importance of Bonhoeffer's commitment to her purpose. Perhaps there is a message for Americans in the great struggle of the German theologian. At the least, we may assume that whatever rhetorical strength the play has was intended by the playwright.

The scene is the American theatre-going public, including that portion of it that is more likely to see a play that is presented in a church than in a theatre. This means an audience of people who will tend to be traditional in their thinking on religious issues; who may have lived through the period when this country was fighting the Germans--may even have fought there--but who at least know the period as one of enmity between the two countries. Also, when a play like this one which

has had no commercial run is produced, people may expect a message in addition to entertainment.

The act is the presenting of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in such a way that his single-minded commitment to obeying God as he understands that obedience is made clear to the audience. It is not just a "life" that is portrayed. It is the faithfulness in that life that made it outstanding which we see.

Within the play, the agent is Erich Friedhoffer; the act is his opposition to the Nazis; the agency is narrative, conversation and letters, "spoken or read;" the scene is primarily Germany; the purpose is to express an alternative way of life--one diametrically opposed to the Nazi style.

We will examine the play and name the strategies which are used to make the act and the purpose clear.

The play begins with an execution scene, played in semi-darkness. The sound of the trap being sprung is heard, and a chorus of voices begins to recite "Death," from Bonhoeffer's poem, "Stations on the Road to Freedom."⁵ This is a poem written by Bonhoeffer while he was in prison. Its four stanzas are sub-titled "Discipline," "Action," "Suffering," and "Death." Because its ideas roughly parallel the stages of Bonhoeffer's thinking, it is used at various points in the play as introductory material for major transitions.

At the conclusion of the recitation, the characters introduce themselves and set the scene. This is a strategy of definition, a way of establishing contact with the audience as well as informing them of background information that is important to the action.

The actor-executioner who plays the part of Erich tells who he is and says, "Perhaps it was because I was an actor that I could do what I did--perhaps it was because I could pretend that it was not I but someone else dealing with the rope and the trap under the shadow of that terrible tree."⁶ This is the strategy of revealing--giving insight into the horror of what took place in those executions, and reminding us that human beings were involved on both ends of the rope, as it were. He concludes,

I can only pray that I may bring Pastor Friedhoffer to life in this place tonight as joyously and meaningfully as his spirit lives in eternity. I can only hope that you will interpret my attempt to do so as the act of repentance for which I intend it.⁷

To speak of "his spirit . . . in eternity" is to employ theologizing in order to establish a religious aura about the memory of the principal character. The speech also uses apology, again reinforcing the personal image of the executioner. He is not allowed to remain a faceless non-entity.

The Mother reads the first of the stanzas, "Discipline," and gives some biographical facts to introduce Erich as a child. It is a strategy of characterization, serving to begin to build the image of Erich as a person of great innate mental and spiritual acumen. Moving quickly to the years of his theological training, Erich plays a scene with "the great Professor," presumably Karl Barth. Erich breaks into a class discussion with a quotation from Luther: "The curse of a godless man can sound more pleasant in the ears of God than the hallelujah of the pious!"⁸ Using the strategy of brashness, Erich shows his attraction to unusual views, as well as his willingness to experiment with them

in the company of others. There is something of impatience with unthinking traditionalism here as well. This is emphasized even more as another student joins Erich and the Professor. At the Professor's invitation, Erich launches into an exposition of another enigmatic quotation from Luther, "Sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ more boldly still."⁹ He concludes his explanation by saying,

. . . who can this be said to, except the person who makes a renunciation of sin every day, from the bottom of his heart? Who can hear these words without endangering his faith but a man who hears their consolation as a new call to follow Jesus Christ? Isn't that what it really is--a new summons to discipleship, pure and simple?¹⁰

There is a combination of strategies here--testimony and exhortation. He is not just explaining, he is proclaiming--and in a Professor's office! He speaks with clarity and conviction, and the "new summons to discipleship" is an adumbration of the rigorous service that lies ahead of him.

Before the conference is ended, the Professor asks Erich if he has any opinion on political questions. Erich replies, "Political questions? I don't understand, sir. What have politics to do with the life of faith?"¹¹ The questioning reveals a compartmentalization in his thinking which persists for some time and keeps him from embracing political action until a crisis situation compels him to broaden his theological perspective. As he leaves, the Professor hands Erich a copy of Main Kampf.

Narrative speeches and a radio announcer provide historical information on the period of Hitler's takeover and the Friedhoffer family's continuing normal pattern. Then Erich, his brother, Fritz and

his good friend Ernst are shown in a meadow in the Black Forest. They find a snake, and Erich prevents Ernst from killing it. He says, "I can't help it, Ernst. Even if it's only a snake, it's alive. Don't you see what I mean?"¹² He is using a strategy of reverence for life that makes more believable the intense struggle he undergoes later before he can join the assassination plot.

An important radio announcement is heard in the Friedhoffer home:

Ladies and gentlemen, we bring you a special report from the capital. Today, March 23, 1933, is an historic day for the German Reich. Just a few hours ago, the Reichstag virtually set aside the Weimar Constitution to place almost unlimited powers in the hands of our beloved leader, Adolph Hitler. But one thing should be made clear. Chancellor Hitler has taken this extraordinary power into his own hand only to regenerate our beloved homeland. As Hermann Goering said in a special interview after the session ended late today: 'God has sent Adolph Hitler to save Germany. We are all creatures of our leader. His faith makes us the most powerful of men. If he removes his confidence, we are nothing, we are plunged into darkness and lost to the memory of man. Germany is Adolph Hitler!' And now we return you to our main studios in Berlin. Heil Hitler!¹³

The strategy being used by the announcer is propaganda. It serves to show the trend toward idolatry already being encouraged by the German officials. The use of religious terms, the identification of Hitler with the nation, and the blind trust asked for him all have the effect of surrounding Hitler with an aura of divinity.

This implication is not lost on the Friedhoffers. Erich calls it "half-truth, half-lies--and all woven together in a pattern of ugliness and distortion that fills me with nausea."¹⁴ As they discuss the meaning of these current events, Erich decides that someone should speak out, and that it must be he. When Fritz asks, "Why does it have to be your decision?" Erich replies, "Who else do I have the right to decide

for?"¹⁵ The strategy is personal responsibility, and Friedhoffer realizes that it is the basis for effective action.

The scene fades, and a radio executive addresses the audience, using the strategy of ridicule in justifying the network's act of cutting Friedhoffer off the air. He says,

For the first time in years we see some kind of real security for ourselves and our country--and then this pastor (he spits the word out as if it were an epithet) tries to tell us what we see as good isn't good at all, it's only evil masquerading as good.¹⁶

A cleric speaks, giving the stand of the "established" church.

Is it better to defy the government and ultimately deprive the people of the comfort and solace of their churches? Or is it better to keep the churches open so that our people may have places to worship--and pray for the best? We believe that by adjusting our thinking to the obvious facts, we are simply being realistic.¹⁷

The two speeches provide needed historical background without adding scenes that would make the play cumbersome. They also show the widespread acceptance of the savior image Hitler was building up. The church was willing to compromise in order to save itself. This indicates the pervasiveness of the attitudes Friedhoffer felt compelled to attack.

A British Bishop tells the audience of Friedhoffer's move to London, and defends it as a way of trying to alert outsiders as to what was happening in Germany. He refers to Friedhoffer's return to Germany to teach in the clandestine seminaries of the Confessing Church.

There follows an impressive series of contrasts between what Erich is teaching in the seminary, and what is being said to the youth of Germany by the Nazis. The Nazi strategy is flag-waving; Erich's is testimony to the Christian faith. Erich's teaching is interrupted by

the arrival of his father, who persuades him to leave for America in view of impending war which, they both know, Erich would be unable to support or serve in. That he still believes his main work is theological, not political, is shown by the line, "I must be where I can do my work, Papa. If it cannot be here, then I must go where it can be done."¹⁸

A narrative speech of the Mother's tells of the start of the war. Erich, in New York, agonizes over his decision for the future. He is shown at prayer:

Father, I no longer know why I am here. What am I to do?
Do you wish me to stay here in safety while my people in
my homeland suffer? Will I have the right to go back to
work with them for a new life after it is all over if I do
not share the trials of this time with them? Oh, God, show
me the way! Am I to go--or am I to stay?¹⁹

The strategy of revealing shows how Erich's innermost being is tormented by the struggle that continues to build up in him. His answer comes with the help of a passage from the book of Jeremiah. He returns to Germany.

His sister, Eva, her husband and Fritz ask him to join the conspiracy in the plot to assassinate Hitler. He is greatly shocked. He answers, "No! I could never do this. Eva, you knew that. You knew I could never consent to--murder."²⁰

In the next scene, Erich is visited by Heinrich Müller, a representative of the government. He warns Friedhoffer against getting involved in any resistance activities. Using the strategy of mirroring, he reflects the traditional view of religion as he says,

I beg of you, don't be a fool! You have no call to
sacrifice yourself. You are a man of God. Stay with
that. Hang onto it like grim death. Friedhoffer,
for God's sake, stay with the next world and leave
this one to those who really think it matters!²¹

To which Erich responds, "And what if I think it matters!"²² Here he alludes to the conviction which grew steadily stronger in him that the world is the arena of God's concern and activity.

Erich says, "You have helped me to see things I have never been able to see before," and Müller departs. There is then a scene in which Erich is depicted in a deep and exhausting battle between his accepted values and what seems to be a divine call. He hears the sounds of hatred and anti-Semitism, and he hears the words of Jesus, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt."²³ These words were spoken by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and are associated with temptation and suffering. The strategy is to identify Erich with a struggle of a similarly profound nature. It is plain that his decision will be based on his faith.

We very quickly learn his decision, for Eva enters, and Erich tells her that he is ready to join their group. He tells her, "It means I wish to join you, my sister. And may God have mercy on our souls."²⁴ There are echoes here of his discussion with the Professor of the "Sin boldly" passage from Luther. Erich expects that God will have mercy on their souls. The first act ends with the recitation by Fritz of the second stanza of "Stations on the Road to Freedom."

Once Erich commits himself to the conspiracy, he is the most zealous and indefatigable of them all. He undertakes a dangerous mission to Sweden as the group tries to get assurance of support from Germany's enemies in the event they can successfully depose the government. As he and Johann discuss some of their personal feelings about what they are

doing, Johann says, "The hand that is raised when the time comes will not even be ours, for that matter." Erich replies, "No, Johann. . . if the time does come when the hand is raised, whether or not it is ours, it will be ours. And the guilt will be ours." Johann responds, "And feeling this way, Erich, how do you go ahead? How can you--" and Erich answers, "I throw myself in the arms of God--and pray to watch with Christ in Gethsemane."²⁵ Once again, the strategies of testimony and identification are employed. Erich has a strong sense of corporate guilt, as well as corporate mercy.

This mission fails, but Erich is determined to go on in spite of the general sense of despair. Eva agrees and declares that she would have nothing to live for if they were to give up now. Erich replies,

Never say that. Eva, I forbid you! You always have something to live for. Life is to be lived for--God is to be lived for. Do you think we are here for no purpose? Perhaps we cannot see it at the moment, but it is always there. Even now, we are living in that purpose, breathing that purpose. It is hard? Who told us it would always be easy? We are lonely? Who told us we would never have to be lonely? We are alive, my sister--and God Himself, alone and in agony, died upon a cross to let us know He cares! How do we dare ask for more?²⁶

The strategy here is a combination of chiding and testimony. Erich feels that his sister has expressed a feeling that is contrary to what they are really doing. Their goal is not just to kill Hitler; their goal is to live the life of obedience to God, regardless of the policies of the state. Now, that means trying to kill Hitler. Later, it will mean something different. But he feels he must chide his sister for confusing the means with the end. It is also an example of Erich's faith--a faith that sustains him even in the most discouraging circumstances.

The next scene tells of Erich's arrest and imprisonment by the Gestapo. Ernst reads stanza three of "Stations on the Road to Freedom." "Suffering," and relates how Erich was able to send letters out of prison to his family and friends. He reads from one of them as the lights come up on Erich, who acts out what is being read. Then Erich is taken for interrogation.

The interrogator, Dr. Keppler, tempts Friedhoffer with the prospect of being returned to his family just by saying a few words. Erich replies,

No! I will not! I am a Christian, Dr. Keppler. Do you know what that means? It means that mine is the cause of Christ. I cannot deny him. He is my mother and my father --my brothers and my sisters. I have no choice. Hitler is not my leader. I have no leader but Jesus Christ.²⁷

The strategy of testimony reveals Friedhoffer's determination to maintain his commitment in the face of grave pressure to conform. After Keppler threatens to torture his family, Friedhoffer shows that such tactics only reinforce his determination. He responds,

Oh, I see it now. I see it clearly. You have given me a new picture of reality, Dr. Keppler, and for that I must thank you. Satan is truly at work in the world. And he has men to help him; not only to help him but happy to help him. And thus you are not men at all, but fiends!

Oh, I admit, you succeeded for a moment when you tempted me to distrust my own motives. But now you have gone too far. Now you are out in the open where the battlefield is clearly marked and victory is already won! Did you think I could not take the risk? Well, you were mistaken. I can take the risk--I do take it--and my family takes it with me. Because unlike you and the others like you, we know we do not take it alone! So do your worst, fiend. Use the old ways to torture us or find new ones if you can! Myself and all those dear to me I place in the hands of God. And you--you I leave to His judgment!²⁸

Friedhoffer is using strategies of contempt and challenging in these lines. He shows his contempt for Keppler and the regime he represents by calling them "fiends," and by leaving them to the judgment of God. The challenge is summed up in "So do your worst, fiend." Freidhoffer is prepared for the battle that must be waged immediately, but his language suggests that he has another, more universal battle in mind: the struggle between good and evil. It is by being placed "in the hands of God" that the "victory is already won." Thus the strategy of testimony to faith is also present.

Dr. Keppler reacts with fury to this challenge and orders Erich removed. As he is led away, Erich turns and says, "Tell me, Dr. Keppler, when they told you there was no such place as heaven, did they also tell you there was no hell?"²⁹ He appears to be goading his interrogator in that line--at least it has the effect of making Keppler even angrier. It is the kind of question, however, that might well stick in the minds of members of the audience, and cause them to consider the nature of good and evil.

The scene that follows shows Erich's helpfulness to the guards and to other prisoners during an air raid. It also reveals Erich's own fears and anguish. It is followed by a scene introduced by the mention of a letter written on July 21st, 1944, the day after the assassination attempt had failed. During the scene, Friedhoffer learns from a guard of the failure of the scheme into which he had put so much effort and hope. He also learns that some secret documents have been uncovered which connect a number of people with the conspiracy. His shock is obvious, but he manages to remain non-committal in his conversation with the guard. After the guards departure, he takes the bread the guard

has brought, breaks it and realizes the similarity between what he is doing and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.³⁰ He prays quietly, and then "speaks" the letter he is writing to Ernst.

I have discovered that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to believe. How can success make us arrogant or failure lead us astray when we participate in the sufferings of God by living in this world?

I am sure of God's hand and guidance. You must never doubt that I am thankful and glad to go the way which I am being led. My past life is abundantly full of God's mercy and, above all sin, stands the forgiving love of the Crucified. . . . Take care of yourself and don't lose hope--we shall all meet again soon!³¹

This is a strategy of encouragement. Erich's faith in spite of the tragic news may be a helpful example to his friend. It also shows his acceptance of the blow that "living completely in this world" has brought him. It is important to distinguish acceptance from resignation. There is no hint of resignation in this speech--only a hopefulness that springs from his courage and his faith.

In the final scene, Erich is preaching to a small group of his fellow prisoners. He says,

And we must always live close to the presence of God for that is newness of life, and then nothing is impossible, for with God all things are possible; no earthly power can touch us without his will. We can claim nothing for ourselves--and yet we may pray for everything.³²

He is giving encouragement out of his own personal testimony. In a situation that seems to offer nothing but despair, he speaks of hope. His faith in God is put into terms that share his convictions with his hearers.

Together, Erich and the others recite a passage from the Old Testament that concerns suffering. They are interrupted by two Gestapo

agents who have come for Erich. In bidding farewell to a fellow prisoner, Erich says, "This is the end, but for me--it is the beginning of life."³³ He recites the final stanza of "Stations on the Road to Freedom," and the lights slowly go out.

We now ask whether or not the rhetoric of the playwright preserves the integrity of the ideas of the central character as evidenced by the rhetoric in the original works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. To answer this question we will look at the ideas which are central to Erich Friedhoffer in the play, and compare them with the ideas of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as we found them in our analysis of him and his rhetoric. First, Erich had a profound faith in God. We see this in the childhood scene, in his testimony before the Professor and among his students in the seminary of the Confessing Church, in his testimony and challenge to Dr. Keopler and in his letter from prison. This is also one of the key ideas found in Bonhoeffer. The strategies of expressing it are similar, as well.

Second, Erich believed that he must obey God at all costs. We find this most explicitly in his chiding of Eva and his testimony at that point; but it is implied in many places, especially in the scenes where he is depicted as wrestling with a decision about future undertakings. This, too, we found to be true of Bonhoeffer. It was found there more often in the analysis of Bonhoeffer as agent, but was explicitly stated in the rhetoric as well.

Third, Erich recognized the evil and idolatry of the Nazi regime. This is, of course, behind all of his actions in opposition to it, since he was convinced he was obeying God. It is expressed in his reaction to

the propaganda speech on the radio, and in the responses to his own speech from the network executive and the German cleric. Once again we find Bonhoeffer expressing the same idea. With him as with Friedhoffer, it is a basic underlying factor. It is also stated in the rhetoric.

Fourth, Erich believed that the church had been unfaithful. This is shown by his disassociation with the established church, and by his reaction to Herr Müller's compromising attitude. It does not, however, constitute in the play as important an idea as it did in the life of Bonhoeffer himself. There it was a major theme in the essay on Baptism.

Fifth, Erich had a severe conflict of ideas between the theological and the political spheres; between his traditional beliefs and what he came to see as God's will for him. This is the focus of several important scenes. It is adumbrated in the depiction of his reverence for life in the meadow scene. It is the central theme of the scene in New York and the scene in the garden of his home after the visit of Müller. We found no hint of this in the rhetoric of Bonhoeffer which was selected for analysis. In the discussion of agent, Bethge refers once to the difficulty Bonhoeffer had in adjusting to the new convictions he held and was following, but the decision is seen as a more gradual process. When we look at the nature of the decisions and events involved, we cannot help but believe that there was a good deal of struggle for Bonhoeffer, but that he simply did not talk about it much. It would be very difficult to portray a long, gradual process on stage and retain dramatic interest.

Sixth, Erich had a great hope for the future. This was based on his faith in God, as we see in his testimony to Eva in the chiding scene,

and in the letter of July 21st. It is implicit in many spots where he is seen working and planning purposefully, rather than resignedly.

Thus, on the basis of four direct parallels in ideas and two strong associations with no contradictory findings, we would answer that the playwright did, in fact, preserve the integrity of the ideas of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the character of Erich Friedhoffer.

In the play, we see Erich as, above all, a man of faith. His commitment to whole-hearted obedience to God comes across over and over in both speech and action. It is central to him, and he urges it for others. We find him to be a man of action, not content with words or theories, even though they be theologically correct. He must follow what he believes with what he does. This is not achieved without a struggle, however. He faces agonizing decisions over what action he is called to take. Once the decision is made, he gives himself to it with complete dedication.

In what he says and the activities he undertakes, we discover that he is committed to the idea that God is very much in the world, and that that is where man must serve him. He finds much to enjoy in the world, in spite of its evils. He enjoys his family, his friends, his work, the out-of-doors, his music. There is a strong identification of Erich and what he says and what he does. Act, agent and purpose are fused by the depth of Erich's deep convictions.

These are the same qualities we found in Dietrich Bonhoeffer. As we studied him as agent, we found his crucial decisions to be made more gradually than they are depicted by the playwright, but the essential nature of them is not distorted. The most recurrent feature of his

rhetoric we found to be testimony--the stating of the theological bases of his convictions and acts. This is also true of Erich. Bonhoeffer came increasingly to espouse a "religionless" Christianity, a trend reflected in Erich's prison scenes, though not as markedly as found in the passage about baptism.

The overwhelming sense of absolute obedience to God is clear in both the historical man and the dramatic character. The act of execution is the sign of the refusal of both to give up that part of themselves. They remained faithful to what they conceived of as God's will for them.

These then are the elements by which the playwright was successful in preserving the integrity of Bonhoeffer's ideas in the rhetoric of the play.

NOTES

1. Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, trans. Eric Mosbacher, et al. (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 9.

2. Elizabeth Berryhill, The Cup of Trembling (unpublished manuscript, 1953).

3. Ibid., p. 1.

4. Ibid.

5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1953), pp. 228-9.

6. Elizabeth Berryhill, op. cit., p. 2.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 4.

9. Ibid., p. 5.

10. Ibid., p. 6.

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Ibid., p. 10.

13. Ibid., p. 11.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p. 12.

16. Ibid., p. 13.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 16.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 20.

21. Ibid., p. 24.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p. 26.

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 29.
26. Ibid., p. 31
27. Ibid., p. 35.
28. Ibid., p. 36.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 42.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., p. 44.
33. Ibid., p. 45.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

We asked whether or not the rhetoric of the playwrights preserves the integrity of the ideas of the central characters as evidenced by the rhetoric found in their original works. In attempting to answer that question, we have made a rhetorical analysis of two men, Sir Thomas More and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, using the dramatic pentad and the naming of strategies. We have then made a similar analysis of two plays, A Man for All Seasons, in which More is the central character; and The Cup of Trembling, in which the central character is modelled after Bonhoeffer.

In both instances, we discovered similar relationships among the elements of the pentad. The playwrights were able to relate the characters, or agents, to their situations in such a way that the message of the entire event was portrayed faithfully. We also found many identical and similar strategies being used by the historical figure and the dramatic character. This can be partially attributed to the playwrights' use of the exact words of the person. But mostly it comes from an ability in characterization that gives an air of authenticity to the playwrights' creations. Thus we find the strategy of testimony being used by both men, and by both characters. It is an important aspect of personality and purpose in each case.

In addition to these similarities we found that the key concept

in the lives of these two men, namely conscience, stands out clearly in the two plays. With Sir Thomas More, it is the word "conscience," and the need to preserve that portion of his "self" that constitutes his essential honesty. With Bonhoeffer, it is called obedience to God. In both cases, it is the area of selfhood in which the man perceives his integrity to reside. It is the underlying factor that unites the man and his situation. In both cases, the playwright kept this identifying characteristic intact.

By tracing major ideas we found in both cases that those of the central character in the play were essentially the same as those of the historical men studied. This was somewhat more complex in the case of Bonhoeffer than it was with More. This is because the latter left us one single example of rhetoric that dealt wholly with the great issue that determined so much of his later years; namely, the matter of the King's divorce. It was the one issue on which More conspicuously rebelled against the King. Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, opposed everything the Nazis stood for, but his rhetoric was much more general and was focussed, not on his opposition to the Nazis, but on his obedience to God and the meaning of that in many areas of life. Nevertheless, with both men the playwrights succeeded in selecting the strategies and the ideas that faithfully represented what the historical figures had believed.

We conclude, therefore, that the playwrights did preserve the integrity of the ideas of the historical figures through the rhetoric of their plays.

It may be instructive to ask how the playwrights achieved this

result. Some of the ways, such as use of the same or similar strategies, use of the person's own words, preserving the relationships among the elements of the pentad, have already been mentioned. Using the same words will not automatically insure preserving the integrity of ideas. The playwright has to find some way of making them believable. All of the elements of characterization are involved. The words must be introduced at the right time, so that the audience is prepared to accept them. Whether he uses the dramatistic pentad or some other device, these are the elements of the situation that must be kept in balance in order to make the words believable.

Another means of preserving the integrity of the man's ideas is to highlight certain events and details in the story and eliminate or play down others. This allows the focus of the drama to remain on those traits the playwright wishes to emphasize. Fortunately, both of the playwrights in this study chose to emphasize the right traits to portray accurately the essential nature of their subjects. Both of them eliminated certain characters in their stories in order to concentrate more on those who contributed more to the heroes' essential image. For example, of More's four children and numerous wards, only one appears in the play; Bonhoeffer had seven brothers and sisters, but Erich has only two.

Both playwrights had one excellent device built into their stories, both for achieving a sense of drama and for making the ideas of their central characters believable--the executions. The decision to forfeit his life rather than give up his convictions does a great deal to make a man appear believable, and both playwrights make good use of these

dramatic realities from their characters' histories. The actual executions are handled with restraint, but are made realistic enough to convey the strength and finality of the act.

In comparing the two characters, we find that they had many circumstances in common, in addition to the matter of conscience already mentioned. They were both interested in theology, though More was a layman and Bonhoeffer an ordained clergyman. Both had a great interest in the relationship between the church and the state. Both of them lived in totalitarian states, and it was this fact that made their stands on conviction more noticeable than they might otherwise have been, and that led eventually to their deaths. In what we read of More's discourse, it would appear that he was ready to go along with the state, or more accurately, King Henry, in almost everything except the matter of the marriage and the laws that pertained to it; whereas Bonhoeffer apparently saw no good in the Nazi regime and was totally opposed to it. Though neither made his stand alone, Bonhoeffer probably had more company in his point of view than More did. For both of them, death was inevitable once they determined to persevere in the stands they had taken.

There are several important and significant ideas which come from these two men via the plays. One is the importance of keeping the "self" intact. The contrast between the men who refused to violate the innermost fortress of their being and those saved their lives by compromise and adaptation is stark. It shows a nobility that does not end at death, but can be transmitted through history. Those two who found life so enjoyable and rewarding were not afraid of death, and considered it to be a lesser evil than the betrayal of their convictions. We are also

reminded that there are certain functions of the state that are legitimate, and some which are not. When the state attempts to intrude on the domain that should be reserved to the individuals in it, something essential is lost, and strong men will fight and, if necessary, die to keep it from being lost forever. In making their fight, both men found tremendous strength in their faith. More had an additional weapon in the law, and he used it mightily.

What are the implications of the conclusion we have reached? For those who are interested in rhetoric, it is important to realize that rhetoric can be preserved when transferred from its original form to drama. If a view is important enough to try to persuade people to adopt it, then it should be important enough to use the best rhetorical means available. This analysis demonstrates that drama can be used as one of those means, and should be considered as a possibility when various means are being considered.

Of course, drama has been used as the vehicle of rhetoric in many instances. These two are just two examples of many fine plays that have had persuasive elements built into them. Howard Taubman says in speaking of the debate and controversy aroused by the play, The Deputy, "It is a reminder of the enormous power of the theater as a forum for burning, controversial ideas. That power has been implicit in the stage for millenniums."¹ He gives examples from many different historical eras. He concludes:

There is something else about the theater. It is a vivid, communal experience. In the very process of being acted out, a theme becomes tangible and visible. If it conveys shock and excitement, the emotional radiations between stage and audience deepen the group reaction and intensify the individual response.

No one would wish the theater to be only a sounding board for broadsides and polemics. It can be so many other things--escape, laughter, mystery and, most important of all, a high ennobling art that reveals us to ourselves. But it is remarkably hospitable to the expression of overpowering convictions and moral indignation. What a pity that it is not asked more often to be an exhilarating clearing house for daring, searching new ideas, right or wrong.²

It might be asked more often if more people who have rhetorical interests realized that drama can faithfully preserve the integrity of the ideas of the people who become its characters. The results of this study indicate that it can.

NOTES

1. Howard Taubman in Dolores Barracane Schmidt and Earl Robert Schmidt, The Deputy Reader: Studies in Moral Responsibility (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1965), p. 68.

2. Ibid., p. 69.

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