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pean editions of *Ulysses*, rather than the relative excellence of the defenses presented, constitute the major differences between the two court actions. Ironically, John Quinn's unsuccessful presentation, the object of Joyce's criticism and Margaret Anderson's ridicule, anticipated the legal and extralegal grounds on which *Ulysses* was to be approved in 1933. As Mr. Ernst himself has observed and as the story of the two *Ulysses* trials illustrates better than perhaps even he realizes, "The test for obscenity is still at the subjective stage."³⁶

³⁶ Ernst, "Reflections on the *Ulysses* Trial and Censorship," p. 8.

Muckraking and the American Stage: The Emergence of Realism, 1905-1917

Maxwell Bloomfield

Louis Filler, in a bibliographical essay published several years ago, pointed up the need for re-examining the work of the muckrakers in terms of its lasting impact upon American culture.¹ Did these popular reformers influence changes in the arts, as they did in politics and economics? A study of the twentieth-century theater in America offers convincing proof that they did.

As long ago as 1916 a shrewd critic, writing for the *Nation*, observed that one might well "call Miss Ida Tarbell the mother of dramatic realism in this country. . . . It was she who gave rise to the flood of muckraking which swept over us during the first decade of the century, and it was undoubtedly the muckraking spirit which begot the first serious attempt to bring the American stage into close contact with life."² The state of American drama before 1900 lends strong support to this argument.

In the post-Civil War era it was virtually impossible for a playwright to establish a reputation by writing on an American theme. The few who did make the grade, such as James A. Herne and Bronson Howard, only cast into sharper relief the widespread failure of their contemporaries. Audiences, wrestling in real life with the uncertain mores of the Gilded Age, shied away from fictional presentation of current problems, and sought escape in the form

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¹ Louis Filler, "The Muckrakers: In Flower and In Failure," in Donald Sheehan and Harold C. Syrett, eds., *Essays in American Historiography* (New York, 1960), pp. 251-270.

² Harold de Wolf Fuller, "The Realism of the American Stage: The Drama of Exposure and the Reforming Spirit," *Nation*, CII (March 16, 1916), 307.

of English comedies or adaptations from the French and German. The leading producers of the day—Augustin Daly, Lester Wallack, A. M. Palmer—yielded to popular demand. When the first great theatrical syndicate was organized by Charles Frohman in 1896, it concentrated on European imports to the exclusion of native American talent.³

Only after 1898 did the outlook for a national drama brighten, as a result of the stimulus of the Spanish-American War. This "splendid little war," with its easy victory over Spain, produced an effect in America roughly comparable to the exhilaration experienced by England three centuries earlier at the defeat of the Spanish Armada. A wave of patriotic pride swept over the country, and in its wake came a renewed interest in a genuine American drama. Within a few years critics could report with satisfaction that 90 per cent of the plays being produced were written by Americans, while foreign works had all but ceased to attract the public's attention.⁴

The new accent on Americanism was by no means uncritical, however. While wartime success raised the nation to the status of a global power, with dependencies in the Caribbean and the Pacific, it brought built-in worries as well. Only a strong America, united on the home front, could hope to maintain for the future its enhanced position in world affairs. But the home front, at the turn of the century, offered little evidence of peace and harmony. Working-class unions battled with employers for the control of industry; political bosses, at the local and national levels, flaunted their allegiance to an "invisible government" of wealth and privilege; while in metropolitan slums the influx of disaffected immigrants from southern and eastern Europe mounted year by year, creating a potential revolutionary mob. Such malfunctioning of the democratic process clamored for correction, and in re-

³ John Corbin, "The Dawn of the American Drama," *Atlantic Monthly*, XCIX (May, 1907), 632-644. See also Marvin Felheim, *The Theater of Augustin Daly* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. 285-308.

⁴ Robert Grau, "The Prosperity of American Playwrights," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, LXXXIX (April, 1912), 617-619; Corbin, "Dawn of the American Drama," pp. 632-633. For similar comments from a British critic, see William Archer, "The American Drama Revisited," *Independent*, LXII (June 27, 1907), 1519-1525.

sponse the muckraking movement took shape among the country's journalists.⁵

Ida M. Tarbell was among the first in the field with her *History of the Standard Oil Company*. This immensely popular study, serialized in *McClure's Magazine* over a nineteen-month period (1902-1904), was reprinted in book form in 1904. It described, in colorful detail, the methods by which John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and his associates had established a monopolistic control over the oil industry of the United States. The story itself was a familiar one. Henry Demarest Lloyd had covered the same ground a decade earlier in his *Wealth against Commonwealth* (1894), displaying a much surer grasp of economic and legal realities.⁶ Nor did Miss Tarbell propose anything startling in the way of a remedy. She merely urged the suppression of monopoly as a means of restoring the good old days of unbridled competition by small producers.

Yet in one important respect *The History of the Standard Oil Company* did break new ground. Its tone, or style of presentation, set it off sharply from earlier attacks on big business. For Miss Tarbell was not content to list the crimes of an impersonal corporation; behind every act of the oil trust she saw the hand of an individual malefactor. That this sinister figure turned out, in most cases, to be Mr. Rockefeller himself did not deter her from denouncing him by name, over and over again, until "Standard Oil" and "Rockefeller" came to seem almost interchangeable terms.

Such personalizing and simplifying of economic issues appealed strongly to the middle-class public served by *McClure's* and the other muckraking journals. Readers with little taste for abstract theorizing developed an intense interest in political and economic problems once they learned that specific individuals were to blame for them. The "personal touch" characterized not only Miss Tarbell's work, but that of the entire muckraking school. Even the most sophisticated reporters, such as Lincoln Steffens, who stretched

⁵ Standard accounts of the muckraking movement are Louis Filler, *Crusaders for American Liberalism* (New York, 1939), a vigorous but uncritical survey; and Cornelius C. Regier, *The Era of the Muckrakers* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1932), a scholarly study which seeks to distinguish between authentic muckrakers and mere scandalmongers. For an excellent anthology of muckraking articles, see Arthur and Lila Weinberg, eds., *The Muckrakers* (New York, 1961).

⁶ On Lloyd, see Daniel Aaron, *Men of Good Hope* (New York, 1951), pp. 133-171.

the web of guilt to cover all society, still insisted that "society" meant individual people who had the power and the duty to remedy the evil conditions they had helped to create. For the assessment of responsibility implied as its corollary an urgent call to reform. The muckrakers demanded an end to corruption in business and politics but, more important, they preached the need for a new set of moral values to guide American society. Men and institutions, after all, were but reflections of the moral climate in which they operated. Neither a Rockefeller nor a municipal franchise gang could flourish unless their get-rich-quick outlook enjoyed popular approval. The major challenge to reform, therefore, lay in the false spirit of "commercial Machiavellism" which permeated men's thinking, and to the task of remolding public opinion along more humane and democratic lines the muckrakers directed their best efforts.

David Mark Chalmers, the most recent student of the movement, has observed that "whether or not it was a substitute for the middle class absence of a consciousness of class consciousness, they placed great emphasis upon the role of public-spirited altruism."⁷ In the Christian ethic they found their most appealing alternative to the business ethic. Few of them espoused any sectarian creed, but all looked to the Sermon on the Mount as a guide to practical conduct, urging especially the simple justice of the Golden Rule. Preoccupied with such long-range proselytizing, they demonstrated little imagination in dealing with specific political and economic issues. Critics, relying on their proposals for tariff revision, direct primaries, more stringent antitrust laws, and the like, have labeled them as superficial, naïve, and lacking even a genuine radical program.⁸ Yet an evaluation of this kind misses the heart of the muckraking position. In their own view the muckrakers were moral innovators, less concerned with the passage of new laws than with the just administration of all law. They chose to work on the grass-roots level of public opinion, believing that once people learned the true meaning of fair play and equal

⁷ David Mark Chalmers, *The Social and Political Ideas of the Muckrakers* (New York, 1964), p. 112.

⁸ See, for example, Lewis Mumford, *The Golden Day* (New York, 1926), pp. 239-246; Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism* (New York, 1963), pp. 160-161.

opportunity they could be trusted to translate these concepts into practical realities. Here, if anywhere, lay their greatest weakness: a confusion between thought and deed, the belief that knowledge in itself must lead to some sort of remedial action. Human nature belied these confident expectations so that the brave new world of the muckrakers never developed beyond the blueprint stage. Still, as gadflies to the national conscience, the crusading journalists of the early twentieth century exerted a tremendous influence. By exposing injustice and discrimination throughout the body politic, they insured that the American public could never again plead ignorance of the darker facts of life.

Between 1903 and 1912 nearly two thousand muckraking articles appeared in popular magazines, accompanied by supporting editorials and cartoons.⁹ The work begun for *McClure's Magazine* by Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, and Lincoln Steffens inspired a host of fact-finding reporters and had unexpected repercussions in other quarters as well. The theater, in particular, experienced a veritable revolution as a result of the impact of muckraking journalism upon a group of young dramatists who together constituted the first school of realistic writers for the American stage. The creation of this school was largely the work of one man, a long-forgotten playwright named Charles Klein.

Klein (1867-1915) was already a successful and prolific hack writer when the rise of muckraking opened more ambitious prospects before him. Born in London into a family of actors and musicians, he came to the United States at the age of sixteen to seek his fortune in show business. For several years he worked as an actor, taking the juvenile lead in such Broadway productions as *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. But his major interest lay in writing rather than performing, and the modest success of his first effort, *By Proxy* (1891), persuaded him to become a full-time dramatist.

Between 1891 and 1905 Klein wrote more than sixteen plays which established his reputation as a purveyor of light comedy and sentimental love stories. His collaboration with John Philip Sousa, the "march king," produced one of the most popular musicals of the nineties, *El Capitan* (1896). And he scored an even greater success with his tearful melodrama, *The Music Master* (1904), in

⁹ Chalmers, *Social and Political Ideas of the Muckrakers*, p. 15.

which a courageous old German pianist struggles to locate his long-lost daughter in America.¹⁰

These early triumphs reflected the narrow limits within which dramatists were expected to operate. Klein longed to deal with serious issues, to discuss over the footlights the problems which were agitating contemporary society. Politics in America had always fascinated him, and he had begun, at one time, the study of law. But whenever he tried to work such themes into his plays, the response was disheartening.

His first attempt at a political drama occurred in 1895, in the wake of the Lexow Committee's investigation of vice and crime in New York City. Seeking to exploit, for dramatic purposes, the committee's revelations concerning corruption within the New York police department, Klein joined forces with Harrison Grey Fiske in creating *The District Attorney*. This timely piece opened on January 21, 1895, to enthusiastic reviews, but ran only forty days. A second effort, written by Klein alone, fared even worse. *Hon. John Grigsby* (1902), which centered about the election of a Lincoln-esque politician, registered only twenty-seven performances.¹¹ The public clearly had little interest in political questions, though by October, 1902, less than eight months after the failure of *Grigsby*, there were intimations of a change in popular taste. The muckrakers were beginning their work.

Klein waited for the muckraking movement to establish itself securely before he sought again to expose political conditions on the stage. Then in 1905 he brought out *The Lion and the Mouse*, a play which owed its inspiration all too clearly to Miss Tarbell's *History of the Standard Oil Company*. The "lion" of the title is Ready Money Ryder, colossus of the business world, a blend of the elder Rockefeller and his chief lieutenant, Henry H. Rogers. Opposing Ryder's unscrupulous schemes stands the "mouse," a young journalist named Shirley Rossmore, who bears more than a passing resemblance to Ida Tarbell. And to complete the picture, audi-

¹⁰ Details of Klein's early career may be found in John Chapman and Gar- rison P. Sherwood, eds., *The Best Plays of 1894-1899* (New York, 1955), pp. 2, 118, 153, 154, 172, 184, 191, 200, 237, 395; "The Lounger," *The Critic*, XLVIII (May, 1906), 398-399; and Bailey Millard, "The Merrivold Dramatists," *Bookman*, XXIX (Aug., 1909), 627-633.

¹¹ Caspar H. Nannes, *Politics in the American Drama* (Washington, D.C., 1960), pp. 43, 47.

ences were treated to a romance between Shirley and Jefferson Ryder, whose rejection of his father's standards tallied with the popular image of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

The plot, a wildly improbable affair, turns upon Shirley Rossmore's penetration of the Ryder household through the use of a *rom de plume*. Installed as confidential secretary to Ryder, Sr., she seeks to uncover the facts which will save her father, an incorruptible Supreme Court justice, from impeachment at the hands of Ryder's henchmen. The methods of big business, as outlined by Ida Tarbell and others, form the real center of interest throughout the play. Ready Money Ryder is shown dictating to United States senators whose loyalty he has purchased with his wealth. His son Jefferson reports: "Whenever my father wants anything to happen the papers are full of it. He inspires editorials and magazine articles, declaring things ought to be so, and then somehow or other the things happen." Secret reports from federal regulatory agencies find their way into Ryder's hands in advance of their official publication. And judges who rule against the "amalgamated interests" of Ryder and his associates become the targets of smear campaigns designed to drive them from office.¹²

The mere exposure of such evils did not satisfy Klein's purpose, however. Like the muckrakers he looked for a remedy, and found it as they did, in a program of moral indoctrination. Throughout *The Lion and the Mouse*, Shirley Rossmore labors to convince Ryder that his methods are morally indefensible, much as Ida Tarbell debated the ethics of Standard Oil policies in her interviews with Henry H. Rogers. And on the stage, at least, feminine persuasion wins the day. Ryder, acknowledging at last that, despite his material success, he is little better than a criminal, volunteers to call off the impeachment proceedings against Judge Rossmore and welcomes Shirley as his prospective daughter-in-law. Typical of the arguments leading to his conversion is the following edifying exchange:

SHIRLEY. So you think your life is a good example to follow.
RYDER. Isn't it?

¹² Charles Klein, *The Lion and the Mouse* (New York, 1906), pp. 14, 15, 45, 74, 85, 86. See also Nannes, *Politics in the American Drama*, pp. 30-33; and Caspar H. Nannes, *Independent*, LIX (Dec. 28, 1905), 1524-1533.

SHIRLEY. Suppose we all wanted to follow it, suppose we all wanted to be the richest, the most powerful personage in the world—

RYDER. Well?

SHIRLEY. I think it would postpone the Era of the Brotherhood of Man, indefinitely—don't you?

RYDER. I never looked at it from that point of view. . . .¹³

Understandably most critics took a dim view of *The Lion and the Mouse* and predicted its early demise. But they reckoned without the public's interest in muckraking themes and techniques. Once it became known that Klein's play carried a thinly veiled attack against John D. Rockefeller, Sr., box office receipts skyrocketed. The piece ultimately set a new record in the American theater, achieving 686 performances on the New York stage, the longest continuous run of any play written in America up to that time. In addition, by the spring of 1907, while the show still played to enthusiastic Broadway audiences, critics reported that four separate road companies were carrying its message to all parts of the country.¹⁴

The phenomenal success of *The Lion and the Mouse* marked a turning point in Klein's career and in the development of the American drama. Thereafter Klein continued to take his themes from newspaper and magazine headlines, giving special preference to the *causes célèbres* of the day. In 1906 he wrote *The Daughters of Men*, an ambitious analysis of the capital-labor problem, in which recognizable figures from each camp argued their position and agreed at last to a compromise. Then came *The Third Degree* (1909), an indictment of New York police methods based upon charges made by Harvard psychologist Hugo Münsterberg. Later in the same year Klein's *The Next of Kin* muckraked the courts and exposed alleged deficiencies in the laws governing confinement in mental institutions. The maladministration of funds by New York bankers, a subject of recurring interest ever since the sensational disclosures of the Armstrong Committee in 1905, prompted the writing of *The Gamblers* (1910). In *Maggie Pepper* (1911) Klein focused attention on the life of a working girl in a large department

¹³ Klein, *The Lion and the Mouse*, p. 49.

¹⁴ "Music and the Drama," *Current Literature*, XLII (April, 1907), 427-433; Paul Armstrong and Hartley Davis, "Manager vs. Critic," *Everybody's Magazine*, XXI (July, 1909), 119-130; Burns Mantle and Garrison P. Sherwood, eds., *The Best Plays of 1899-1909* (New York, 1944), p. 501.

store, while in *The Money Makers* (1914) he attacked the so-called Money Trust, whose alleged power had inspired an inconclusive congressional investigation by the Pujo Committee in 1912. None of these later plays approached the popularity of *The Lion and the Mouse*, but at least three of them—*The Third Degree*, *The Gamblers*, and *Maggie Pepper*—proved to be solid hits.¹⁵

Klein's example, moreover, persuaded other dramatists to take up the muckrake in turn. Between 1905 and 1917 a school of popular "realists" flourished in the American theater as a counterpart to the journalists of exposure. Collectively these playwrights transformed the stage into an effective sounding board for the discussion of issues vital to national life. Their work, from a literary standpoint, proved ephemeral, for they concentrated too much on contemporary problems and tended to rely on moral fervor as a substitute for artistic craftsmanship. Probably on this account their real impact has gone unnoticed by professional historians of the theater.¹⁶

To place them in proper perspective (and even, in many cases, to determine their identity), one must resort to the popular magazines of the early twentieth century, to the published essays and reviews of dramatic critics, to the invaluable performance statistics compiled by Burns Mantle and Garrison P. Sherwood, and of course to the plays themselves, where they exist in printed form. A study of these sources reveals the far-reaching scope and importance of the muckraking impulse in American drama.

¹⁵ *The Third Degree* had a Broadway run of 168 performances, while *Maggie Pepper* and *The Gamblers* scored 147 and 192 performances, respectively (Mantle and Sherwood, *The Best Plays of 1899-1909*, p. 577; *The Best Plays of 1909-1919* [New York, 1933], pp. 428, 449). By 1909 Klein was receiving top royalties of 10 per cent on the gross receipts of his plays, and his average annual income was estimated shortly thereafter at no less than one hundred thousand dollars (Hartley Davis, "The Business Side of the Theatre," *Everybody's Magazine*, XXI [Nov., 1909], 665-674; Robert Grau, *The Stage in the Twentieth Century* [3 vols.; New York, 1912], III, 306).

For adverse criticism of Klein's muckraking proclivities, see Walter Prichard Eaton, *At the New Theatre and Others* (Boston, 1910), pp. 135-140; Richard Burton, *The New American Drama* (New York, 1913), pp. 97, 204.

¹⁶ See, for example, Arthur Hobson Quinn, *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day* (2 vols.; New York, 1927), pp. 100-112. Nannes, *Politics in the American Drama*, contains much valuable information on theatrical muckraking, but treats only political themes and makes no effort to relate individual plays to any general muckraking movement within the theater.

Virtually every exposure made by the journalists found an echo in the theater. Lincoln Steffens' articles on municipal corruption provided the background for several plays dealing with the evils of "boss rule" in cities: George Broadhurst's *The Man of the Hour* (1906), Jesse Lynch Williams' *The Stolen Story* (1906), Eugene Walter's *The Undertow* (1907), and Julius Hopp's *Friends of Labor* (1907). Of these, Broadhurst's play, which reproduced most faithfully the "facts" reported by Steffens, also enjoyed the greatest success. Philadelphians and New Yorkers recognized their own reform mayors in the hero, commented a critic in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and "almost any city might put on this dramatic coat."¹⁷ A similar literalness characterized William J. Hurlbut's drama, *The Writing on the Wall* (1909), which capitalized upon journalist Charles Edward Russell's revelations concerning the ownership of New York tenements by the "respectable classes" of Wall Street and Trinity Church.¹⁸

Other muckraking themes transferred to the stage include trust-busting (Owen Davis, *The Power of Money* [1906]); juvenile delinquency (Frederic Ballard, *Young America* [1915]); Mormonism (Harvey O'Higgins and Harriet Ford, *Polygamy* [1914]); child labor (Elmer Blaney Harris, *The Offenders* [1908], Bayard Veiller, *Back Home* [1915]); tenement house conditions (Charles Kenyon, *Kindling* [1911]); prostitution and the white slave traffic (Bayard Veiller, *The Fight* [1912], George Scarborough, *The Lure* [1913], Raachael Marshall and Oliver D. Bailey, *The Traffic* [1914], Robert McLaughlin, *The Eternal Magdalene* [1915]); miscegenation and the race problem (Edward Sheldon, *The Nigger* [1909]); yellow journalism (Joseph Medill Patterson, *The Fourth Estate* [1909], Amélie Rives, *The Fear Market* [1916]); senatorial corruption (Harrison Rhodes and Thomas Wise, *A Gentleman from Mississippi* [1908]); customhouse fraud (Roi Cooper Megrue, *Under Cover* [1914]); "boss rule" in state politics (Isaac Landman, *A Man of Honor* [1911], James S. Barcus, *The Governor's Boss* [1914]); unfair administration of justice (Bayard Veiller, *Within the Law* [1912]).

In addition, the muckraking crusade led indirectly to the pro-

¹⁷ Corbin, "The Dawn of the American Drama," p. 638. See also Names, *Politics in the American Drama*, pp. 45-58.

¹⁸ Eaton, *At the New Theatre*, pp. 99-103.

duction of a number of plays dealing with the sex problem, or the changing status of women in America. This was a subject never adequately explored by the journalists, although its implications were apparent throughout their work, particularly in relation to studies of prostitution and child and woman labor. David Graham Phillips went farthest in attacking the inequities of conventional marriage and in demanding that women be made "equal partners" with men in every sphere of activity. But Phillips championed the cause of the "new woman" primarily through his fiction; only faint allusions to the evil of male tyranny can be found in muckraking journalism proper.¹⁹

For the dramatists of the day, however, the battle of the sexes required no documentation. Once traditional notions of male domination were called into question by magazine writers, the playwrights' imaginations rang endless variations on the theme. Some exposed the economic pressures which drove girls into loveless marriages (George Broadhurst, *Bought and Paid For* [1911]); others portrayed domestic tragedies resulting from the weakness or cruelty of husband or wife (Eugene Walter, *Paid in Full* [1908], Louis K. Anspacher, *The Unchastened Woman* [1915]); while still others condemned the double standard of morality (Rachel Crothers, *A Man's World* [1910], Eugene Walter, *Just a Wife* [1910]), or suggested an answer to marital strife through free-love theories (H. S. Sheldon, *The Haroc* [1911]) or divorce (Joseph Medill Patterson, *Rebellion* [1911], Jesse Lynch Williams, *Why Marry?* [1917]). The desire to improve individual marriages broadened to include the mating of the race in such eugenics dramas as Percy MackKaye's *To-morrow* (1912) and Michael L. Landman's *The Pride of Race* (1916).²⁰

Critics termed all of these plays "realistic," and whether they dealt with business, politics, or sex, they shared certain characteristics which set them apart as a class and betrayed their characterizing antecedents. In the first place, they were all professedly plays of reform, treating controversial subjects from a moral standpoint.²¹

¹⁹ On Phillips, see Chalmers, *Social and Political Ideas of the Muckrakers*, pp. 81-87.

²⁰ Changing attitudes toward women, on and off the stage, are well reflected in William Matly, "Dramatizing the Sex Problem," *Twentieth Century*, II (May, 1910), 106-113. See also Daniel Nelson Koster, *The Theme of Divorce in American Drama, 1871-1939* (Philadelphia, 1942).

point. "We have reached a day when there is very little left which may not be put on the stage," wrote a disgruntled critic in 1913. "One may go to any length if, by a speech, a forced climax or a wrenched ending, the play can be bent to the high cause of reform."²¹ Other commentators praised the educational value of realistic drama, comparing it to the civic theater of ancient Greece or the medieval morality play.²²

Without such ethical justification the stage could never have been liberated so quickly from the influence of long-established taboos in regard to subject matter. Exposure of the uglier aspects of life was not tolerated before 1905 (at least from American playwrights), but the bars were lowered thereafter as part of a crusade to stamp out the evils portrayed. This suggests the second major characteristic of realistic drama: its optimism.

With few exceptions these plays ended on a hopeful note. No problem, it seemed, was too serious or complex to admit of a remedy. The realistic playwright, like the muckraking journalist, rejected all forms of determinism. In so doing he reaffirmed the distinctly American character of his work and dissociated himself from European realists such as Ibsen, Strindberg, Brioux, and Sudermann. Critics noted the obvious differences between the two schools,²³ but perhaps Charles Klein best expressed the prevailing idealism of the American dramatist. "Both Shaw and Ibsen only tell half-truths," he declared. While they were great dramatists, they made no appeal to a general audience because they tended to the "wholesale destruction of its popular ideals."

I am not contending that the hero or heroine should be stage puppets, that they should be completely perfect, that they should be all hero and

²¹ "The Rising Tide of Realism in the American Drama," *Current Opinion*, LV (Oct., 1913), 250. Cf. "Music, Art and Drama," *Independent*, LXI (Dec. 27, 1906), 1544-1557; "The Drama," *World To-day*, XV (Nov., 1908), 1095-1097; William Mailly, "Forward, the Drama of the Idea," *Twentieth Century*, I (Jan., 1910), 298-305.

²² B. O. Flower, "The Theater as a Potential Factor for Higher Civilization, and a Typical Play Illustrating Its Power," *Arena*, XXXVII (May, 1907), 497-509; "The Moral Trend of the American Drama," *Current Literature*, XLIII (Nov., 1907), 550-551; Algernon Tassin, "The Drama as a Moral Force," *Good Housekeeping*, XLIX (Dec., 1909), 644-649; Frances Squire, "The Stage and Democracy," *Twentieth Century*, V (March, 1912), 451-457.

²³ Corbin, "Dawn of the American Drama," pp. 635-638; Fuller, "Realism of the American Stage," pp. 307-308; "Notes," *Nation*, LXXXIII (July 5, 1906), 13-14.

heroine. But should they be all weakness? Should evil predominate in stage characters to such an extent that the human race seems incapable of any good whatsoever? Why should we hold up the weak, the vicious, the ugly, the horrible, as a warning, as something to be avoided, and not hold up the good, the perfect, the beautiful and the pure as examples to follow? Personally I am for a combination—a skilful blending that gives the preponderating power to good and that robs evil of its charm and vice of its alluring qualities. . . . I cannot believe that a man, like Shaw, who denies everything, from pure love to pure music, is a public beneficence; only the man who affirms what is good tells the whole truth.²⁴

In their efforts to present a true picture of social problems, however, the American dramatists confused the forest with the trees. They grew increasingly absorbed in technical details, seeking to reproduce with absolute fidelity the external conditions described by fact-finding reporters. Their plays, as a result, degenerated into a series of carefully contrived photographs, authentic "still lifes" depicting the interiors of police stations, brothels, and tenement houses. *Young America* included a juvenile court proceeding lifted bodily from Ben Lindsey's famous "boy's court" of Denver, Colorado. *The Fourth Estate* exposed the inner workings of a newspaper plant, complete with an operating press. And by 1912 literalness had reached such proportions that one commentator, noting that "in *Bought and Paid For* the intoxicated husband smashes in a real wooden door to effect an entrance to his wife's bed-chamber," demanded of his readers, "Is the Realism of the Stage Running to Seed?"²⁵

Clearly it was, for novel settings provided no adequate substitute for psychological insight into problems of human motivation and character. As the realists improved in mechanical efficiency, their plots grew more hackneyed and implausible. "Of all the political bosses, corrupt financiers, etc., that have recently been seen upon the 'realistic' stage, not one has really lived," complained Harold de Wolf Fuller in 1916, and other critics agreed.²⁶

²⁴ Charles Klein, "Religion, Philosophy and the Drama," *Arena*, XXXVII (May, 1907), 492, 494; Montrose J. Moses, *The American Dramatist* (Boston, 1917), p. 34. Cf. Percy MacKaye, *To-morrow* (New York, 1912), pp. v-viii.

²⁵ "Is the Realism of the Stage Running to Seed?" *Current Literature*, LII (Jan., 1912), 88. Cf. William Mailly, "Drama and Near-Drama," *Twentieth Century*, IV (May, 1911), 104-111.

²⁶ Fuller, "Realism of the American Stage," p. 309. See also Eaton, *At the*

To remedy the shallowness of commercial drama, "art theaters" and "little theaters" sprang up across the country, beginning around 1912. These new movements aimed at placing man once more in the center of the stage and probing his nature more deeply through the application of Freudian psychology. Within a few years psychological realism was supplanting the cruder "realism of exposure" throughout the entire theater, as World War I quenched the fires of social reform and ushered in a period which one historian of the drama has aptly termed "The Psychoanalytic Era."²⁷ But the playwrights of the twenties, however advanced in their attitudes or techniques, built upon the indispensable foundations laid by Klein and his contemporaries. The frank treatment of controversial themes was no contribution of the Jazz Age; that battle, so far as the theater was concerned, had already been fought and won.

It was singularly appropriate, therefore, that the Provincetown Players, the most celebrated "little theater" group, should have chosen to present their first bill of fare at the home of a brilliant ex-muckraker named Hutchins Hapgood.²⁸ In retrospect that event may well serve as a symbol of the renaissance of the American drama, a renaissance which, in its inception, was a product of the muckraking spirit.

²⁷ *New Theatre*, pp. 232-244; Clayton Hamilton, "Dramatic Literature and Theatre Journalism," *Forum*, XLI (Feb., 1909), 135-145.

²⁸ W. David Stevers, *Freud on Broadway* (New York, 1955), p. 65. On the little theater movement, see also Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence* (New York, 1959), pp. 253, 287-290.

²⁸ Stevers, *Freud on Broadway*, p. 53.

The Conflict in *The Golden Bough*: Frazer's Two Images of Man

Timothy Hall Breen

The more than fifty years since the publication of the third edition of *The Golden Bough* have in no way lessened the readability of James George Frazer's prose. The passing years have, however, deadened our appreciation of the impact which *The Golden Bough* originally made on the educated public. The reader of 1913 who followed Frazer through twelve thick volumes learned much that was startling, fresh, and exciting about primitive life.¹ Today, *The Golden Bough* has lost much of its anthropological significance, but the massive work remains a valuable record for the intellectual historian. Frazer's book reveals much about the cultural climate of Europe at the turn of the century. In it Frazer presented two contradictory images of man. One view saw man as rational, evolving upward toward ever higher physical and mental planes; the other was more pessimistic and held that man was an irrational, often quite impulsive, being. The dualism in *The Golden Bough* clearly indicated Frazer's own confusion or indecision concerning the nature of man, but even more important, it may have also reflected a tension within the European mind itself in the two decades before World War I. To understand Frazer's position more fully, we must first examine the conflicting images in detail. We can then turn to Frazer's life, his education, and his friends, in order to place these opposing views in the proper context of European thought.

Frazer's image of rational man was related to evolutionary *con-*
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¹ The first edition of *The Golden Bough* appeared in 1890 in two volumes, the second edition in 1900 in three volumes, and the third edition between 1910 and 1913 in twelve volumes.