PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

1999

The Elevation of Thieves

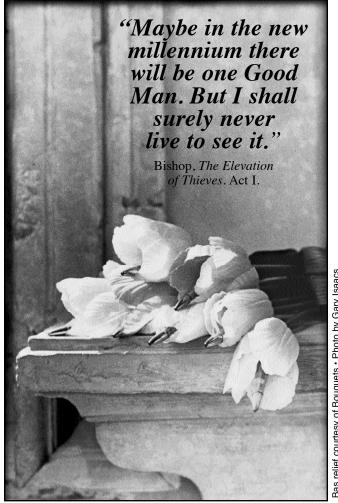
"Things are changing."

— Johnny, The Elevation of Thieves, p. 2.

SYNOPSIS

n an unnamed Western European town, the religious pageant "Elevation of Thieves" is about to receive a makeover. A consultant from the National Theater ■ has been hired by the city fathers to modernize the ritual for tourism purposes. This fact does not please the conservative contingent of the town nor do the numerous nominations for a Muslim immigrant gardener to play one of the characters in this Christian pageant. The Islamic residents feel they are under-represented in the town's affairs and want a presence and a voice.

As the play progresses, the characters' lives revolve around the pageant's makeover, and the town is torn by turmoil as social, religious, racial and economic conflicts explode out of a medieval rite. On this eve of the new millennium, the roots of religion, righteousness and reason are shaken



The Elevation of Thieves references off-stage acts of senseless violence. We believe that presenting the play is in the public interest. We agree with the playwright who said, "This play is about spotting the roots of violence and finding ways to anticipate violence before it's too late."

The opening night proceeds of *The Elevation of Thieves* will be donated to The Healing Fund, established by Mile High United Way and dedicated to assisting the students and faculty of Columbine High School, including victim and community healing and preventive measures to assure a safe future for our children and youth.

Bas relief courtesy of Bouquets · Photo by Gary Isaacs

"In the action of a ritual, a collective articulation is being celebrated; from past experiences and individual responses, a collective attitude is being formed....By rehearsing in an articulated and formal sequence the correct attitude, ritual causes the truth to 'come true.'"

— Richard Potter, The English Morality Play.

'he Catholic Church is normally cred-

ited with the revival of drama after the fall of the Roman Empire in the sixth century. Its patronage and sanction were crucial and drama was an inherent part in the Mass. The church calendar also provided an incentive toward dramatizations because it commemorated particular Biblical events on specific days of the year. By the tenth century, a number of theatrical elements had been incorporated into these annual celebrations in an attempt to make them more colorful. For example, Palm

with an elaborate procession from outside the city to the church. On Good Friday, a cross was often wrapped in burial clothes and placed in a symbolic tomb, from which it was raised on Easter Sunday.

The early liturgical drama is associated primarily with the

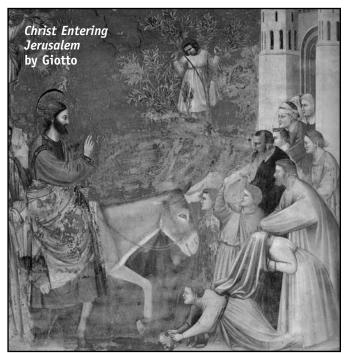
Sunday was usually observed

associated primarily with the Benedictine monasteries. It flourished in Lemoges and Fleury in France, St. Gall in Switzerland, Richenau in Germany, Ripald in Spain, and spread as far as Russia and Scandinavia. During the monastic revival, the arts flourished in England and came to exert considerable influence throughout Europe, but regardless of where it originated, religious drama had been widely adopted before the end of the tenth century.

The oldest and most numerous of existing plays deal with the visit of the Three Marys to the tomb of Christ. The most elaborate Easter dramas date from the 13th century, and one found at Klosterneuberg, Germany includes some of the following episodes: while Roman soldiers are guarding Jesus' tomb, an Angel appears and strikes them dead;

while the Marys stop at a perfume sell-

The Theatre of the Middle Ages



er's stall to purchase ointments and proceed to the tomb, they learn Christ has risen; on the way back to the tomb Mary Magdalene meets Christ disguised as a gardener; Christ is led by two Angels to the gates of Hell, which He forces open to free the imprisoned souls. In spite of the numerous events, there are only about 200 lines of dialogue.

The presentation of religious plays outside the church probably originated in the 12th century. Whatever the date, a number of significant changes had occurred in religious drama by 1400. One of these was the staging of plays outdoors, especially in the spring and summer months. Arenas with multiple stages called "rounds" have survived to this day in Cornwall, Arles, Orange and Nimes. In addition, the newly created feast of Corpus Christi was conceived by

Pope Urban IV in 1264, given official sanction in 1311 and celebrated almost everywhere by 1350. "Since it honored that mystery which to the medieval mind gave meaning to existence (the union of the human and divine in the person of Christ and the promise of redemption through his sacrifice), all Biblical events could be related to it"

Thus, the dramatization of events from Christ's life came to be known as mystery or miracle plays. Finally, another radical change was the abandonment of Latin in favor of the vernacular speech. This change led to the substitution of spoken for chanted dialect and the use of non-clerical actors. It also marked a major step toward national

As the production of plays passed out

of the hands of the church, the delegation and responsibilities for production fell upon the town councils. The councils, in turn, assigned the plays to individual guilds or trade unions. Each guild was then responsible for providing scenery, costumes, properties, special effects, actors, etc. Some of the guilds added comedy in the form of a buffoon or fool.

point of interest in the staging is the positioning of Heaven and Hell in the very elaborate pageants. Almost certainly Heaven was placed to the left and Hell to the right of the acting area as seen by the audience ("dexter" and "sinister" in the play). "This positional symbolism may have been derived from the placing and movement of the priests during Mass...the left side of the altar (from the point of view of the

congregation) was associated with Heaven, the right with Hell."2

Besides religious drama, many villages joined with the Church to produce Christian myths, which were sanctioned by the Church. One of these was the St. George myth. St. George, of dragon-killing fame, also drove the heathen from England and killed the Turkish knight. Records exist of this celebration at Norwich, England as early as 1385 and continuing until 1732.

Whatever the sources, the Medieval plays remain. "[They] preserve for us the voice of common humanity with persuasive simplicity and amusing directness, as well as with realism and wonder, homely detail, and religious transcendence."3

Islam is the religion of Muslims. The word Islam itself is Arabic and best translates into English as "submission." It comes from the Arabic word salaam, which means "peace"; peace not just in the absence of conflict, but a deep, inherent tranquillity. A less literal translation of the word Islam would be akin to "submission to the peace that comes from following in the path of Allah [God]."4

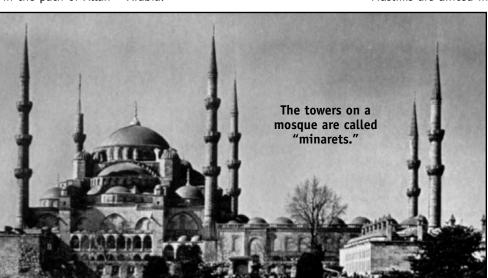
Muslims believe that Allah revealed his divine truths to Muhammad, who was born in Mecca about the year 570 AD in the Christian calendar. Jesus and the Old Testament prophets were predecessors of Muhammad. Unlike Christians who believe Jesus was the son of God. Muslims do not revere Muhammad as a divine figure. He was the insan-i-

kamil, the perfect man, but a man nonetheless. Muhammad specifically warned Muslims against worshipping him, rather than Allah.

Muhammad became a prophet in the year 610 at the age of 40. He worked as a trader in Mecca, with the caravans that traveled the deserts of Arabia and the Levant (the countries of the eastern Mediterranean). He was a respected local figure and became known as someone one could trust, an Al-Amin. A contemplative man, he liked to retire to a cave on Mount Hira, where he could meditate and pray. It was there, during the night the Muslims call the "Night of Power and Excellence" that he received his first revelation, when the archangel Gabriel commanded him to "recite." These revelations, memorized by many Muslims during the time of Muhammed, continued for 22 years and were written down as the Quran (Koran).

The *Quran*, divided into *surahs* (chapters) and verses, is the primary source for Muslim law and beliefs, supplemented by the *hadith* (sayings of Muhammad) which have been collected and cataloged. Both the *Quran* and the *hadith* call for social justice, protection of the poor, widows and orphans, and threatening the power and legitimacy of

the unjust oligarchies who oppress their subjects. Muhammad knew the consequences of what he preached and was at first overwhelmed by humility but continued with the role Allah had given him. He encountered stiff resistance from the Meccan elite to his message of egalitarianism, monotheism and social justice but persisted and his faith triumphed in Arabia.



Islam

"There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah."

-The "Shahadah" or core Islamic creed.

Although Muslims believe in the idea of an international community of faith and brotherhood uniting every believer, they are differentiated by nationality, culture, politics and theology. More than 75 percent of all Muslims in the world are Sunni, who take their name from the Sunnah, the customs and practices of Muhammad. The other fourth of the Muslim population are the Shiah. Most are concentrated in the Middle East, particularly Iran and Iraq. The Sunni/Shiah split originated in a dispute over the successors of Muhammad after his death. Shiahs believe that Ali, the first young male Muslim and Muhammad's son-in-law should have been the first successor

rather than the fourth. The Sunnis believed in the first three successors or *Caliphs*. This disagreement led to the battle of Karbala in 680, in which Ali's son Hussain was beheaded and thousands of Shiah were killed. This battle still resonates with present-day Muslims, whether Shiah or Sunni.

But whether Sunni or Shiah, all Muslims are united in their belief in the

> Islam which are the core of their faith. These are: 1. THE CREED (shahadah) The statement that "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah" is recited during prayer, religious ceremonies and as an assertion of Islamic faith. The shahadah is the core tenet of Islam and by reciting it in front of two Muslim witnesses,

five pillars of

a non-believer converts to Islam.

2. PRAYER (salat)

A Muslim must pray five times a day, every day: before sunrise, noon, mid-afternoon, after sunset and before midnight. Ideally, a Muslim should pray in a mosque; if this is not possible, then a Muslim may pray in any quiet, clean place, facing Mecca, often on a rug kept especially for praying. Islam has no priesthood. Any believing Muslim who knows the *Quran* and is of high moral character may lead the prayers. Prayers are usually led by the *Iman*, the mosque's resident scholar.

3. POOR TAX (zakat)

Zakat is a tax on all Muslims living above the poverty line. It is for the economic relief of poor Muslims. It is not a charity, which is an additional duty. Zakat is paid on wealth according to the amount of property and goods that a Muslim owns, at 2.5 percent. However, it is forbidden to establish any kind of bureaucracy to monitor or collect Zakat; rather, it should be paid out of an individual's conscience. Zakat is part of Islam's message of egalitarianism, that all men are equal in front of Allah. It also illustrates how Islam is a religion of the community in that



Islam in the Western World

"God has made you brethren one to another, so be not divided. An Arab has no preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor is a white one to be preferred to a dark one, nor a dark one to a white."

—Muhammad speaking at Arafat, shortly before his death.

oday there are one billion Muslims in the world, mainly spread throughout the Middle East, Africa, the Indian sub-continent, southeast Asia, Europe and the United States. Most people associate Islam with Arabs, as the country of Saudi Arabia was the birthplace of this religion. But Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country and a number of Arabs now living in the United States are Christian.

Westerners are generally ignorant of the inventions and discoveries of Muslim mathematicians, scientists, doctors and astronomers. In mathematics alone, two of the most important numeric systems, algebra and algorithm, without which the modern computer would never have existed, were invented by Arabs. Earlier, the works of al-Khwarizmi and al-Kashi drew on the Indian mathematical system based on units of ten and zero, which laid the foundations for our numeric system. In the ninth century, the Caliph al-Ma'mum created the House of Science in Baghdad. There scientists from all over the world convened and their works were translated

from Greek, Syrian, Hebrew, Sanskrit and Persian into one language, Arabic. This conversion of knowledge into one single corpus enabled Arab scientists to leap ahead of their European counterparts in fields such as optics, astronomy, medicine and, of course, mathematics. The Turkish Ottoman Empire (13th-14th centuries) left a legacy of outstanding architecture and literature in the Balkans and central Europe. When the Jews were ousted from Spain by the Edict of Expulsion in 1492, the Ottoman Empire welcomed them. These Jewish refugees brought contributions in medicine, printing and military science which the Sultans recognized as important and incorporated into their core of knowledge.

In the 20th century, the collapse of Communism triggered a surge in nationalism and a search for pure ethnicity. In regions that for centuries had been home to a myriad of peoples, we now find countries such as Bosnia, Albania, Bulgaria and Kosovo that have made Muslims the object of their hatred. This situation plus the unrest in the Middle

East has resulted in Muslim resettlement in Western Europe and the United States.

One of these places of refuge is England, especially London. Here, the intellectuals that once lived in Beirut, Lebanon, have settled because it is the "closest major capital to the Middle East and a crossing point where you get the currents from across the Atlantic."5 One of the most illustrious refugees is Dr. Muhammad al-Mass'ari, Secretary General and spokesman of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), who tried to overthrow the monarchy in Saudi Arabia. Al-Mass'ari, whom the British government has tried to deport, uses state-of-the-art technology to send his message to Muslims around the world.

Every major and minor Islamic group has a presence in London including Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front, the Palestinian Hamas, the Tunisian An-Nahda movement and the secular Iraqui opposition organization (the Free Iraqi Council.)

Continued on page 5

ISLAM continued from page 3

Muslims have an obligation to their less well-off brethren.

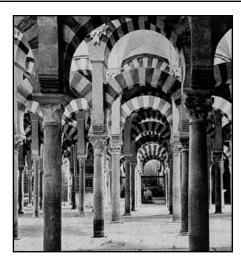
4. FASTING (sawm)

Every Muslim who has reached puberty must fast between dawn and dusk for the 30 days of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic year. Sawm is how Muslims show their obedience to Allah and the ability to do without food, drink, tobacco, or sex. Muslims prepare for the day of abstinence by getting up an hour before dawn and having a large breakfast. Nursing mothers, the sick and travelers are exempt from sawm, but they must make up for lost days by fasting later in the year. The end of Ramadan is marked by a great feast to break the fast and is a time of great

happiness and celebration.

5.PILGRIMAGE (HAJ)

All Muslims must attempt the Haj, the pilgrimage to the Great Mosque at Mecca that houses the Ka'bah, Islam's holiest site, at least once during their lifetime. Muslims believe that the Ka'bah was built by the prophet Ibrahim. But by the time of Muhammad's lifetime the Ka'bah was a shrine to polytheism, filled with idols, until Muhammad destroyed them and began to preach the message of Islam. The core ritual of the Haj is tawaf, circling the Ka'bah seven times counterclockwise, when the *hajji* (pilgrims) attempt to touch or kiss the black stone which Muhammad put in the wall of the Ka'bah.



In its strictest interpretation, Islam forbids the dipiction of human or animal forms in its art and architecture.



ISLAM IN THE WESTERN WORLD continued from page 4

ut not every import from the Middle East is welcome. The cycle of violence in the Israeli-Arab conflict spilled over into the London streets in July 1994, when a car bomb exploded outside the Israeli embassy in Kensington, injuring 14 people. This led to a spate of anti-Islam propaganda. Mr. Bashir, one of the administrators of London's Regent's Park Mosque sees it as a "manipulation by certain individuals and certain countries for their own use ... sadly."6 He says that incidents like the Salman Rushdie affair, the Gulf War, Bosnia, Chechnya, Algeria are incidents that have been used by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Israel to dictate events for their own benefit. In his opinion, these countries care little for their own people, "let alone show concern for anybody who is different from them."7 The propaganda fire is further fueled by the fact that Muslims do not like to debate. They have developed the idea if you don't like someone, you just don't talk with them. Dr. Zaki Badawi, head of the Muslim college in West London who has been described as Britain's foremost Muslim cleric, says this attitude developed from Medieval times. "We do not tolerate different opinions. We find someone who has a different opinion to be threatening and frightening. ... Now any new idea is regarded with suspicion."8

But despite the anti-Islam feeling, British Muslims are there to stay and they want their rights. These include: state aid for Muslim schools, extension of race relations and blasphemy laws to cover Islam. So far, little has been done to satisfy their demands.

However, some equanimity and tolerance do exist in a town called Bradford, England. Home to one of Britain's largest Muslim communities, it boasts 28 mosgues and 14 Islamic schools — and a Muslim town mayor, Muhammad Ajeeb. He says that the Muslim community must stop complaining and putting the blame on others; he also feels it is not up to the host community to provide them with jobs. But, he cautions: "...Britain has become a multi-faith society. We need to start from that recognition and move on....That's why Muslims are concerned. This is their country. If they want to fight for their rights, they have to do it here."9

While the British are mostly respectful of Muslims and have a live-and-let-live philosophy, the situation in France is much different. "France is a lovely country with a lovely culture, but the people, the media, and the government make it like a hell," complains Mustapha Touqui, a lecturer in Islamic theology. ¹⁰ Much of this ill-feeling stems from 1962, when Algeria declared its independence from France. French settlers in Algeria, who had lost everything, returned to France, bitter and angry. Many Muslims left, too, for they saw little future in the Marxist oriented regime.

Muslims are a comparatively new minority in the United States. In the 1970s and 80s, as war and strife spread across Turkey, Afghanistan and the Indian sub-continent, a major influx of immigrants arrived.

Islam is now America's fastest-growing religion.

For many French Muslims, the "headscarf affair," as it came to be known, was a defining moment, confirming them as perpetual outsiders in French society. In 1989, in the Paris suburb of Creil, three Muslim girls were expelled from school for refusing to uncover their heads. The headmaster argued that wearing a veil contradicted the principle of separation of church and state. The case finally reached France's highest court, which ruled that "ostentatious" religious symbols, such as headscarves, were forbidden. Muslim organizations were quick to denounce the decision. Today, they repeatedly ask for acceptance and respect: respect for their culture, their religion and for themselves as human beings.

In Germany, the Muslim message is pounded out by Boe B, lead singer with the Berlin Turkish rap band, Islamic Force. He wants to put his violent past behind him and seeks an intellectual confrontation to force the Germans to accept the country's Turkish minority and

grant them the same rights and freedoms Germans have. But after the fall of Communism, the "quest workers" from Turkey became more than quests, they became residents. With the poor economy in East Germany and the rise of unemployment, these Turkish Muslims became victims of violence, particularly at the hands of Neo-Nazis. To become German citizens, immigrants need 10-15 years of residency, eight years of schooling and they must give up their original nationality. But many Turks, unnerved by Neo-Nazis and the opposition to granting them citizenship, refuse to surrender their Turkish passports.

This uncertainty has led to a segregated Islamic community. This situation will continue unless "Germany changes its politics and opens itself to these people. The normal German man and woman on the street see Islam as something from the last century, something undemocratic....."¹¹

Muslims are a comparatively new minority in the United States. In the 1970s and 80s, as war and strife spread across Turkey, Afghanistan and the Indian sub-continent, a major influx of immigrants arrived. Islam is now America's fastest-growing religion. The United States offers the greatest challenge to those Muslims wanting to live freely as Americans and still maintaining their Islamic beliefs and it is not because of any organized hostility. "The values and mores of contemporary America widespread use of drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, homosexuality, teenage dating, gun ownership—clash completely with the demands of Islamic morality."12

any African Americans are turning to Islam because of the destruction in the black community. Its appeal lies in its message of self-improvement and brotherhood and its discipline, structure and moral grounding. At the moment, the Nation of Islam in the United States is led by Louis Farrakhan, whose record of virulent racism, anti-Semitism and sexism infuriates many mainstream orthodox Muslims.

The World Trade Center bombing in New York was an unmitigated disaster for Muslims living in the US who are lawabiding and peace-loving. The action of a clutch of fanatics painted a whole community with a terrorist's brush. When it

TERMS, NAMES AND PLACES

DIGNER from digne meaning worthy, excellent, deserving

DEXTER of or on the right hand side **SINISTER** of or on the left

NICENE CREED formal statement of the chief tenets of Christian belief, adopted by the first Nicene Council in 325AD

NANA MOUSKOURI France's number one selling recording artist for the last 20 years. Of Greek descent, she sings in 13 languages and wears heavy black-rimmed glasses

ST. MALO a town in France on the Emerald Coast. It is a walled city and may be named after St. Malo, who saved the damned by pulling them out of Hell. He also changed a rock into a chalice to celebrate Mass.

ARTHUR ST. GEORGE name derived from "King" and the English national saint

YOUSSEF OMIR from the pre-Islamic "Imir" meaning flourishing, thriving EMORY from German, meaning worker ALBERT from German meaning noble, bright and famous

CLOTHILDE KRETZEL first name means "famous in battle" and surname possibly from the German "krits" (?) meaning to scribble

TULIP a flower so named from its resemblance to a Turkish turban GOLGOTHA graveyard, burial place

Notes

1. Brockett, p. 98. 7. Lebor, p. 131. 13. Lebor, p. 286. 2. Cawley, et all, p. 13. 8. Lebor, p. 138. 14. Lebor, p. 297. 15. Aoumiel, p. 56. 3. Gassner, p. x. 9. Lebor, p. 156. 4. Lebor, p. 305. 10. Lebor, p. 165. 16. Revitch and 5. Lebor, p. 124. 11. Lebor, p. 201. Schlesinger, p. 80. 6. Lebor, p. 131. 12. Lebor, p. 250.

Sources

Aoumiel. Dancing Shadows. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1994.
Brockett, Oscar G. History of the Theater.
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1974.
Campanelli, Pauline. Rites of Passage.
St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1994.
Cawley, A. C.; Jones, Marion;
McDonald, Peter F.; and Mills, David.
Medieval Drama. London: Metheun,
1983.

Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. *Islamic Society in Practice*. Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 1994.

Fox, James Alan and Levin, Jack. *Overkill*. New York:

Doubleday Publishing Group, 1994.

Gassner, John. *Medieval and Tudor Drama*. New York: Bantam Books, 1963. Lebor, Adam. *A Heart Turned East*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Kelleher, Michael D. *Flash Point*. London: Praeger, 1997.

Revitch, Eugene and Schlesinger, Louis B. *Psychopathology of Homicide*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1981.

Stewart, Bob. *Pagan Imagery in English Folksong*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1977.

World Book Encyclopedia. Volume 10. Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1972 ■

ISLAM IN THE WESTERN WORLD continued from page 5

was learned the conspiracy planned to organize a campaign of urban terrorism across New York, the backlash was immediate. Arson attacks, bomb threats and various forms of harassment were reported by American Muslims.

Ibrahim Hooper, National Communications Director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations says Muslims in America don't want assimilation or isolation. They want Muslim school board members, city council members and mayors who take Muslim views into account whenever big decisions are made in the community. In a country based on immigration and the rights of free speech and assembly, they have a chance to achieve their goals.

And what is the future of Islam in the 21st century? The radical Islamists

will still try to topple the established regimes in the Middle East. At the other end of the scale, Dr. Zaki Badawi of London, is working to develop a modern Islamic theology that will recognize the world as it is and deal with reality instead of a demonized opponent. "Death to America, death to Israel' serves no purpose... America will not die and neither will Israel, especially not through shouting." Islam must evolve according to its new conditions and consequences and to adapt and accept these new conditions.

Islam's message of social justice and combining religious belief with action is rattling the old cages. Islam has replaced Marxism as the ideology of the dispossessed and, unless the West remedies global economic disparities and becomes less selfish, it will only reign by power and force. Both the Muslim world and the western countries must

realize their fates are bound together.

As Mayor Ajeeb of Bradford states: "It's the masses who are questioning why they have no control of their resources....They think they have been cheated for too long. Many of them regard Islam as a panacea for all their grievances. But I think it is going to be hard to find all answers in Islam in the modern age. If you want to adopt Islam, you have to do it according to today's requirements." 14

"God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves." —Quran, Chapter 13, Verse 11.



Commentary

Pre-Christian and Christian References in The Elevation of Thieves

n the pre-Christian era, rituals or fertility rites occurred during the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year and the spring equinox, the point of egual day and night. A source or spirit of regeneration was to be released. If the ritual was not performed, the power would depart from the community. By performing these rites, a village believed that they preserved the powers that determined its survival.

St. George is the name of one of the characters in this play: it is also the name of a legendary figure. The story of the legend is that Saint George was tortured for his faith but was miraculously revived several times before dying. It is also told that he slew a dragon. It is told that a dragon terrorized a community and the daughter of the king was to be sacrificed to pacify the dragon. Saint George happened by and slew the dragon and converted the community and the king to Christianity. This slaying of the dragon was never a historical event but is a legendary theme in which the dragon symbolized evil or primordial chaos, which is controlled by the intelligence

Part of the pre-Christian spring ritual was the presence of the Threefold Goddess: Maiden, Mother and Crone. In the play the Maiden might be represented by Tulip, the Mother by Meg or Niki, and the Crone is certainly Miss

Kretzel. This three-in-one aspect can also be found in the Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Though the specific religion is not mentioned in the play, it may be Catholicism. The reason Catholicism has so many followers, according to one source, is that the early Church brought in elements of the European pre-Christian tradition. ¹⁵ These elements included the time honored traditions of holidays which were retained and renamed Easter,

Christmas

so on while keeping the customs of each such as gift exchanges, Easter egg hunts and bunnies (a fertility symbol).

and

The Christian references in the play are many. The "Elevation of Thieves" is the reenactment of the Crucifixion

without anyone on the Cross. The Cross is empty because no "Good Man" has been chosen for over a century.

The Three Marys are to be present: Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary. Mary of Bethany was the sister of Martha and Lazarus who sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His teaching (Luke 10:39). Mary Magdalene was a faithful follower of Jesus and stood at the Cross when he was cruci-

fied (John 20). The Virgin Mary was Christ's mother. Finally, we return again to St. George venerated as a military saint beginning in early Christianity. There is no historical data verifying his life but it is thought that he might have been martyred in Palestine in the third or forth century. As the divine Hero image he became patron saint of England because he was supposed to have led the knights in victorious battle against the heathen and to have killed the Turkish knight. His popularity in England may be from the return of crusaders. Thus, Arthur in his intolerance and intransigence, may not turn back the heathen, but he will not accept them either. His actions precipitate a monster of a mess which may result

in the

destruc-

tion of a

commu-

nity.

"Are there no Moravians in the Moon, that not a missionary has yet visited this poor pagan planet of ours, to civilize civilization and christianize Christendom?"

—Herman Melville. *White Jacket*. (1850)

Senseless VIOLENCE

"Every murderer is probably somebody's old friend."

—Agatha Christie. The Mysterious Affair at Styles. Chapter 4

'n their book, *Psychopathology of* Homicide, authors Eugene Revitch and Louis B. Schlesinger comment on the influence of the general social environment as a cause of the increase in homicides. The rapid social changes and shifts, real and relative economic deprivation of portions of the population and the mechanization and bureaucracy of life, cause, in some individuals, a state of alienation, a weakening of interpersonal bonds, a loss of involvement and a sense of impermanence and discontinuity. The authors believe that sensory overload and the rapidity of change in our society force people "to operate at a level of adaptability never [before] asked of human beings."16

According to criminologists James Alan Fox and Jack Levin, most mass killers target people they know—family members, friends or co-workers—in order to settle a score, to get even with the particular individuals whom they hold accountable for their problems. The perpetrator is usually clearheaded and rational, though resentful and depressed. In order to "get even," this person must also have access to weapons. In the

United States, as we all are well aware, acquiring firearms is not difficult. The increased availability of high-powered, rapid-fire weapons is a large part of the reason why the death tolls have climbed so dramatically in recent years.

In his book *Flash Point*, Michael Kelleher tries to "get inside" the mind of a mass murderer. He finds some common factors and familiar patterns that may lead to a better understanding of these crimes and the people who commit them:

1. A history of failing to deal appropriately with negative emotions and experiences, such as frustration, disappointment and failure.

- 2. Experiencing rejection and the lack of a nurturing parental environment.
- 3. A belief that personal failures are attributable to others.
- 4. A feeling of being under-appreciated

the fantasy, this individual will obtain the weapons required and consider the location and timing of the act. At this point, he/she becomes socially isolated and breaks off communication with loved ones. By this time, the process has resulted in the depersonalization of the intended victims and the targets are no longer viewed as human beings. A comparison of recent mass murders leads to the conclusion that in most cases, the perpetrators signal or teleggraph beforehand, their intentions.

The world continues to evolve in ways that are unpredictable and frightening. The opportunities for mayhem will increase as the population increases; the opportunities to view life as a failure will multiply as people, in an increasing drive for more, leave behind an unful-filled segment of society. ■

According to criminologists James Alan Fox and Jack Levin, most mass killers target people they know—family members, friends or co-workers—in order to settle a score, to get even with the particular individuals whom they hold accountable for their problems.

causing a compensatory belief in selfrighteousness. This person may put himself/herself in the position of being taken advantage of or victimized.

- 5. Fantasizing of revenge. Convinced that all positive options are meaningless, he/she seeks notice and attention by balancing the scales with an ultimate act of retribution.
- 6. Personal isolation and a dehumanization of the target victim(s). Throughout

"When I search for man in the technique and the style of Europe, I see only a succession of negations of man, and an avalanche of murders." —Frantz Fanon. The Wretched Earth. (1961)

Special thanks to the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust and the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation for supporting new American plays at the Denver Center Theatre Company.



Inside Out is intended for students and teachers but may be enjoyed by audiences of all ages.

Denver Center Theatre Company

Donovan Marley, Artistic Director A division of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts Sally Gass, Contributing Writer Danny Tamez, Activities Linda Eller, Editor Melanie Simonet, Designer