

THE MORPHOSYNTACTICS OF THE VERB IN
THE PLAYS OF THE WINDFIELD MASTER

by

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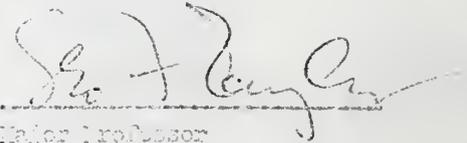
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Chapter 1

1.0.0. Introduction. The ambitious and compelling English cosmic mystery cycles arose in the late thirteenth century with an immediate heritage of four hundred years of Church-sanctioned liturgical drama and an ultimate heritage that reached beyond the culture of the classical world into the prehistoric twilight of many races.¹ Of the great cycles for which MSS remain, the two greatest were those performed at York and Wakefield in Yorkshire during the troubled reigns of Edward III, Richard II, and three Henrys. There is a considerable body of nearly identical material in the two cycles, indicating a borrowing of several whole plays and portions of others at some time in the cycles' development. Previous scholarship has indicated several of the points of close interrelations and has shown each cycle to be composed of several layers. The exact nature of their interrelations, however, has resisted disclosure. Further complicating the question, the MSS of both cycles date from several decades after the borrowing period; thus even originally identical plays have undergone considerable independent change, at least in surface structure.

1.1.0. Selection of corpus. The layer of the two cycles most easily separated from its fellows is that comprising the major work of the anonymous Wakefield Master whose Secunda Pastorum (Second Shepherds' Play) is probably the best and certainly the best known of all mediaeval drama. Six plays, numbered 2, 3, 12, 13, 16, and 21, in the scholarly Early English Text Society edition, have been well established

as being the work of this one person, primarily on the basis of literary criticism, and secondarily on the basis of dialect. The descriptive and analytic tools of modern structural linguistics provide a third, more objective, basis for a more nearly scientific examination of the materials. A thorough analysis of such a cohesive body of material, previously unified by other means, should delineate the distinctive features of the Master's use of language, and should indicate methods and techniques that might be of value in similar studies of the cycles' other layers. Its results, therefore, raise the possibility that, with extension, the more elusive details of the interrelations of the York and Wakefield cycles might be discovered.

1.2.0. Material for analysis. Since in Middle English, as in Modern English, the finite verb is so central to the meaning-carrying function of the clause, it is not unreasonable to assume that the structure and use of the finite verb and its expansions in the clause would efficiently show the particular practices of a given author. Furthermore, the verb, with its great importance as a semantic core of the clause, would be among the syntactic units less likely to be altered by a scribe in transmission and also rather resistant to such superficial but beclouding alterations. Finally, owing to its central, high functional load, the verbal system is highly codified and furnishes a great amount of efficiently analyzable material for a scientific linguistic study. It is not surprising, therefore, that this investigation, whose ultimate, albeit presently unattainable, goal would be the careful differentiation of the several playwrights and editors

of the York and Wakefield cycles, should concentrate on the finite verbal structure in the six plays firmly established by scholarly tradition in the canon of the Wakefield Master.²

1.3.0. Scope of the investigation. The discussion of the most significant and characteristic features of the finite verb in the corpus is followed by the presentation of tentative proposals for further study. While the testing of such hypotheses is beyond the scope of the present paper, they may indicate what linguistic phenomena show promise of being stylistically distinctive and may thus provide the initial step towards the more ambitious stratification the major goal requires.

Chapter 2

2.0.0. Limitation of study. The material for analysis is the finite verbal construction of the clause as it occurs in the 3250 lines of Middle English dramatic poetry of the corpus.

2.1.0. The clause defined. The term clause, as it is used here, refers to that grammatical construction which contains one and only one predicating entity. It may consist of as few as one morpheme, e.g. con, or several (the limit of possible clause size is dictated rather by practical considerations of style and intelligibility than by grammatical proscription) and may, in turn, be a part of another clause for which the former, taken as a whole, is a non-predicating element. A grammatical unit containing two predicating forms is counted as two clauses, e.g. 'my handys may I wryng and mowmyng make' (12.28).³

2.2.0. The verb defined. A precise definition of a 'predicating entity', henceforth called a finite verb, would seem to be impossible. A number of potentially distinguishing features may be used in judging a given form, but the use of even a fairly exhaustive selection of such measures may not necessarily indicate all forms felt by a native speaker to be predicating.

2.2.1. Morphological evidence. Among those measures useful in the present study are morphological criteria. The finite verb may add to its basic form a series of affixes, e.g. <-s, -ys, -is, -d, -yng, -and> with or without a simultaneous alteration or deletion of a portion of the basic form. For example, make may become makes, malys,

makis, made, naide, mayde, malang, makand;⁴ do may become dos, dyd, done (see tables 1 and 2).

2.2.2. Syntactic evidence. Syntactically the finite verb requires as a subject, that is, has close grammatical relations with, the members of a small set of forms including I, thou, he, she, it, we, you, and they (e.g. 'I hard hym blaw' and 'I go') and with the members of a larger set of syntactically equivalent forms including such examples as hee, huk, shepe, chylde, and honye. The unaffixed form may be used in close association with members of a class including shall, will, may, can, dar, and thar, e.g. 'ye shall fynde hym', 'I will the name', and 'the shrew can paynt'. The form with a $\{-D_1\}$ (preterite) affix (which occasionally may include the unaffixed form) may be used with has, have, or had, e.g. 'as I haue hard', 'thou had broght thi brother downe', 'the tend shuld hafe brend full clere', and 'thus had I it set'.

2.2.3. Critical intuition. For the final analysis, however, even an exhaustive study of the measures briefly mentioned here is likely not to indicate without exception all predicating forms, particularly because the distinguishing features are often identical to features of forms that are found to be in other grammatical classes, e.g. 'I will none', 'thou had grace', and 'we steuens here'. The approach that must be taken when the formal criteria fail to indicate syntactic function unambiguously is that required of any analyst for the apprehension and comprehension of any portion of a nonnative language. After an initial period of systemization and experimentation, the careful student begins to develop a 'feel' for the language and to acquire what may, in time, become a nearly native fluency for grammatical and paragrammatical accu-

racy or 'correctness' (i.e. acceptability to a native speaker). This 'feel' may indeed be demonstrated to be justified, but the demonstration, involving the laborious listing of every instance of a given form's occurrence, an involved delving into the deep structure of an ambiguous construction, and a careful investigation of the lexical content of a given form, would require a much greater expenditure than its results warrant considering the relatively small number of completely ambiguous constructions. At no point in this investigation did a major decision rest solely on such an 'abstraction' of data. For Middle English there are, obviously, no contemporary native speakers to which such problems may be referred. Because of its demonstrated affinities with contemporary English, however, after taking account of whatever differences have been found previously and reducing the number of possibilities through the use of whatever formal morphosyntactic data there may be, one may make a careful judgment as to a form's syntactic use based on an induced 'native speaker's intuition'.

2.3.0. Nonfinite forms. Specifically excluded from this analysis are nonfinite, nonpredicating forms that resemble verbs, even if they be identical in form and 'parentage' to finite verbs. Such forms include certain nominal, adjectival, or adverbial occurrences of what are called infinitives and participles in traditional grammar. A few comments on such forms is in order, however, as the delineation of certain formally ambiguous syntactic units and the differentiation of several clause types depends on their systematic and consistent analysis.

2.3.1. The infinitive. An infinitive is a nonfinite form resembling a finite verb in many ways but which is always introduced by to or for to,

e.g. 'I was bowne to by store' (12.130) and 'I think not for to flytt' (16.175).

2.3.2 The unmarked infinitive. The unmarked infinitive is not introduced by to or for to, but is functionally very similar to the infinitive. This term is used explicitly to indicate the similarities in usage in the corpus between the two types. There apparently is a tendency for certain verbs to take either a marked infinitive or an unmarked infinitive, but several verbs are found with both types in analogous environments, e.g. 'Ich shall ... make you to thwang' (13.211) and 'I make you go' (16.396); 'I pray the to run away' (2.396) and 'I pray the go to' (3.236). One example even employs both infinitives, in apposition, in the same line, 'I list gad / to gif away my worldis aght' (2.149-150). Both infinitives may be expanded by the use of auxiliaries or participles in very similar ways: by auxiliary, 'lett vs do poore men gif it to' (12.283-284), 'many prophetyes that sight desyrd to haue seen' (12.442), and 'thay desyrd to haue sene this chylde' (13.693); by participle, 'lett vs be walkand' (2.106), 'with the to be lendyng' (12.80), and 'thus to be gangyng' (21.10). Although the limited quantity of data prevents a conclusive judgment, it would seem that, as will be seen with other grammatical features, the demands of rhyme and rhythm are as important as grammatical patterns and may, in a given situation, dictate the use of one infinitive rather than the other.

2.4.0. Verbal inflection. Although nominally rather simple, the inflectional system of the verb provides many analytical difficulties, chiefly for three reasons. First, there was apparently a very considerable homophony both within the verbal paradigm and between the verbal

affixes and other inflectional affixes (notably the genitive and plural suffixes of nouns) as indicated by the allographs used to identify the affix $\{-I_2\}$, i.e. $\langle -s(e), -es, -is, -ys \rangle$. This homophony, or at least homography, partially illustrates the extent to which the Old English inflectional system had weakened. Second, the subjunctive was used very frequently but, if judgment is based purely on morphological criteria, it was also used erratically. Third, the amount of deviation allowed from 'standard', i.e. paradigmatic, practice was apparently great, seemingly justified by the pressures of the poetical dramatic moment. The basic inflectional pattern is presented in table 1.⁵ An exhaustive treatment of the exceptions to this paradigm would require far too many pages for this study, but a few general comments may be made.

2.4.1. The Northern dialect 'affix rule'. The corpus reflects the Northern dialect tendency to drop the present indicative affix (except 2s) immediately preceding or following a personal pronoun (Messé 1952:79), e.g. 'I lay bekynd thare ars and tyes them fast' (2.45-46). There are, however, many instances of contrary practices. The affix is occasionally absent in nonsubjunctive⁶ examples when the subject is not a personal pronoun, whether the verb is contiguous with the subject or not, e.g. 'euery liffyng leyde ... syn' (3.48-49) and 'no lyght make the none' (12.433). There are also many occurrences of affixed verbs contiguous with a personal pronoun, e.g. 'he lyes for the quetstone' (21.80) and 'he spelys on lowde' (12.66). As with most of the divergences from 'normal' usage this study has disclosed, a considerable weight must be given to the requirements of the verse, which undoubtedly account for a

major portion of such variations. Note, for example, the following: 'thay that swynke and swette' (13.312) which rhymes with 'note' and 'gett', and 'I that swettys and swynks' (13.154) which rhymes with 'wynkys' and 'drynkys'.

In spite of these exceptions, however, the affix rule was followed fairly extensively and was even extended to have and be which have replaceive affixes resembling the additive suffixes of most verbs. In the following examples, the otherwise exclusively second and third person singular forms have apparently been extended by analogy to plural subjects because of a resemblance to the {-Z₃} inflected forms of other verbs: 'the planettis seuen left has thare stall' (3.345), 'ye men that has wifis' (3.397), and 'so is youre wyttys thyn' (12.171).⁷

2.4.2. Exceptions to inflectional paradigms. There are seven noteworthy exceptions to the outline presented in table 1.⁸ Four involve the use of wilt instead of will, in each case before thou (2.50, 2.85, 2.408, and 3.226). Will thou also occurs, however, (e.g. 2.227) and there is no occurrence of the analogous shalt in place of shall. These forms are all found within lines, not as rhymes, and probably represent later alterations of a revisor or scribe. The other two exceptions, doyst (before thou) in the middle of 21.132, and doth (after wordis) in the middle of 21.183, also are likely to be later alterations and not characteristic of the Master's diction.

2.4.3. Verbs assimilated with a following pronoun. Three forms appear assimilated with following it: ist (3.517), gart (12.254), and spart (12.271).

2.4.4. Subjunctive. Theoretically the subjunctive is morphologic-

ally very simple since it uses the uninflected base form of the verb to express present subjunctive and the preterite form to express past subjunctive. The difficulty with the material in the corpus, and it is a major one in a strictly morphological analysis, is in deciding what form is meant to be subjunctive and what is not. Only in the case of be is the differentiation between subjunctive and indicative relatively clear a good part of the time. Subjunctive forms always follow if, e.g. 'if he reyne any more' (21.119), and and 'if', e.g. 'and no thyng he leder' (3.289), and frequently in noninterrogative VS order, e.g. 'be thou sekir' (2.295). Certain frozen utterances, including 'blissid be god' (2.169) and 'crist cross me spede' (13.116) invariably employ the subjunctive. In several other cases, however, verbs occur uninflected and neither the affix rule mentioned in 2.4.1. nor normal subjunctive usage provides a wholly satisfactory explanation for their occurrence, e.g. 'a fals skawde hang at the last; so shall thou' (13.596-597). The frequently used periphrastic subjunctive construction using a modal, as in 'might I the' (3.328), offers no difficulties to structural analysis.

2.5.0. Personal pronouns. Personal pronouns play a major part in the differentiation of clause types. Fortunately, they are used fairly consistently in the corpus with only a few, usually unambiguous, exceptions. The pronouns found in the corpus are summarized in table 3.

2.5.1. Impersonal constructions. Of particular import is the question of the impersonal verbs. To approach the problem in traditional terms, impersonal verbs take as their subjects either it or 'no subject', since the pronoun usually found with these verbs is in the objective case. Structurally, however, the pronoun, whatever its case, functions

as the subject and there is, therefore, no reason why it should not be considered such. Furthermore, in the corpus there are several pairs of identical or nearly identical syntactic patterns which clearly show that, in terms of a functioning grammatical unit, there is, in fact, no difference.⁹ Compare: 'me thynk my hert ryfis' (3.399) with 'I thynk my hart ryfys' (13.83), 'me list not ban' (2.59) with 'I lyst not to plete' (12.204-205), 'then nedes me do nott' (21.431) with 'you nede not to care' (12.163), and 'me aght to be fayn' (16.468) with 'thou aght to repent' (13.461).

2.5.2. Other nonnominal case form pronouns as subjects. Similar in form to the impersonal constructions, but without a systematic basis, are several other occurrences with pronouns in other than the nominal case that function as clause subjects, e.g. 'hens must vs fle' (3.292), 'better groved me no this yere' (2.199), 'hy vs fast' (3.312) (cf. 'hy we heder' [13.670]), and 'his self shall not excuse hym' (21.35). In each case, there is no functional difference between the clause with the object case form pronoun and an identical one with a nominal case form pronoun. As with the impersonal constructions, the clause was analyzed structurally in spite of any seeming contradictions of pronoun case.

2.6.0. Mak's 'Sothern tothe'. In the Secunda Pastorur Mak attempts to fool the shepherds by affecting a Southern dialect. There are three occurrences of Ich in place of I (13.201/207/210) and one occurrence each of be for am (13.201), goyth for goys (13.204), and doth for do (13.213). As the dramatist's purpose for employing these forms is clear, they are not considered in this study.

Chapter 3

3.0.0. The structural system used for a model. The structural system according to which the finite verb clauses are analyzed was developed by Leo F. Engler for use with modern English (Engler 1966). The system has been altered somewhat by the rearrangement of certain elements and the deletion of others to accommodate the material found in the corpus. Its primary advantage is that it provides a simple, consistent model against which the Middle English examples may be measured and an efficient classificational notation for discussing the forms. Relative order of the elements within a verbal expansion is generally not distinctive, although there are particular patterns in which the elements tend to occur (see 3.4.0.). Neither is the interpolation of other elements distinctive, whether such elements be a single nominal, adjectival, or adverbial (e.g. a pronoun, a complement, or not), or longer units including other whole clauses.

3.1.0. Expansion types. The finite verb and its expansions, with representative examples, are summarized in table 4.

3.1.1. Expansion 0. Unexpanded verbs account for over three quarters of all recorded finite clauses (see table 6). This expansion type includes both present and preterite tenses and both indicative and subjunctive moods.

3.1.2. Expansion 1. This expansion bears a quite heavy functional load in the corpus and, since a very large number of the unexpanded examples are semantically general verbs (e.g. do, go, have, be, make, and take), is actually of greater importance to the plays' meaning trans-

mitting function than its number of occurrences would indicate.

3.1.3. Expansion 2. In order to achieve a more nearly objective analysis, only those past participle forms occurring with have were considered to be part of a finite construction. There are a few verbs in the corpus, however, for which the Old English distinction between the auxiliaries been/wesan and habban is important. Chief among these is con, which, likely because it is a frequently used verb and would thus tend to resist leveling, significantly is found only with the auxiliary be (e.g. 12.298). Certain other occurrences of what appears to be a usage similar to expansion 2 are, not surprisingly, found to involve mutative intransitive verbs, e.g. 'it is waynd a grete dele' (3.450). The verb go is a notable exception. Go, however, is also used extensively with other base form verbs as an auxiliary, e.g. 'go cloute thy shone' (3.353), in a way that suggests a weakening of its positive meaning. Perhaps there is a connection between the apparent partial weakening of its mutative sense and its occurrence in expansion 2.

3.1.4. Expansion 3. Again the pressures of poetry seem to be at work; of the eight examples, there are four with -yng and four with -and, all rhyme words.

3.1.5. Expansion 4. Like go, con and do seem to have undergone a partial weakening of their positive meaning. This judgment is strengthened by the occurrence of these auxiliaries in several examples involving the expansion of an unmarked infinitive (2.3.2.), as in 'let vs go foder' (12.209). The presence of any of these auxiliaries, e.g. 'com hap me' (13.404), contributes nothing material to the construction except a slight intensification, and may even be semantically antithetical to the

sense of the main verb, as in 'con go' (2.299).

3.1.6. Expansion 5. This rare expansion carries the same restriction as expansion 2. Note that, although the clause construction is sometimes reordered or interrupted by other elements, the auxiliary and the participle always occur contiguously.

3.1.7. Expansion 6. As in expansion 3, the use of -ing (twice) and -and (once) is apparently dictated by the demands of rhyme.

3.1.8. Expansion 7. Although the three examples found in the corpus all occur with go, there would seem to be no reason why the other two modals, do and con, should not be found, were the corpus larger, since they occur in other works roughly contemporary.¹⁰

3.2.0. Differentiation of clause types. The differentiation between several types of clauses can be quite difficult at times. Those limited to simple combinations of individual words or small phrases offer little problem. With increasing complexity, however, clauses may be found embedded within other clauses, joined in subordination or coordination (e.g. of the type illustrated by 'if ... then ... '), or split, i.e. two finite verbal constructions with a single subject and/or object. In each of these cases the clauses retain the essential feature of a clause, the finite verb. With concatenation,¹¹ however, a process which fuses two clauses, the finite character of one verb is lost and its original form is obscured, i.e. the two clauses become one clause. Among the advantages of the Engler system is the reliance on the evidence actually present. Only rarely is the analyst required to 'supply' an item in order to 'complete' a construction. In this paper only one major exception, the analysis of the imperative, is taken with this rule

and the outline presented in table 5. Since imperative forms are encountered in all clause types and in virtually all expansions, it is more economical to consider imperative constructions as being one of the listed clause types with the subject slot filled by \emptyset .

3.2.1. Subordinate and coordinate clauses. Subordinate and coordinate clauses retain the grammatical characteristics of independent clauses, that is, they each have, depending on the clause type and expansion, a subject and an object or complement.

3.2.2. Dependent clauses. Dependent clauses substitute for a normally simple element in another clause. For example, in 'as it had neuer bene I that caryed there shepe' (13.348-349), the clause introduced by 'that' fills a slot that would normally be filled by a simple adjective. In some dependent examples, the subject of one clause serves simultaneously as the subject of the second clause, e.g. 'he were well qwytt had sold sich two' (12.146-147). Similarly, the object of one clause may serve simultaneously as the subject of another, e.g. 'what was that sang' (12.305).

3.3.0. Clause types. Although table 5, listing examples of all expansions and clause types, is self-explanatory, a few particular remarks may be made where some feature warrants special consideration.

3.3.1. Type 1b. In the corpus the verb was furnishes the unique example of this type.

3.3.2. Type 1c. Seue is the only verb which fits this pattern.

3.3.3. Type 1d. The verb hatt 'to be called' is the only remnant of the Indoeuropean middle voice found in Middle English (Mustanoja 1960: 457). The use of make as a verb of the middle, the only such verb other

than hatt in the corpus, is limited to two very similar citations.

3.3.4. Types IIIbi and IIIbii. There is no essential difference in the use of types IIIbi and IIIbii attributable to the presence of nouns vs. pronouns as any object. Nearly all possible arrangements in several orders occur and it would appear that nonoccurring patterns might be found were the corpus larger.

3.3.5. Types IVa and IVb. Type IV clauses may be viewed as being two type III clauses concatenated. Unlike a type III with an infinitive object (marked or unmarked), where, for example, the subject of the clause also serves as the subject of the infinitive, the object of the type IV clause serves as the subject of the infinitive. Compare: 'Iett bren this baude' (13.595) with 'I pray you ... com to hym' (16.264-286). Often the only way to differentiate a type III with a dependent clause object from a type IV with an unmarked infinitive object is to notice the case of a preceding pronoun. For the type III the pronoun, as the subject of the dependent clause, will be in the nominal case; for the type IV, the pronoun, as the object of the finite verb, will be in the objective case, e.g. 'I rede thou so tend' (2.257) vs. 'I red the not stry' (16.360). Note that the elimination of the object transforms a type IV into a type III; cf. the preceding example and 'Ihyt a Inot fast I red' (21.391-392).

3.3.6. Type V. Although several formally ambiguous examples may appear to be passive, they are not so classified unless an agent or means is indicated. Two exceptions to this rule were made because the passive nature of the construction was so evident, viz. 'god is made your friend' (13.641) and 'Iqng will I be seyn' (16.175).

3.4.0. Order. The amount of flexibility allowed the playwright

in ordering the elements of finite clauses was great. The standard order is, depending on the elements involved, (S) (H) (Aux) V (O/C) for declarative utterances. For questions, the usual order is V (S) (O/C), H (S) (Aux) V (O/C), Aux (S) V (O/C), or V (S) (O/C). However, there are examples of nearly every possible order, apparently depending on the playwright's needs for rhyme and rhythm, although the occurrence of any given order is not necessarily caused by such needs; e.g. the order 'that lif may' (3.4) is needed for rhyme, while 'sagh I neuer none so fare' (12.160) is not needed for rhyme. Compare the peculiar 'bot well I se go must I nede' (2.164). Certain constructions often occur with an inversion of the normal order, although the presence of these elements does not necessarily require inversion.

3.4.1. Inversion after introducing adverbs. A fairly large group of adverbs, including when, then, yit, thus, or, here, bot, as, and now, is often followed by a clause in inverted order, e.g. 'bot had I gyffen hym this to teynd then wold thou say he were my freynd' (2.214-215) and 'bot it gos sore agans my will and shall he like full ill' (2.255-256).

3.4.2. Order within dependent clauses. The order of elements within a dependent clause will, of course, depend largely on whether the clause is dependent on the main clause through the subject or through the object. That is, if the object is the connecting unit, e.g. 'payn that they shall haue' (16.139), the order is usually OSV or OVS. If the subject of the dependent clause is the connecting unit with the main clause, e.g. 'god that settys in trone' (16.138), the usual order is SVO and, less often, SOV.

3.4.3. Order within subordinate and coordinate clauses. Except for the apparent effect of the introducing adverbs mentioned in 3.4.1.

above, there seems to be no distinctive order of elements within a subordinate or coordinate clause.

3.4.4. Order within frozen expressions. Certain commonly used formulaic expressions always occur in particular orders, e.g. 'blissid be god' (2.169), 'cryst crosse me spede' (13.118), 'bi hym that he boght' (12.313), and 'might I the' (3.328).

3.4.5. Order in subjunctive constructions. Inversion is very common in both true subjunctive constructions and periphrastic subjunctive constructions using modals, e.g. 'begyn he with you for to stryfe, then non ye neuer thryfe' (2.17-18) and 'as euer myght I thryfe' (3.243), although such inversion is not necessary, e.g. 'I were at ese' (3.338).

3.4.6. Order with tags of attribution. A group of verbs commonly forms tags of attribution, quotation, or exhortation that usually take complete clauses as objects. These tags, usually formed with a pronoun plus a verb such as say, trane, ken, thynk, witt, wene, pray, bid, and cry, are always placed before or after the clause, occasionally at quite a remove from it, e.g. 'I say gyf the shepe space' (13.123). No instance was recorded of the clause object interrupting the SV order of the tag.

Chapter 4

4.0.0. Results. The finite verbs employed by the Wakefield Master in his major canon of six plays have been classified and record made of the various clause types and verbal expansions found in the work. At this point, it is not possible to prove whether or not the use of any of these constructions can be found distinctive.

4.1.0. Topics for further investigation. The investigation has, however, indicated features that may be characteristic and it is possible to suggest several points for further investigation.

4.1.1. Scribal practices. Since the same scribe copied the entire Towneley MS (Cawley 1958:xii), it should be possible to note those irregular features of morphology and syntax found in the Wakefield group that are also found in the other plays of the entire cycle.

4.1.2. Distinctive expansions. The occurrence of certain expansions, especially 3, 4, 6, and 7,¹² in other plays of the cycle could indicate the plays in which the Master had a revising hand, although he may not have used his characteristic stanza.

4.1.3. Distinctive clause types. The occurrence of certain clause types, especially the less common types IIIbii and IVa, might also prove to be distinctive.

4.2.0. Conclusion. As a frankly preliminary study, this paper consistently describes the verbal usage of the corpus. More conclusive evaluation of the results of this endeavor can only come with the extension of the work to another stratum of the Wakefield cycle and eventually to the strata of the York cycle.

Notes

¹ For further reading in the history of mediaeval drama see Craig (1955) and Hardison (1965). An excellent selected bibliography for topics related directly to the Wakefield Master may be found in Cawley (1958:xxiv-xxviii).

² References to particular items in the corpus will be to the EETS edition (Tonneley 1897) by play and line number, e.g. (16.213). There has been a considerable body of scholarship concerning the text of the plays, especially concerning emendations and errors in the EETS edition. In no case, however, are the errors or emendations distinctive in the present study; therefore, printer's or editor's errors are generally corrected without comment and suggested emendations are disregarded. One editor's error which was not corrected is the renumbering of the occasionally misnumbered lines (e.g. 2.398-399 should be printed as one) as such a correction would be immaterial to the paper and would make reference to the text unnecessarily complex.

³ This fact must be taken into consideration regarding the frequency count of clause types and expansions shown in table 6.

⁴ No claim is made that these eight forms all contrast equally with each other. The inflections of the first two groups of three each are three allographs of the same grapheme but constitute one morpheme and are phonemically identical. The last two inflections are allographs of different graphemes and are phonemically distinct but are allomorphs of the same morpheme. In this paper attention is directed primarily to morphology but occasionally a graphemic difference may be pointed out, as

in the case of <-and/-yng>. Phonological considerations, such as the phonological conditioning that governs the use of the three phonemically distinct allomorphs of the preterite morpheme (table 1) are disregarded.

5 Inflectional analysis is complicated by much nondistinctive variety in spelling. To cite the prime example only, <-y- > is often used to indicate length of the preceding vowel, but its absence is not distinctive. Compare: 'teynd I well or tend I ill' (2.271). The flexible spelling often resulted in quite a range of forms for a given morpheme, e.g. the verb meaning 'leave' is variously spelled lefe (16.205), leife (2.97), leyfe (21.109), leyff (12.251), and lief (2.195). Such nondistinctive allographic variations are ignored in this paper.

6 Note that the dropping of the present indicative affix makes a verbal form (except be and occasionally have) morphologically identical to the subjunctive.

7 'Wyttyts' is indeed plural as in 16.250; cf. singular 'wit' in 2.300.

8 Excluding the Southern dialect forms discussed in 2.6.0.

9 A diachronic study of these verbs would indicate their development and the forces at work on their subsequent leveling. Thynk, for example, involves the falling together of two Old English verbs, þencan 'think' and þencan 'seem' and survived through the sixteenth century only in the frozen form methinks. As the quoted parallel passages indicate, however, there was certainly a strong similarity in the use of the verb with an objective case form pronoun and one with a nominal case form pronoun. It seems unwise to disregard that similarity.

10 Cf. Chaucer 'thou shalt ... come spoken with thi lady' Troilus

and Criseyde (iv:654) and 'als hys halles I wol do peynte with pure gold' Book of the Duchess (259). References from Kustanoja (1960:535, 601).

¹¹ The term concatenation corresponds partially to the term conjoining as used in some recent grammatical analyses such as Andreas Koutsoudas' Writing Transformational Grammars (1965:232ff). The difference between the use of the two terms lies in the restriction of concatenation to a conjoining of two or more clauses in which the finite character of a clause is lost. Conjoined clauses include those described here as joined, split, and concatenated.

¹² For example, expansions 3, 4, 6, and 7, do not occur in Chaucer's prose (and only one example, of expansion 3, occurs in his poetry) which is only 25 to 40 years earlier (Huntsman 1967). The fact may indicate that the Northern dialect had, in addition to the lexical and morphological effects usually discussed in histories of English, a syntactic influence on the London area dialect that became standard English. This possibility, although beyond the scope of this paper, bears further investigation.

Table 1: Basic unexpanded verb inflection paradigm.

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Present: | 1s. -(e) 13.431 |
| | 2s. -ys (-es, -is) 12.81 |
| | 3s. -ys (-es, -is) 12.300 |
| | 1p. -ys (-es, -is) 13.10 |
| | 2p. -ys (-es, -is) 13.512 |
| | 3p. -ys (-es, -is) 16.40 |
| Preterite: | all persons |
| | -yd 13.693 |
| | -d(e) 13.353 |
| | -t(e) 13.659 |
| Past Participle: | -yd (-id, -ed) 21.423 |
| | -d(e) 16.73 |
| | -d(e) 3.345 |
| | -en (-yn) 21.316 |
| Present Participle: | -yng (-ing) 16.12 |
| | -and 3.74 |

Table 2: Finite forms of be.

| | | Indicative | | Subjunctive | |
|-------------|------------|------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| Present: | 1s. | am | 16.106 | be | 13.280 |
| | 2s. | art | 3.201 | be | 21.19 |
| | | bese | 2.296 | | |
| | 3s. | is | 2.12 | be | 2.258 |
| | | bese | 2.250 | bese | 2.370 |
| | | bees | 3.373 | | |
| | | beys | 16.62 | | |
| | 1p. | ar | 3.199 | be | 3.317 |
| | | ar | 12.161 | be | 21.184 |
| | | ar | 12.1 | be | 2.310 |
| | | bese | 2.296 | | |
| | Preterite: | 1s. | was | 16.343 | were |
| 2s. | | was | 2.350 | were | 13.172 |
| 3s. | | was | 12.317 | were | 2.215 |
| 1p. | | were | 13.363 | were | 3.526 |
| 2p. | | were | 13.568 | were | 21.51 |
| | | were | | were | 13.510 |
| 3p. | | were | 12.418 | were | 16.136 |
| were | 12.352 | were | 21.120 | | |
| Participle: | 1s. | has bene | 16.406 | had bene | 13.503 |
| | 2s. | has bene | 12.206 | | |
| | | has beyn | 21.8 | | |
| | | has be | 3.192 | | |
| | 3s. | has bene | 13.302 | had bene | 12.183 |
| | 1p. | haue been | 3.456 | | |
| | | haue beyn | 16.290 | | |
| | 2p. | | | had beyn | 21.442 |
| 3p. | has bene | 16.119 | | | |

Table 3: Personal pronouns.

| | | | | |
|------------|---------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| Nominal: | 1s. I | 21.154 | 1p. we | 2.54 |
| | 2s. thou | 2.61 | 2p. ye | 2.27 |
| | 3s. he | 2.7 | 3p. thay (they, thai) | 3.154 |
| | she | 3.409 | | |
| | it | 3.453 | | |
| Objective: | 1s. me | 3.382 | 1p. vs (hus) | 16.398 |
| | 2s. the (pe) | 2.58 | 2p. you | 2.10 |
| | 3s. hym | 2.16 | 3p. thayn (theym, thain) | 21.3 |
| | her | 3.505 | | |
| | hit | 2.315 | | |
| Genitive: | 1s. my | 3.411 | 1p. oure | 21.17 |
| | myne | 2.59 | oures | 16.447 |
| | 2s. thi (thy) | 2.50 | 2p. youre | 2.3 |
| | thyne | 21.17 | youres | 16.449 |
| | 3s. his (hys) | 2.9 | 3p. thare | 3.144 |
| | her (hyre) | 3.508 | | |
| | | | | |

Table 4: Expansion types.

Unexpanded:

0. FinV (finite form) 'I anger' 16.113

Expanded:

1. FinModal + base-formV 'we must hop' 21.354

| | | | | |
|---------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| Modals: | can | 12.154 | couth | 13.739 |
| | may | 13.569 | night | 16.420 |
| | shall | 3.24 | shuld | 3.454 |
| | will | 16.625 | wold | 13.726 |
| | dar | 3.204 | durst | 3.479 |
| | not | 2.254 | must | 3.159 |
| | nede | 16.150 | non | 2.18 |
| | thar | 2.293 | | |

2. FinAux have + past participleV

'we haue betyde' 16.399

3. FinAux be + -yng/-and formV

'all thyng that is liffand' 3.73

4. FinAux do + base-formV

go
com

'go spar the gayte door' 13.327-328

5. FinModal + HAVE + past participleV

'som shuld haue boght it' 13.509

6. FinModal + DE + -yng/-and formV

'his throne shall euer be lastyng' 12.384-385

7. FinModal + GO + base-formV

'may we go dyne' 12.197

Table 5: Representative clause types and expansions.

Type I. Copulative.

SUBJECT + VERB copulative + POST-VERB complement

- a. SUBJECT + VERB *bc* + POST-VERB complement nominal
adverbial
adjectival

- ex. 0. 'ye ar irregulere' 21.306
ex. 1. 'right so shall it be' 2.335
ex. 2. 'it had bene thoner flone' 12.324
ex. 5. 'it shuld haue bene spokyn' 16.492

- b. SUBJECT + VERB *wax* + POST-VERB complement adjectival

- ex. 0. 'his dyscypyls wax ferde' 21.71

- c. SUBJECT + VERB *seme* + POST-VERB complement nominal
adjectival

- ex. 0. 'it seys ... he groches to go' 21.417
ex. 1. 'so may I well seme' 21.289

- d. SUBJECT + VERB *niddle* + POST-VERB complement nominal

- ex. 0. 'this nalds fyfe' 2.204
ex. 1. 'what dowill shall he hatt' 13.604

Type II. Intransitive.

SUBJECT + VERB intransitive + POST-VERB optional adverb

- ex. 0. 'come screryd on lowde' 12.310
ex. 1. 'he shall dy on a spere' 16.252

Table 5 (continued)

Type II (continued)

- ex. 3. 'that ar so long tarryng' 3.497
 ex. 4. 'when that I do com downe' 21.253
 ex. 5. 'might I thaim haue spyde' 16.188
 ex. 6. 'euery man ... shuld be bowand' 3.76
 ex. 7. 'I wyll go slepe' 13.347

Type III. Object taking.

SUBJECT + VERB object taking + POST-VERB object(s)

a. SUBJECT + VERB transitive + POST-VERB object

- ex. 0. 'this trauell I expound' 3.440
 ex. 1. 'I shall tane thare tallyng' 16.80
 ex. 2. 'he has ... broken oure law' 21.316
 ex. 4. 'I do fy the' 21.131
 ex. 5. 'it wold vs both haue choked' 2.319

bi. SUBJECT + VERB indirect object + POST-VERB O_1 + to + O_2
 till
 vnto

- ex. 0. 'I gif it ... to the' 2.178-179
 ex. 1. 'till hym I may me meyn' 2.113
 ex. 2. 'a byrd haue I broght to my barne' 13.272-273

bii. SUBJECT + VERB indirect object + POST-VERB O_2 + O_1

- ex. 0. 'the dwyll I the betake' 2.440

Table 5 (continued)

Type III (continued)

bii (continued)

ex. 1. 'cowthe ye ... reche vs a drynk' 12.242

ex. 2. 'had I giffen hym this to tend' 2.214

ex. 4. 'a stoyll go fetch vs' 21.345-346

c. SUBJECT + VERB factitive + POST-VERB $0_x + 0_y$

ex. 0. 'a kyng thay hym call' 16.28

ex. 1. 'I shall the name ... kyng copyn' 21.165-166

Type IV. Concatenating.

SUBJECT + VERB concatenating + POST-VERB 0 + infinitive

a. SUBJECT + VERB senses (transitive) + POST-VERB 0 + inf (unmarked)
causitive (marked)

ex. 0. 'thay ... here the shepe blete' 13.325

ex. 1. 'the kyng ... will let tham wafe' 2.428-430

ex. 2. 'myschaunsee that has gart vs swynke' 21.40

b. SUBJECT + VERB infinitive object - POST-VERB 0 + inf (marked)

ex. 0. 'to fle it avalis you' 3.296

ex. 1. 'myght we gett hym son word for to say' 21.218

Type V. Passive.

SUBJECT + VERB be + past part + POST-VERB by + agent
with + means

Table 5 (continued)

Type V (continued)

ex. 0. 'a boy that is borne her by' 16.26

ex. 1. 'all shal be fordone ... with floodis' 3.115

Table 6: Frequency count by clause type and expansion.

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | TOTAL |
|--------|------|-----|----|---|----|----|---|---|-------|
| Ia | 641 | 78 | 24 | | | 1 | | | 744 |
| Ib | 3 | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Ic | 4 | 1 | | | | | | | 5 |
| Id | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | 4 |
| II | 443 | 70 | 38 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 576 |
| IIIa | 552 | 138 | 18 | | 6 | 6 | | | 720 |
| IIIbi | 7 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | 12 |
| IIIbii | 95 | 27 | 7 | | 3 | | | | 132 |
| IIIc | 8 | 3 | | | | | | | 11 |
| IVa | 88 | 9 | 2 | | | | | | 99 |
| IVb | 16 | 7 | | | | | | | 23 |
| V | 8 | 4 | | | | | | | 12 |
| TOTAL | 1868 | 341 | 91 | 8 | 15 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 2341 |

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THE MORPHOSYNTACTICS OF THE VERB IN
THE PLAYS OF THE WAKEFIELD MASTER

by

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to describe the form and use of the finite verb in the established canon of the anonymous Wakefield Master in an attempt to delineate the morphosyntactic features that may be characteristic of the Master's use of language. The plays of the Towneley cycle, of which the Wakefield plays are a part, have close interrelations with those of a similar cycle performed at York, indicated by the occurrence of five plays in Towneley virtually identical with five in York. A considerable amount of scholarship has been devoted to the cycles' interrelations. This thesis brings to bear on the question the more objective tools of modern descriptive linguistics and describes in terms of a simple, consistent grammatical model the special features of the finite verb and its expansions.

Procedure: Six plays, numbered 2, 3, 12, 13, 16, and 21, in the scholarly Early English Text Society edition (Oxford 1897) were analyzed and found to contain 2341 finite verbal constructions in their 3250 lines of Middle English rhymed verse. The finite constructions were classified into eight different categories of verbal expansions and twelve different categories of clause types, based primarily on morphological criteria. The several categories were contrasted, counted, and analyzed for particularly distinctive characteristics.

Results: Several unusual verbal expansions were found that do not commonly occur in the works of other, nearly contemporary authors such as Chaucer, namely expansion 3, Fin¹ux_{be} + -yng/-and form^{IV}, expansion 4, Fin¹ux_{do/go/com} + base-form^{IV}, and their respective further ex-

pansions with modals. Two unusual clause types, IIIbii (SUBJECT + VERB indirect object + POST-VERB $O_1 + O_2$) and IVa (SUBJECT + VERB senses (intransitive)/causative + POST-VERB O + infinitive (unmarked)), were also found to have a surprisingly high frequency. Finally, several morphological peculiarities were indicated that may demonstrate consistent scribal alterations. While the testing of the basic hypothesis was beyond the scope of the thesis, the indication of possibly distinctive verbal expansions, clause types, and scribal practices provides a direction for further study in the interrelations of the York and Torneley cycles and offers the further possibility that the grammatical features characteristic of the plays' Northern dialect had a much greater effect upon the London area dialect that became standard Modern English than has heretofore been assumed.