Contents

Introduction		1
One	"Art May Tell a Truth Obliquely" THE POEM'S PURPOSE	13
Two	"The Eventual Unity" THE POEM'S DESIGN	37
Three	"Our Human Testimony False" THE WORLD'S ILLUSION	82
Four	The "Filthy Rags of Speech" LANGUAGE AS DECEPTION	112
Five	"The Middle Way" TERTIUM QUID AND ETHICAL RELATIVISM	130
Six	"Here's Rhetoric and to Spare!" THE LAWYERS AND CLASSICAL ORATORY	151
Seven	"Poke at Them with Scripture" THE DRAMA OF ALLUSION	184
Eight	"How That Staunch Image Serves at Every Turn!" THE DRAMA OF METAPHOR	226

Contents

Nine	"The Tragic Stage"	
	COMEDY AND THE CROWD, MIRACLES AND MOLINISM	281
Ten	"Suffice the Eye and Save the Soul Beside"	
	THE POEM'S ULTIMATE MEANING	327
Biblio	graphical Note	363
Index		367