

THE BOYS' COMPANIES 1599-1610: A DISCUSSION OF ACTING STYLE

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By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the boys' theatre companies with particular emphasis upon the most commercial phase of their history.

Boy actors, however, had been part of English dramatic tradition for several centuries prior to the 1599-1610 period, and their stage history is discussed to illustrate the long-established features of their acting, as well as the companies' economic and social background.

The revival of the boys' companies around 1599 is given special attention as, at this time, the two main companies emerged as almost fully commercial concerns. This section also discusses the more diverse audience these companies were now attracting at the Paul's and Blackfriars theatres, and how such audiences shaped plays and performance.

In order to consider a theory of acting style, a wide selection from the boys' repertory has been examined, and, from this examination, a number of common aspects emerged. These were songs and music, visual effects, emphasis on women and romance, and virtuoso performance. A number of plays, discussed in close detail, discuss the specific nature of performance by the boys.

In general, the thesis considers the strengths and weaknesses of the boys' acting and finally considers the reasons for the companies' demise around 1610.

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I

INTRODUCTION

The boy players have an important position in the history and development of British theatre, and especially in the emergence of the professional actor. Their history has been charted in detail in several major works¹ but, generally, discussions of acting style have been part of an examination of a particular group of plays, or of a particular playwright's work. The aim of this thesis is to suggest techniques and style of performance on the basis of the historical evidence provided in those major works and through a close reading of representative texts from the boys' repertory. Furthermore, as the first decade of the seventeenth century marked the zenith of the professional boys' companies, particular attention will be given to the plays of this period in order to suggest both reasons for that success and for the companies' subsequent demise.

Despite somewhat cursory discussions of acting style, both Hillebrand and Gair decide that the wane of the boys' fortunes was due to those actors' inferior ability when in direct competition with their adult counterparts. Shapiro is more generous in his assessment of their talents, although he avoids any elaboration of other reasons

¹Notably H.N. Hillebrand, The Child Actors (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964); M. Shapiro, Children of the Revels (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977) and R. Gair, The Children of Paul's (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

for the boys' departure from London theatres.

The earliest of the three histories (Hillebrand's The Child Actors²) is categoric in its dismissal of the boys' contribution to the development of professional theatre:

They were now [post-1600] apes, copying the matter and manner of the men. That granted, the part these lads played in the drama of the time becomes clear. Because they were simply copyists, who did not inspire the best talents of the best men, that part was small; with certain exceptions which had nothing to do with their histrionic ability, they had no appreciable influence on the course of the drama.³

The most recent book, Reavley Gair's The Children of Paul's, also draws conclusions of inferior ability:

As far as ability was concerned the children were clearly superior as musicians, but probably inferior to the adults as actors and when they became more adult themselves they lost ground. This does not necessarily presume that their style remained formal and mannered, merely that as actors they were not as good as Burbage, Kempe or Alleyn. The most serious hidden reason for the ultimate demise of the children's companies was their miscalculation that they could compete on equal terms with the adult companies by producing similar plays, presented in largely the same way.⁴

The following research suggests, in fact, that the boys had an immediate and very appreciable influence on the course of the

²This book was first published in 1926 as Volume XI, Nos. 1 and 2, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature.

³Hillebrand, pp. 271-2.

⁴Gair, pp. 169-70. His comparison between the boys and adults, Burbage, Kempe and Alleyn, is particularly misleading as the latter two actors had finished their stage careers by the first years of the seventeenth century and thus were not in direct competition during the boys' final (and most successful) phase.

drama. Their ability is best described in terms of difference, rather than inferiority, to the adult performers. Yet the final sentence of the quotation from Gair's book does point towards the most likely reasons for the boy companies' wane. These reasons, as will be discussed, may well have been economic and managerial rather than a reflection of inferior performance.

The most positive assessment of the boys' acting is contained in Michael Shapiro's book. He bases much of his argument on the benefits of dual consciousness found "in audiences watching boy companies perform, because of the obvious disparity between child actors and adult characters".⁵ As Shapiro points out, this exploitation of dual consciousness was a traditional feature of plays written for boy actors. Any discussion of the boys' acting needs to take account of this and other aspects of their six-hundred-year history as it was such long-established traditions which created the fundamental style of the children's companies on the commercial stage.

⁵Shapiro, p. 104.

II

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

1. The Tradition of the Child Actor

The Elizabethan adult actor had his predecessor in the travelling player -- the minstrel and the comedian -- or, in other words, he emerged as a solo performer. The boy actor, however, had always been part of an ensemble, a schooled member of a company. This company tradition was, indeed, a long one as Hillebrand's comprehensive account of children on the stage points out. He charts the boys' history back to the Middle Ages, starting his survey with evidence from the twelfth century. This history Hillebrand identifies as falling into three categories:

First, the choir boys of abbeys and churches and the pupils of grammar schools from very early times were wont to act in religious plays and interludes. Secondly, the choir boys throughout England and the rest of Europe went through a curious mummerly at the feast of St. Nicholas, when one of their number acted for a space as bishop, fulfilling the duties of that office. . . . the third mode is by no means so well known, namely, that in the half-dramatic pageants with which the large cities welcomed visiting sovereigns and titled guests, children were in constant use.¹

As he notes, the result of all this activity was to make the child on the stage a familiar sight in England. Evidence of these earlier performances is scant, but, from the beginning of the sixteenth

¹Hillebrand, p. 9.

century, there is a wealth of activity recorded. The choristers were certainly performing in the first decade of that century. Chambers² records the history of the Children of the Chapel from 1501, and the history of the Children of Paul's from 1509. Furthermore, performances at grammar schools are recorded from shortly after that date³. (Hillebrand suggests, however, that these performances were not something new but that "the tradition was carried over directly from the fourteenth century by various cathedral and abbey schools"⁴.)

It is the early history of the choir schools and grammar schools that provides the obvious background to the emergence of fully commercial children's companies, and thus this will be discussed in detail. As Hillebrand indicates, however, two other traditions bear examination: the first of these is the ceremony of the Boy Bishop, and the second is the performance by children in pageants.

The ceremony of the Boy Bishop was widespread and a long-practised event, which incorporated processions, games and plays: "We find, in short, a great ceremony flourishing through the middle ages down to the middle of the sixteenth century, in which the actors and directors were choir boys, which existed in all parts of the

²E.K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923)

³Hillebrand, p. 13. His earliest record of a school performance is at Eton in 1525.

⁴Hillebrand, p. 13.

kingdom, and which so delighted the people that restraining orders had to be issued to hold in the enthusiasm of the mob".⁵ Critical discussion concerning the ceremony of the Boy Bishop inevitably points up its saturnalian aspects, the reversal between bishop and choir boy providing a kind of release within a strictly-ordered social structure, and, as Hillebrand succinctly describes it, "the whole affair was a glorified masquerade".⁶ It was not, however, simply the central ceremony that provided a platform for the young actor. There were a number of accompanying rituals that fostered the growth of dramatic performance. Small scenes developed "from tropes introduced into the Mass after the ninth century. From dialogues between two half-choirs, these tropes expanded into short scenes with clergy and choristers singing individual parts".⁷ Besides the liturgical drama within the church ceremony, attendant festivities also provided an opportunity for acting:

There seems always to have lingered about the Boy Bishop a taint of the extravagances of the Feast of Fools, from which the children's feast most probably descended. Thus we know that in 1441 at St. Swithin's monastery, Winchester, the boys of the Almonry, together with the boys of the Chapel of St. Elizabeth, dressed themselves like girls, dancing, singing, and performing plays before the Abbess and the nuns of St. Mary's Abbey on the Feast of Innocents. On the continent the revels of Childermas Day usually included the performance of stage-plays, and doubtless the same

⁵Hillebrand, p. 24.

⁶Hillebrand, p. 28.

⁷Shapiro, p. 9.

custom obtained in England.⁸

In any event, the choir schools (maintained by monasteries, cathedrals, collegiate churches and some parish churches⁹) set the pattern to be adopted by later, more overtly theatrical, chorister troupes. Shapiro describes the chorister's career in his discussion of children's companies as follows:

The choirboys were generally maintained by alms, lodged in the almonry, called 'pueri eleemosynariae', or almonry boys, and supervised by the almoner, who was also frequently the choirmaster. Boys usually entered these schools at the age of seven or eight, and served as choristers until their voices broke, generally at thirteen or fourteen, although the change could sometimes be concealed for several years. The choir schools provided an excellent musical education, which included instruction in polyphonic singing and in playing such instruments as organs, virginals, viols, cornets, and recorders.¹⁰

The shape of these companies is mirrored in the later history. For the obvious reason of quality of voice, the age range of the child actors of commercial companies was, initially at least, similar and they too came under the guidance of one or, at most, two masters. Vocal and musical training also remained at the forefront of their education.

The role of children in Tudor (and probably earlier) pageants is, however, also a key part of a history of boy actors. Hillebrand divides the roles of the children in shows and pageants designed to

⁸Hillebrand, p. 26

⁹Shapiro, p. 8.

¹⁰Shapiro, p. 8.

entertain royalty, visiting nobles and other dignitaries into three main areas: "(1) musicians, singers, and players; (2) silent participants in costume; (3) expositors (of the meaning of the pageant) or orators".¹¹

These entertainments involved music and singing, addresses in Latin, and short celebratory plays. The children's role in pageantry, and its importance, is highlighted by their involvement in coronation ceremonies. Hillebrand draws on a description from Leland's Collectanea to illustrate the part they played at the crowning of Edward VI:

At the Great Conduit in Fleet was erected a stage "whereon sat a Childe in very riche Apparell, which represented Truth, and was accompanied with two other children before him in Red, representing Faith and Justice, whose names were before him written in their Places." Truth delivered the oration. "Towards Cheap" six children saluted the king with "divers goodly songs" and played upon their regals; and at the conduit in Cornhill, where there were various kinds of music and singing, two boys, richly apparelled, pronounced two addresses. At the Great Conduit in Cheap was another elaborate pageant: "nigh unto the same Fountaine did stand foure Children very richly adorned, representing Grace, Nature, Fortune, and Charity, who, the one after the other, pronounced these speeches following. . . . At a certain Distance from thence . . . stood eight richly apparelled other like Ladyes, representing Sapience, and the seven Liberal Sciences, which declared certaine goodly speeches." At another place there was a double scaffold, an upper and a lower; on the nether one was a sumptuous throne "whereupon satt a childe apparelled with rich Cloath of Gold, with a Robe of crymson Satten, representing the King's Majesty. The which Throne was upholden with foure other Children one representing

¹¹Hillebrand, p. 29.

Regallity have a Regall in his hand,
Justice drawing a Sword,
Truth having a Book
Mercy having a little Curtain,

who speak these Speeches or Words following."¹²

The children, then, can be seen as an important aspect of the day's sumptuous and elaborate celebrations.

Hillebrand also suggests that, although adults were also involved in these pageants, they never played as integral a part as the boys; at least this was so until the seventeenth century.¹³ This history of the boys' performances in pageants also appears to be much longer than that of the adult actor in guild productions. This is evidenced in the following demand, made in 1378, by the scholars of Paul's school reputedly to Richard II: "to prohibit some unexpert People from representing the History of the Old Testament, to the great prejudice of the said Clergy, who have been at great expense in order to represent it publicly at Christmas".¹⁴ As Shapiro suggests, this demand for the suppression of less experienced actors indicates that "some group of children at Paul's had presented this cycle many times before and resented poachers on its preserve".¹⁵

The performance by children in these three categories clearly

¹²Hillebrand, pp. 30-1. His quotations are from J. Leland, Collectanea (London, 1770) pp. 313-21

¹³Hillebrand, p. 29.

¹⁴Shapiro, p. 10

¹⁵Shapiro, p. 10.

establishes a tradition, a practice of certain acting skills that date back at least several hundred years. Hillebrand sums up the importance of the boys' early history in the following terms: ". . . in the sixteenth century child actors were not a fad; yet we cannot pretend that it was an unsophisticated age. Nor were they a fad in the ages preceding. Who ever heard of a fad that lived five hundred years? . . . But they belonged definitely to the formative stage of English theatre . . ." ¹⁶ Following from these earlier traditions, the next step in "the formative stage" was the establishment of companies of boy actors. Chambers lists eleven boys' companies ¹⁷ and the two most important of these (in that they evolve as the commercially-run troupes) were, as Chambers lists them, "the Children of Paul's" and "the Children of the Chapel and Queen's Revels".

The grammar school at Paul's dates back to the twelfth century and statutes of that time show the involvement of eight boys in the annual ceremony of the Boy Bishop ¹⁸. The performing of plays, however, is only recorded from the sixteenth century, and they were, throughout that century, regularly acting at Court. With the benefit of more historical documentation than was available for earlier years, there is more clearly apparent a developing tradition of the boys' acting abilities being fostered under the guidance of a single, specified master, whose own interests and abilities were

¹⁶Hillebrand, p. 38.

¹⁷Chambers, p.8. (All quotations are from Volume II.)

¹⁸Chambers, p. 10.

mirrored in the performances of that particular troupe.

The boys at Paul's came under the charge of the Master of the Choir School, and perhaps the most famous of these masters was Sebastian Westcott. Westcott undertook the position of master between 1557 and 1582, this twenty-five year reign being notably long, and, during this period, "brought his boys to Court no less than twenty-seven times, furnishing a far larger share of the royal Christmas entertainment . . . than any other single company".¹⁹ As Trevor Lennam points out in his book about Westcott, the Paul's master had taken the boys to perform before Elizabeth prior to her coronation, thereby establishing favour at an early stage. Lennam comments: "In view of her immediate preference for Westcott's company after her accession, one suspects that her [Queen Elizabeth's] delight in them was founded upon a more substantial acquaintance than that merely afforded by a single presentation, however memorable. . . . Throughout her life she rarely failed to respond to the appeal of intelligent and accomplished youth, particularly to handsome, audacious, and eloquent boys".²⁰

Certainly, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the evidence suggests that the boys spent much of their careers acting and not simply singing, and that they were very popular entertainers

¹⁹Chambers, p. 14.

²⁰T. Lennam, Sebastian Westcott, the Children of Paul's, and "The Marriage of Wit and Science" (Toronto: U of T Press, 1975) pp. 35-6

in royal circles. Westcott, as a result, became a prominent figure with the power "to impress boys from any cathedral church in England, a privilege usually reserved for masters of the Chapel Royal or the Windsor Chapel, but which Westcott exercised in 1580 to 'take up' a boy from Christ's Hospital".²¹ Thus there is evidence of a move toward excellence, a desire to form companies of the most talented boys. This desire may well have been stimulated by the first royal patent for an adult company, granted in May 1574, and by the establishment of the first public playhouse two years later. The boys were, even at this time, in competition with the adults not only for Court attention, but also, as Andrew Gurr notes, for the theatre-going public of London:

Even in the academic exercise of playing the profit-motive was rearing its head, and in 1573 plays were banned at Merchant Taylors' because of the rowdyism of the audience. They were commercial shows open to the public. Therefore they [the boys] were on a par with and in competition with the adult companies, not only at Court, where they had traditionally entertained the Crown with plays, but also in London.²²

Westcott's mastership at Paul's also led to another step toward the later form of the boys' companies. It was during this time that the first playhouse at Paul's was established which was an important factor in Westcott's success. Lennam notes that:

The expansion of his theatrical enterprise from 'exercises' followed by court performances at Christmas and Shrovetide

²¹Shapiro, p. 12.

²²A. Gurr, The Shakespearean Stage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) p. 23.

to the operation of a company advantageously based in his own 'house', however small its capacity and stage, immune from city jurisdiction and yet so immediately accessible to a densely populated area of residence and trade, would have offset whatever advantages his competitors possessed.²³

A Privy Council edict of December 1578 "classifies Westcott's troupe with professional adult companies, who evidently had their own theatres or regular places to play".²⁴

Westcott's death in 1582 marked yet another move toward professionalism in that the boys came even more clearly into direct competition with their openly commercial adult counterparts. This was a result of the transfer of the Paul's boys to Farrant's newly-opened theatre at Blackfriars where, for a short time, the boys joined forces with the other major children's company, the Chapel Children, and some of Lord Oxford's boys to perform plays by John Lyly.²⁵

The guidance of John Lyly and the mastership of Thomas Giles (Westcott's successor) undoubtedly led to further success for the Children of Paul's, but "it was this connexion [between Lyly and Giles] which ultimately brought the Paul's plays to a standstill".²⁶ This was the result of the so-called Martin Marprelate scandal. Lyly

²³Lennam, p. 49.

²⁴Shapiro, p. 13.

²⁵Chambers, p. 17.

²⁶Chambers, p. 18.

had joined an attack on the Puritan Martin Marprelate and "for four-
 pence, Londoners could hear the boys' voices raised in shrill defence
 of episcopacy and shrill abuse of Puritans".²⁷ The result of this
 activity by Lyly and others was an edict from the Privy Council in
 November 1589 suppressing plays "for meddling in matters of State".²⁸
 It is thought that after 1589 the boys continued to play in the
 provinces, but this law marked a temporary end to their London success
 -- as Thomas Nashe wrote in Have With You To Saffron Walden, "we need
 never wish the Plays at Paul's up again"²⁹ -- and when the company re-
 emerged, it was in an even more overtly commercial form.

Notwithstanding Lyly's involvement in the Martin Marprelate
 scandal and the consequences of this, John Lyly was a central figure
 in the development of the boys' companies. His plays formed a major
 part of their sixteenth century repertory and, in the second section
 of this chapter, Campaspe will be discussed as representative of the
 demands texts made on the boy player at this time.

The other major boys' company, the Chapel Children, had an
 equally long and involved history. The existence of the Chapel as
 part of the royal household can be found as far back as the twelfth
 century, but first evidence of the children's involvement comes in

²⁷M. Bradbrook, The Rise of the Common Player (London: Chatto
 & Windus, 1964), p. 219.

²⁸Bradbrook, p. 219.

²⁹Shapiro, p. 18.

the reign of Henry IV. He appointed a chaplain to act as Master of Grammar for a company of boys in 1401.³⁰ Their fifteenth century performances appear to have been largely musical, rather than dramatic, and this reflects, Chambers suggests, the known tastes of Henry VI. Indeed, it is not until the end of Henry VII's reign that there are records of play performances, and these are noted as being by the Gentlemen, rather than by the Children (although Chambers questions whether there is any real difference between the two³¹).

As in the case of the Children of Paul's, the history of the Chapel Children as actors becomes more evident in the sixteenth century. Under their master, William Cornish (appointed to that position in 1509), the children's performances at Court became a regular and frequent occurrence. C.W. Wallace, drawing on the Household Book of Henry VIII as evidence, notes that "during Cornish's mastership, no outside actors appeared before the King, and only four times do the accounts for the first twelve years mention any sort of outside entertainers, present or prospective".³² These "outsiders", he adds, were minstrels from Normandy, pipers and dancers from Flanders, and some players from Suffolk who played before the Lord Steward; they

³⁰Chambers, p. 24.

³¹Chambers, p. 29. This is, in fact, a footnote to the doubt expressed in A. Feuillerat, "Documents Relating to the Revels at Court in the time of King Edward VI and Queen Mary" (Louvain 1914), 3, 255.

³²C.W. Wallace, The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare (Berlin, 1912) pp. 34-5.

were not, then, significant competition for the boys' troupe.

The boys' careers at Court were largely as a part of the Revels programme, and there is evidence of the Chapel Children performing as early as 1516, during twelfth night festivities at Eltham³³ -- Wallace's records, however, show a payment to Cornish as Master at an even earlier date, 1 January 1510.³⁴ Cornish was from a musical family and apparently wrote extensively for the Chapel, which established a strong musical tradition within the company. Unfortunately none of his work is extant. Notwithstanding this musical tradition, a description of the 1516 festivities reveals details of dramatic performance:

By the joint orders of Cornish and the Master of the Revels, for the entertainment of Twelfth night, 1516, at Eltham, a great pageant of a castle was prepared, in which dialogue and dancing played a still more prominent part. But before the pageant, Cornish and the children with others, 15 actors in all, played a comedy which he had written, called The Story of Troylous and Pandor, in which he himself, clad in mantle and bishop's surcoat, took the role of Calchas. The children acted the roles of Troilus, Cressid, Diomed, Pandor, Ulysses, and others not named. The dresses were 'Grekkyche', made of silk and adorned with gold and other rich stuffs. 'Dyomed and the Greks imparylld lyke men of warre, akordyng to the intent or porpoos' afforded opportunity for a realistic scene at arms.³⁵

Once this play was finished, Wallace continues, Cornish "donned the yellow satin robe of a herald, and the pageant of the castle was brought in, for which he had written an accompanying play. . . .

³³Shapiro, p. 7.

³⁴Wallace, p. 38.

³⁵Wallace, p. 48.

This is the first record of the 'maske' as part of either play or pageant. Disguised lords and ladies had come out of the castle as a conclusion to the entertainment. From this on, its [the 'maske'] introduction into plays was inevitable".³⁶ Certainly Cornish brought the Chapel Children to the forefront of the royal revels.

Cornish was succeeded by William Crane and, from this time, the company's performances became less frequent. This resulted not only from Crane's apparent inability to match Cornish's expertise at Court entertainment, but also from the increased age and responsibilities of the monarch:

He had less craving and found less time and opportunity for vent of his energies in entertainment, and more in affairs of state and the world's business that was thrust upon him. . . . the relations between him and France, the Emperor, and the Church, mingled with divorces, marriages, coronations, beheadings, suppression of the monasteries, church reformation, and personal experiences meant that he had less need of the lighter entertainment of the less real. He made fewer demands for plays, masques, and dances as his reign grew toward its end.³⁷

Whatever the reasons, performances were reduced during Crane's mastership, and this trend continued with his successor, Richard Bower. Although his mastership extended through the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip and Mary, and into that of Elizabeth I, records of dramatic involvement are scant.³⁸ It is the case that although the

³⁶Wallace, p. 48

³⁷Wallace, p. 64.

³⁸Wallace, p. 70.

boys continued to play at Court -- Wallace's evidence shows that Christmas Revels performances were at least maintained -- "it may be doubted whether they [the boys] were quite so prominent as they had been in Cornish's time. Certainly they had to contend with the competition of the Paul's boys."³⁹

The Chapel Children did not enjoy the stability the long mastership of Westcott afforded the Children of Paul's. Following Bower's death in 1561, the Chapel Children came under the leadership of Richard Edwardes, previously a Gentleman of the Chapel. He was followed in 1566 by William Hunnis who was himself succeeded some eleven years later by Richard Ferrant.⁴⁰ Ferrant had been the master of the children at the Chapel located in Windsor.

In the five years of his mastership, Edwardes, it seems, wrote extensively for the company and performances are recorded both at Court and at Lincoln's Inn.⁴¹ Edwardes brought the Chapel Children back into the limelight and the troupe regained some of its earlier prestige and success. Indeed, records show that both Edwardes himself and his young actors delighted the Queen and received her special attention:

On the second night [in 1566], she promised him a special reward -- probably paid out of her privy purse -- and then,

³⁹Chambers, p. 32.

⁴⁰Wallace, pp. 116-7.

⁴¹Shapiro, p. 7.

after a little pause, made him [Edwardes] and her retinue standing about her a happy little speech on the love scenes of the play and the characters and actors that especially charmed her, with appreciative little jokes at Edwardes for his knowledge in love-affairs. The handsome fourteen year old boy who enacted the role of Princess Emilia, the only woman in the cast, and who so pleased the Queen with both singing and acting that she gave him 8 angels (4 l.) in reward, appears to have worn in this play and to have retained as a further expression of her Majesty's pleasure⁴² one of the actual robes of the recently deceased Queen Mary.

Edwardes' achievement at Court seemed to encourage the development of the drama performed by the children. Under Hunnis, and later Ferrant, the plays were evolving from simple Revels offerings into more fully developed dramatic genres. The plays presented by Hunnis and Ferrant were largely tragedies and tragicomedies⁴³, and were assuming the shape and thematic interests that Lyly soon perfected. The contribution of Hunnis and Ferrant to the boys' history is, however, perhaps more notable for their steps in establishing a permanent theatre for the company's performances.

The need for such a permanent theatre was demanded by the increasing competition for patronage with the Children of Paul's. This latter company had a theatre within the Cathedral precincts, and Alfred Harbage notes the response of Chapel masters, Hunnis and Ferrant, as one to be expected:

It is not surprising then that in 1576-77 Ferrant should have combined with Hunnis and leased tenements in Black-

⁴²Wallace, p. 114

⁴³Wallace, p. 124.

friars not far from the Paul's theatre. The complaint of Farrant's landlord will describe the project sufficiently . . . "Farrant pretended unto me to use the house only for the teaching of the Children of the Chapel, but made it a continual house for plays to the offense of the whole precinct, and pulled down partitions to make that place apt for that purpose." For five years the two companies of boys, Paul's and the Chapel-combination, competed in close proximity.⁴⁴

The property was leased from Sir William More and, as suggested in the above quotation, was converted inside into a large rectangular theatre.⁴⁵ This theatre was some twenty-six feet by forty-six feet with a seating area which "could accommodate one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty spectators, although other estimates run as high as four hundred".⁴⁶ The obvious costs involved in such a project led to Farrant's need to commercialize his enterprise and, as such, this formed the turning point in the economic history of the company.

The expense of acquiring the leasehold and converting the Blackfriars premises are not, however, the only reasons suggested for the move towards commercialization made by those then in control of the boys' companies. The boys' background was grounded in Court performance. This fact is evident from the above discussion as well as from the sheer number of performances -- Murray records twenty-three by Paul's between 1559 and 1590, and twelve by the Chapel in the years 1559 to 1582; Harbage records fifty-one performances by children's

⁴⁴A. Harbage, Shakespeare and The Rival Traditions (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 39.

⁴⁵Shapiro, p. 15.

⁴⁶Shapiro, p. 35.

companies at Court between 1559 and 1582 and fifty-nine by adult companies, with no one company coming anywhere near the Paul's total which he gives as twenty-eight.⁴⁷ Evidence exists⁴⁸ that in the latter quarter of the century, funds were not so forthcoming from Elizabeth and this too provided an apposite reason for the children's companies to look elsewhere for funding.

The figures quoted from Harbage in the above paragraph suggest an even stronger reason for the children's companies to establish theatres of their own. This is, of course, the rapid development of the adult companies. No longer did the children have the security of being sole performers at Court as had been the case in Cornish's time, but the adults were providing a new and successful alternative drama for society as a whole. It is surely far from coincidental that Hunnis and Ferrant's endeavours to obtain the lease for the premises at Blackfriars dates from precisely the time of the opening of The Theatre by James Burbage. 1577, the year of the first performances at Blackfriars, also saw the opening of another competitor, the Curtain. These were, of course, public theatres, catering to 'common' tastes, but, for the private companies to survive, there was an obvious need to match the growth of the 'public sector' in both frequency (and, to a lesser extent, availability) of performance and product. Perhaps the

⁴⁷J.T. Murray, English Dramatic Companies 1558-1642 (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1963) p.328, p. 335; also Harbage, p. 37.

⁴⁸Chambers, pp. 38-9.

greatest advantage that Paul's and the Chapel Children enjoyed was the central location of their respective theatres. Public theatres were located on the outskirts of the City. The children's companies, then, needed to exploit this advantage to the full in order to survive the competition. How extensive this competition was at this time is a matter for speculation, but it is certain that this phase in the boys' history saw a most definite change in their 'modus operandi':

The tendency of chorister companies to escape from the fostering chapels and come under secular control is illustrated by the complex maneuvering at Blackfriars from 1580 to 1584. Farrant died in 1580, and the lease to the theatre held by his widow passed first to Hunnis in partnership with one John Newman, then to the scrivener Henry Evans, who had been associated with Westcote at Paul's, and then to the Earl of Oxford, who conferred it upon John Lyly. Between 1582 and 1584 the company seems to have been made up of a combination of Chapel Royal, Windsor, and Paul's choristers or ex-choristers with recruits from the chapel of the Earl of Oxford -- in a word, just a company of professionally managed juvenile actors enjoying the privileges, through Hunnis, of association with the royal household.⁴⁹

This fusion of two or more of the boys' companies at Blackfriars was an obvious attempt to run the theatre on a commercial basis, rather than relying on the whims of Court patronage. The partnership of Henry Evans, John Lyly and the Earl of Oxford was, however, short lived as Sir William More "regained his property in 1584 and evicted the children's troupes, who subsequently resumed their separate identities".⁵⁰ It was, of course, only a few years later that the

⁴⁹ Harbage, p. 39

⁵⁰ Shapiro, p. 17.

Privy Council forbade plays, and this decade thus marks the end of the children's companies as primarily royal entertainers.

In the early 1570s, the boys' companies were clearly at the forefront of dramatic activity -- the competition was chiefly with each other -- and theirs was the success of the time: "In 1574 the profits made by the children of Paul's was one of the objections brought against them by the City Fathers -- such small players, such enormous profits!"⁵¹ A decade later, the competition was much more widespread with the advent of the public theatres with successes such as The Spanish Tragedy, Arden of Faversham, and Tamburlaine. Such plays were quite a different product from that which had evolved under refined and courtly circumstances, and the rapid change in the type of play performed and the even more rapid move to commercialization can be seen as an attempt to match the progress of this new organization.

Nonetheless, before examining the re-emergence of the boys' companies at the very end of the sixteenth century in their overtly commercial format, it may be useful to examine closely one text from this earlier phase of their history in order to recognize their evolution thus far and to consider what performance skills had been established.

⁵¹Bradbrook, p. 45.

2. Sixteenth Century Performance

The sixteenth century was a period of development for the children's companies and their history shows the growth of dramatic performance, rather than simply singing and recitation. By an examination of a representative text of the time, it is intended to highlight certain performance skills and styles that would reflect the boys' training. John Lyly's Campaspe can be considered typical of the drama performed by the boys in the latter half of the sixteenth century with a Court audience in mind, and Lyly himself was certainly a central figure in this phase of the boys' history.

Lyly, involved in the 1580s with the Earl of Oxford and others in the lease of the private theatre at Blackfriars (which theatre, of course, later became a focus of the boy companies as 'home' of the Children of the Revels), was the foremost writer for the boy players at that time. Campaspe was performed, either in 1580 or 1581, "before the Queenes Maieſtie on new yeares day at night" (description given on the title page) by a troupe combining both the Chapel Children and the Children of Paul's.

Campaspe is a typical Lyly play. It has a large dramatis personae, is relatively plotless, and is more obviously a collection of short scenes than a unified whole. The dynamic of the drama arises from a debate format and reveals themes and issues that would reflect the status and interest of the audience. Harbage cites Campaspe and

and the anonymous Wars of Cyrus to suggest the general interest of the boys' repertory as a whole:

On the basis of the extant Campaspe and Wars of Cyrus, we may guess that a number of such plays as Iphigenia, Ajax and Ulysses, Quintus Fabius, King Xeres, Mutius Scaevoli, Scipio Africanus, Pompey, and Agamemnon and Ulysses were concerned with heroic sentiments about patrician honor, presented dialectically rather than in action. Again on the basis of extant plays as well as the earlier titles, we can see that the theme of friendship -- pervasive in the polite literature of the Renaissance -- was a favorite with the chorister companies.⁵²

Certainly Campaspe's structure mirrors the talents of its performers. Many of Lyly's scenes exist simply as an effective exploitation of boys who were selected for the quality of their voices and trained to make the most of such voices. In fact, Campaspe must surely have earned its success as an outstanding showcase for the boys' talents rather than its having any great merit as drama.

The use of song in the play is indicative of the playwright's shaping material with his actors' talents in mind. In common with many other plays of this period, Campaspe contains many songs, but they do not, in general, bear any direct relationship to plot (such as one exists within the play in the love triangle of Campaspe, Alexander, and Apelles). The songs are more obviously vehicles for the trained, and presumably charming, voices of the boys. Some of the songs are for solo performance and these probably were intended to exploit the best voices in the companies. That the boys were renowned for their

⁵²Harbage, p. 67.

singing abilities -- they were still, at this stage, products of chorister schools -- justified the inclusion of song not only to offer the audience diversity of entertainment, but also to satisfy the audience's expectations.

Lyly does, however, also use song as a means of controlling his play's tone. For example, the song which concludes the second scene of Act I (102-119) is not a virtuoso piece, but is roistering and fitting both to the status of the performers (the servants and the apprentice) and to the purpose of the scene as audience 'warm-up'. Another example of Lyly's use of song as a means of controlling tone occurs in the final Act. The third scene in this act consists of Milectus, Phrygius and Lais' comic taunting of the cynical philosopher, Diogenes. The replies made by Diogenes are typical of the railing satirist, and thus he provides entertainment for the warriors (in much the same way as Thersites does in his first scene in Troilus and Cressida) and, by extension, for the audience. But this railing is curbed and the tone altered by the inclusion of a song. This song acts as a bridge to the next scene featuring the play's hero, Alexander, and the cue lines for the song emphasize the effect of changing the tone: "But first let us sing; there is more pleasure in tuning of a voice than in a volley of shot." (V, iii, 46-8) This cue also draws attention to the boys' vocal skill. Here, then, we can see Lyly's exploitation of the actors' vocal prowess made overtly, as well as more subtly, as a structural feature of the play.

The songs in Campaspe all take place at the end of scenes and are, in this way, reminiscent of the intermezzi of Italian erudite comedy. This early Renaissance Italian drama was performed before audiences in small sections, broken up by a plethora of dances, "scenes" and songs, and Campaspe is certainly similar in form. This structure afforded a courtly audience a diversity of entertainment, and prevented that audience having to maintain its attention for too long at any time.

The comedy in Campaspe is also more akin to commedia erudita and the earlier entertainments devised by Edwardes than to the physical 'knock-about' fun of Newguise, Nowadays and Nought taunting Mankind. The only possibility for physical comedy is set up when the crowd gathers to watch Diogenes "fly". This does not take place and it would clearly be outside the realms of decorum (as well as technically difficult) for him to make such a flight. The humour derives from the jokes at Diogenes' expense and not from any real expectation that he might fly and fall.

Diogenes' role is important in the play. Its earlier title, Campaspe, Alexander and Diogenes reflects this and suggests that the comedy of Diogenes' railing was central to the entertainment. There is evidence that the master of a boys' troupe often took part in the plays; indeed, both Edwardes and Cornish appear to have acted regularly and Wallace records many descriptions of their performances, such as the following:

On the following Twelfth night, he [Cornish] and two of the children acted the chief roles in the pageant-play of the Gardyn de Esperans . . . "Of which garden Master Cornish showed by speech the effect and intent, imparelled like a stranger in a gown of red sarcenet and a coat of arms on him, his horse trappered with blue sarcenet, and so declaring his purpose" -- a rather splendid prologue.⁵³

Diogenes may well have been a role for the master's performance. The age difference would have heightened the comic effect, and the implications of the boys making jokes at their master's expense would recall the antecedent of their involvement in the Boy Bishop ceremony.

In general, the inclusion of the philosophers (in marked contrast to the very refined and gracious performances of the lovers) reflects the preponderance of verbal wit. The noble characters stand apart from the comedic aspects, and the witty exchanges are more appropriately with the lower types. Again this demonstrates that the wealth of comedy is verbal rather than physical. This emphasis on learned wit again reflects not merely the tradition of plays for the boy actors, but also the education and status of the audience for whom Lyly was writing his play.

For Campaspe's comedy to succeed, it requires performers who are at ease when delivering Latin-derived jokes and clever puns, and makes few, if any, demands for comic acting (in the sense of physically-executed, carefully timed, visually entertaining routines which, of

⁵³Wallace, p. 49.

course, become a particular feature of their later plays). The question and answer session in Act I, scene ii, illustrates this. The routine that Manes, Granicus, and Psyllus perform has the shape of the commedia dell'arte lazzo -- it is not in any way crucial to the action of the play, and could be as long or short as the scene demands -- but the physical emphasis of the Italian genre is not in evidence. Nonetheless, these stichomythic exchanges do, as with the commedia dell'arte routine, require good timing and, thus, detailed rehearsal. This then suggests that the boys were schooled on set pieces through a lengthy rehearsal period. Using Chambers as his source, G.K. Hunter comments: "No doubt the fifty days required to rehearse a masque in 1616 was more than normal, but virtuosity of a trained corps de ballet order is obviously required not only for the masque itself but for the masque-like plays devised for the Tudor Court".⁵⁴

Generally, Campaspe is best described as a series of entertainments, each existing in its own right, and seemingly the stage is cleared at the end of each short scene. It requires grace and elegance to effect so many entrances and exits without a play simply becoming chaotic⁵⁵ and, in this regard, Lyly's arrangement of characters is interesting. The arrangement is effected with the utmost simplicity, the majority of scenes being conducted between two characters, and this,

⁵⁴G.K. Hunter, John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) p. 62.

⁵⁵A playwright such as Thomas Middleton in fact uses frequent entrances and exits, fusing scenes, to wreak a chaotic effect.

rather than being a product of naive dramaturgy, reflects more obviously the intended debate format. In such scenes, the two actors (perhaps entering from opposite sides of the stage) represent the two sides of the topic under consideration. Thus the play has a built-in choreography and the visual picture reinforces the verbal content. Examples of this might be the debate on love between Alexander and Hephaestion (II, ii) and the questions and answers between Campaspe and Apelles (III, iii). With the dual intention of debating the theme of love and duty, and of entertaining a sophisticated audience, Lyly's symmetry of scenes and overt stylization is both appropriate and effective in underscoring the language of the play. His young actors must have been well used to maximize the mannered effects.

It must be remembered that Lyly rose to fame as a result of the success of a non-dramatic work, Euphues⁵⁶, and therefore the audience would be keen to devote their attention to what is being said as least as much as, if not more than, to that which was being performed. This emphasis on speaking, rather than personation, also reflects the talents and training of the boys. Their youth was part of their attraction and, rather than attempting to create the illusion of 'being' those older characters, they were more simply presenting, with the benefits of their trained voices, adult points of view. The educated audience and the schooled boy player shared a knowledge and appreciation of rhetoric as this was an important and much studied

⁵⁶It is generally considered that Campaspe is the most euphuistic in Lylian drama.

component of the students' curriculum in the sixteenth century. Peter Dixon notes that it was common practice for schoolboys to have to reproduce a Sunday sermon on the following day, identifying the figures used in the speech and analyzing the way the authors had achieved their effects. He further comments: "We can assume that such habits of careful listening were not forgotten in the play-house".⁵⁷

Lyly certainly makes full use of the devices and effects of rhetoric, and the grammar school background of some of the boy players suggests that they would be well prepared to perform Lyly's rhetorical masterpieces. Many of the speeches in Campaspe are no more than displays of rhetorical skill and demand little acting ability. Once again the emphasis is clearly on speaking rather than physical interaction between characters. For example, in the second scene of Act II (1-142), Alexander and Hephaestion's performance is static and the focus is first and foremost on the language. The scene is typically a one-to-one debate format and, in this instance, the topic is Alexander's love for Campaspe, whether it is appropriate for Alexander to be in love opposed to whether it is more appropriate for him to adhere to his duty as a soldier. The following exchange is typical of their verbal parrying:

ALEXANDER: I am a conqueror, she a captive; I as fortunate
as she fair; my greatness may answer her wants, and the

⁵⁷P. Dixon, Rhetoric (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 47.

gifts of my mind the modesty of hers. Is it not likely then that she should love? Is it not reasonable?

HEPHAESTION: You say that in love there is no reason, and therefore there can be no likelihood. (II, ii, 131-7)

This is the proof of the seasoned rhetorician, and Hephaestion's earlier long speech (38-95) employs all the devices such a rhetorician would be expected to know: there are many rhetorical questions, as well as parison, anaphora, isocolon, and so on. The wit is clearly verbal.

The static nature of such a scene is even more evident in comparison with scenes on a similar subject written by Shakespeare. As You Like It contains many exchanges on the subject of love but these are made more dramatic in a number of ways. One immediately obvious difference is the complication of the love interest. The love triange which forms the 'plot' of Campaspe is multiplied considerably in the Shakespeare play and involves an even broader range of characters. Furthermore, the love debate is given visual interest through the complication of disguise and through various pieces of stage business such as Orlando's hanging his sonnets in the trees and the subsequent humour deriving from Rosalind and Celia's discovery of them (III, ii). Ultimately, an audience is drawn far more to the characters of the play than to their topics.

As critics point out, Campaspe is more simply a number of set topics and not a number of developed characters and this fact is substantiated by Alexander's somewhat instant love for Campase. In As

You Like It, Rosalind may well fall equally quickly for Orlando, but that love is then more cautiously and convincingly developed.

Campaspe's soliloquies in Act IV are indicative that the emphasis is to be placed on the language and not characterization.

Lyly is, then, exploiting the abilities of his players, and circumventing the inappropriateness (if not inadequacy) of their portraying a romantic scene more naturalistically. The success of the boys in performing this kind of drama is described by G.K. Hunter: "Their clear, piping voices with considerable carrying power (as their regular use in open-air civic 'entries' shows) but emotionally inexpressive, were well suited to the artifice of formal poetic declamation, where sense so often depends on a command of rhythmical nuance . . ."⁵⁸ This exploitation not only mirrors the boys' training in chorister schools, but also marks once more the close relationship between play and audience. The audience to whom they performed were expected to admire the content of Lyly's rhetoric along with the style and grace with which it was delivered.

The themes of the play and their presentation both assume the learning and wit of the audience and compliment them for having these qualities necessary to appreciate all the refinements of this drama. For these earlier boys' companies, there was inherent in the performance a demand, due to the tradition of economic reliance on

⁵⁸Hunter, p. 99.

royal patronage, to entertain and flatter the Court; however, this had to be done at the right level. Wit at the Court's expense would be offensive (Edwardes, for example, ran into problems with Damon and Pythias) and the dramatist had to be careful not to appear to be too obsequious. The central concern was to mirror and entertain the elite audience in an appropriate manner.

There is, then, an inextricable link between play, player and audience. In Campaspe, the love interest of Alexander, Apelles and Campaspe herself forges a nexus between beginning, middle and end, but the play's real interest and strength lies in its diversity. Lyly displays an acute understanding of his audience and its expectations, as well as a realization of how the boy players could best meet these audience demands. This is his success as a dramatist.

It has been shown that the skills required in a performance of Campaspe demand the kind of training and specialization that was a feature of the boy actors. These acting talents were nevertheless quite different from those of contemporary public theatre actors; a comic performance by successful actors such as Richard Tarlton or Will Kempe contained certainly very different attributes from the type demanded by the play, Campaspe. As is apparent from the charting of the boys' history in the first half of this chapter, the public theatre performers were a new threat to the 'coterie' drama, and, even at this time, the boys' repertory was not a conscious competitor, but more naturally a development of their chorister tradition. The boys' skills

were primarily in terms of voice, the arts of speaking and singing, and were nurtured by the regular schooling and training of a troupe master. It is true that many of the boys, at the end of their careers as child actors (such careers often terminating when their voices broke), joined the then flourishing adult companies, but, in the sixteenth century, their talents should be viewed in a different frame from that of the adult performer.

A brief examination of the first scene in Act IV of Campaspe again points up both the boys' specific talents, and Lyly's willingness to exploit such talents, irrespective of plot relevance, for the entertainment of his audience. It also suggests a working relationship between the playwright and the master of the boys' companies. Such a relationship is perhaps not unexpected in consideration of the fact that many of the masters were also the companies' creators of texts (as seen with Cornish and Edwardes, for example) and this close understanding enabled particular boys' talents to be highlighted and interwoven as part of the drama. In this scene from Campaspe (IV, i), a new character, Silvius, described as a citizen of Athens, is introduced when he brings on stage his three sons to be taught by Diogenes. As might be expected, this scene affords yet another opportunity for the philosopher to demonstrate his cynicism, but, at the same time, it provides a framework for three virtuoso performances. That the sons were appearing as children to child actors suggests that these boys were among the smallest and youngest in the troupe. Thus, by this fact, they would have entertained and charmed the audience. The

first son performs a dance, accompanied by music; the next tumbles; and Trico, the third son, sings. This again demonstrates the diversity of Campaspe in its entertainments, and emphasizes that the play, in places, is little more than a vehicle to show off particular performers for the admiration of the audience.

In conclusion, Campaspe is not great drama, but a charming entertainment, and Lyly's plays, in general, have been described as "nearer to the sub-dramatic forms of welcome and revel than to full drama; they were primarily Offerings".⁵⁹ Yet Campaspe clearly demonstrates features of the boys' acting which were to continue into the period of their more commercial history, namely verbal techniques, visual effects, virtuoso performance, and songs and music.

Campaspe was an "Offering" for a courtly audience, written towards the end of the boys' history as discussed in this chapter. Comments on the status of rehearsals for these plays which were intended as "Offerings" reveal that the companies were on the verge of overt commercialism: "For the select few permitted to attend these 'rehearsals' for Court, an air of intimacy would be kept. Although presumably open to anyone who could pay, the performances were in private quarters; the audience must have felt rather like those who today pay to be 'guests' of a peer".⁶⁰ The fact that these rehearsals were open to the public marks (as discussed by Shapiro and others)

⁵⁹Bradbrook, p. 218.

⁶⁰Bradbrook, p. 218.

another step towards the complete commercialization of the boys' companies. With the development of their own theatres, the companies were soon to concentrate primarily on their secular careers. Also the link with the monarch was to become somewhat tenuous. As this commercialization became more overt in the seventeenth century, the inter-relationship between play, player and audience became even more crucial to their success.

The virtual shutdown of the boys' companies in the 1590s, due to the Martin Marprelate scandal and the generally precarious status of plays at that time, combined with the change in tastes and trends that took place in that decade, more or less severed the link between the boys and the Court. Nonetheless, throughout the boys' companies' history, they were part of the private sector, a 'coterie' theatre, and to maintain their paying audience, they had to mirror the learning, pretensions, and expectations of those who came to be entertained in very much the same way as Lyly had excelled in his courtly "Offerings". An examination of this earlier phase of the boys' history is particularly illuminating because of the later companies' capitalization on the prestige and exclusiveness that had attached to their sixteenth-century predecessors. Furthermore, the first plays that were performed after the companies revival -- for example, Jonson's Cynthia's Revels and Lyly's Love's Metamorphosis, both staged in either 1599 or 1600 -- closely resemble Campaspe in both their form and structure.

III

REVIVAL AND COMMERCIALIZATION

1. The Paul's and Queen's Revels Companies: Their Theatres and Audience

Following the disappearance of the boys' companies (at least from London performance) at the end of the 1580s, the Paul's Children were the first to re-emerge. 1599 is generally considered to be the year of revival for this company, although Shapiro offers evidence for an earlier re-opening. He cites a passage from Le Prince d'Amour, a Christmas entertainment presented at the Middle Temple (1597-98):

Midway through the published account of these revels, there occurs a list of "Offenses inquirable by the Jury" assembled for a mock-trial. According to this list, it is unlawful to point out the sources of lines which the authors of the entertainment have lifted from contemporary plays: "If any man do appeal to any play at Paul's, Bishopsgate, or the Bankside, upon any sentence given in any of his Excellency's disports of Record; this is also Premunire". . . . "Paul's" unquestionably refers to the theater on the Cathedral grounds used by the Children of Paul's since Westcote's time. The grouping of Paul's with theaters that were open and flourishing suggests that playing had resumed at the playhouse by this time.¹

In any event, the precise date (and reasons) for revival remains uncertain. A common hypothesis is that Richard Mulcaster, appointed as headmaster to the grammar school in 1596, had a strong influence on this new development. The boys were, however, initially

¹Shapiro, pp. 18-9.

under the aegis of choirmaster Thomas Gyles, and were a troupe of between eleven and seventeen actors. (Gair² records that there were eleven on the foundation in 1598, with an extra six boys being recruited over the next two years, specifically as actors.)

Evidence suggests that the boys performed on Sundays and Mondays between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., that is after prayers and before the church was locked, but Gair believes that the boys acted on most days of the week.³ This confirms an endeavour to compete with other theatres in London, public and private, and a move away from the original raison d'etre of court entertainers.

Certainly the location of Paul's was advantageous in this attempt to reach a larger audience. St. Paul's was at that time a centre of social and commercial activities, and the middle aisle of the Cathedral a fashionable rendezvous for the City gallants, as well as lawyers, booksellers, and prostitutes.⁴ Furthermore, there were many aristocratic homes in nearby districts. Yet the theatre was clearly not a part of the Cathedral itself. It seems to have been located in a private house, within the grounds of St. Paul's, but bounded by the cloisters which were themselves "devoted to

²R. Gair, "The Staging of Plays at Second Paul's: the Early Phase, 1599-1602", The Elizabethan Theatre VI, ed. G. Hibbard, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977) p. 37

³Gair, Elizabethan Theatre VI, p. 38. He notes Chambers' quotation of Flecknoe (c. 1660): the boys acted "on Week-dayes".

⁴W.A. Armstrong, "The Audience of the Elizabethan Private Theatres", Review of English Studies, NS 10 (1959), p. 235.

purely secular uses for trunk-makers were in possession of them and used them as warehouses and workshops".⁵ All of this area, Gair goes on to suggest, was under the control of the Choirmaster. The theatre's size lent itself to exclusivity:

This playhouse was obviously small; its stage was two-storied and, thus, perhaps, inside there was a spectators' gallery but since the space available for a building adjacent to the Chapter House wall was restricted, its capacity may well have been less than a hundred "select auditors". This was a private playhouse, not merely in a technical legal sense, but literally "Mr. Haydon's house".⁶

Although, then, the revived Paul's Children can be seen as playing before a wide audience and more regularly, the limited accessibility placed necessary constraints on their commercialization. A theatre holding only a hundred or so spectators could have been little of a threat to the public theatres.

The Children of the Chapel re-emerged shortly after the Paul's company. Perhaps on seeing the success of their rival's resurrection, Nathaniel Giles, "the choirmaster of the Windsor Children who succeeded Hunnis to the mastership of the Chapel Children in 1597, entered into a partnership with Henry Evans, the theatrical business man who had been associated with the first Blackfriars theater".⁷ A

⁵Gair, Elizabethan Theatre VI, pp. 40-2. He also cites the Burbage-Keysar suit as evidence of the theatre location as Burbage, Heminge, and Condell describe it as "neere St. Pauls Church".

⁶Gair, Elizabethan Theatre VI, p. 41.

⁷Shapiro, p. 24

revival date of late-1600 seems to be accurate, bearing in mind that Evans leased the property which was to become the Second Blackfriars on September 2 of that year and that, as Chambers notes, the Children of the Chapel appeared at Court "for the first time since 1584, on 6 January and 22 February 1601".⁸

As with the theatre at Paul's, Blackfriars had the advantage of a central City location. In size, the Blackfriars theatre appears to have been somewhat larger than the one at Paul's, but nevertheless much smaller than its public counterparts. Andrew Gurr suggests dimensions of sixty-six feet by forty-six feet with the stage at the south end.⁹ The stage itself was also bigger than its Paul's equivalent as, at Blackfriars, there was room for spectators to sit on the stage. The management of this theatre was obviously commercial and, notwithstanding Court performances, it is clear "from various legal documents . . . that they performed three times a week over a six-month season".¹⁰

In the previous chapter, a close link between play, player and audience was identified and this continued to be an important focus. An examination of the private theatres' audience is, therefore, useful. Both the Paul's and Blackfriars theatres were in a good location. Armstrong quotes Francis Osborn's Historical Memoires on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, published in 1658, as evidence of the

⁸Chambers, p. 42

⁹Gurr, p. 104.

¹⁰Shapiro, p. 25.

social function of the middle aisle of Paul's:

It was then the fashion of those times and did so continue till these . . . for the principall Gentry, Lords, Courtiers, and men of all professions not merely Mechanick, to meet in Pauls Church by eleven, and walk in the middle Ile till twelve, and after dinner from three, to six, during which time some discoursed of Busnesse, others of Newes.¹¹

Indeed, this area was a meeting-place for the socially mobile (as well as attracting many others from lower classes) and, as such, would provide a ready audience for plays purporting to be superior to the offerings of public theatre. Considering the make-up of the local community, Armstrong comments:

The private theatres were thus conveniently close to the dwellings and meeting-places of various classes who had the leisure and the money to attend performances. The direct evidence concerning the constitution of their audiences shows that they drew the majority of their patrons from these adjacent districts.¹²

Armstrong's "direct evidence" comes from the play texts themselves. He notes that "in references to spectators at the private theatres, the aristocracy and the gentry are mentioned more frequently than any other social class".¹³ From listing various reference to audience, he suggests that the composition would have been aristocracy, members of the Inns of Court (noting the frequency of references to play-going at Blackfriars by law student John Greene in his diary), and

¹¹F. Osborn, Historical Memoires on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James (London, 1658) pp. 64-5, in Armstrong, p. 235.

¹²Armstrong, p. 236.

¹³Armstrong, p. 236

ladies of the upper classes. He also suggests that country gentlemen from out-of-town would have provided a small portion of the audience. Whatever the exact constitution of their audience, the companies, through the playwrights, seem to have encouraged the notion of exclusivity. Planet, in John Marston's Jack Drum's Entertainment, performed by the Paul's boys around 1600, makes the comment:

I like the Audience that frequenteth there
 With much applause: A man shall not be choakte
 With the stench of Garlicke, nor be pasted
 To the barmy Jacket of a Beer-brewer.¹⁴

The common reason given for the exclusion of the less wealthy from the private theatre audiences is the fact of higher admission charges. The cheapest seats at Blackfriars (in the rooms of the top gallery) were sixpence (and thus six times more expensive than admission to the yard of a public theatre). Gurr comments on Planet's statement that "it was a hopeful pronouncement, and probably meant more that the stinkard was banished from the yard to the top gallery than that he was totally excluded".¹⁵ Those that went to the theatre to be seen paid considerably more. Armstrong offers the following prices: a seat in a middle gallery room, twelvepence; a bench seat in the pit, eighteen pence; a stool on the stage, two shillings (eighteen pence admission to the pit plus an extra charge of sixpence for the stool rental; see the Induction to Jonson's Cynthia's Revels); and, a

¹⁴J. Marston, Jack Drum's Entertainment (V, i). The quotation is given in Gurr, p. 144.

¹⁵Gurr, p. 144.

seat in the boxes, half-a-crown.¹⁶ Paul's, however, did not have such high admission prices. Gair suggests that in the early part of this revival period, "Paul's may have subsisted on voluntary donations and the dramatists may have financed their own productions".¹⁷ He continues that, in 1601, the price of admission to a first night at Paul's was only twopence, but also makes reference to Dekker's comment in The Gull's Hornbook that "the gallant who wished to be noticed in the cathedral had to 'quote Silver into the Boyes handes'. This may explain why Paul's was expensive, despite the cheap entry; spectators were expected to reward the actors as well as pay a fee to the gatherers".¹⁸

Such higher admission charges were crucial to the companies' existence in the seventeenth century as they became more and more clearly separated from their original support of church and court. The Children of Paul's survived, it seems, only six years into the new century. Their last recorded performance was given on 30 July 1606 before the King and his brother-in-law, Christian IV of Denmark. The reasons for their decline are not known but both Gair and Shapiro recount disputes among the management and, furthermore, "Ambrose Goulding, Senior Cardinal, died in November 1606 and his place was taken by William Maicocke, his arch-enemy and not a likely supporter of the playhouse for he appears to have been friendly with

¹⁶Armstrong, p. 241.

¹⁷Gair, Elizabethan Theatre VI, p. 39.

¹⁸Gair, Elizabethan Theatre VI, p. 39.

Dr. White, who caused the 1603 closure".¹⁹

The Blackfriars children weathered the scene longer. This may have been because they became clearly severed from any choirboy associations. Whether or not this was a reason, on 4 February 1604, the King issued a patent to the troupe at Blackfriars permitting them to use the name "Children of the Queen's Revels". He had ceased to supply the company with choir boys from the Chapel Royal. This name change, however, did not mark the end of the King's displeasure and after the company had annoyed him yet further, another change was deemed necessary. In 1608, they became the Children of Blackfriars. In August of that year, Evans gave up the lease to the Blackfriars theatre and "the children's company was reorganized by Robert Keysar and Philip Rosseter, a royal musician, and moved to Whitefriars, vacant after the dissolution of the King's Revels. The Keysar-Rosseter troupe appeared at court as the Children of Whitefriars and, as the Children of the Queen's Revels, toured the provinces and finally merged with the Lady Elizabeth's Men in 1613".²⁰

In this last phase of the history of the Children of the Queen's Revels/Children of Blackfriars/Children of Whitefriars, discussion can be centered on a troupe of particular individuals. No new enlistments were made and several of the individuals growing up in the boys' company have well-documented careers as actors. It is then difficult to discuss these final years in terms of 'boy' actors as they were

¹⁹Gair, The Children of Paul's, p. 172ff; Shapiro, p. 22ff

²⁰Shapiro, p. 28

obviously now young men. Without the financial benefits of royal patronage and without the privilege of recruiting the best young talent available, the children's companies had to compete with the public theatre troupes on an equal basis, and with the disadvantage of much smaller capacity. The further the companies were removed from their choir school tradition, the more contingent their existence became on economic viability. It is suggested that it was economic difficulties, combined with problems in the companies' management (highlighted by both Gair and Shapiro), that led to the boys' eventual demise.

2. The Plays of the Revival Years

The texts of the plays performed during this phase of the boys' history mark most clearly a change in style, as well as their direction at an elite audience. One of the first plays to be staged after revival was Lyly's Love's Metamorphosis. The 1601 edition states on its title-page: "Fir^st playd by the Children of Paules, and now by the Children of the Chappell". This suggests that it may well have been an opening text for each of the resurrected companies, and it is useful to examine it as a bridge between the two phases; while it is obviously written by John Lyly, well-established as a writer for the boys as Court performers, it also shows signs of the changes in taste that had taken place and that were to be capitalized upon by other playwrights.

Love's Metamorphosis is a very close relation of Campaspe. It includes the usual concerns of a Lyly play and, like Campaspe, has a debate format in its presentation of the theme of love. Again the acting demanded was very stylized, and the form of the play very symmetrical. The three central male characters in Love's Metamorphosis are three foresters and the three central female, their loves, are among Ceres' nymphs. The opening scene presents the three foresters, Ramis, Montanus and Silvestris, and they launch straight into a debate on the nature of love. The second scene presents the objects of their affection, respectively Nisa, Celia and Niobe, and, not surprisingly, they discuss the foresters. In both scenes, the skills required for performance are verbal. There is little demand for movement and the

actors are instead required to be at ease with the rhetorical constructions, Latin aphorisms, and so on. The women, as might be expected, are directed to sing -- presumably female roles were given to the boys with the purest voices -- and, throughout the play, they are afforded several opportunities to display the quality of their voices.

The digression in Love's Metamorphosis is a typically Ovidian borrowing. Before the three sets of lovers are brought together on the stage, diversity is achieved through the introduction of Erisichthon and his daughter. The character of Erisichthon fulfils much the same role as Apemantus in *Campaspe*, and his is clearly a blocking part. His behaviour stands in marked contrast to the refinement of the lovers and, indeed, the gods. For example, in the second scene, he cuts down a tree on stage in which Fidelity has been imprisoned (and this might be considered as representative of Lyly's stage 'action'). This act leads to Fidelity's one and only speech, a long set piece leading up to her death, and a virtuoso speaking part. The strong rhetorical nature of this speech is demonstrated in its closing lines:

Farewell Ladies, whose lives are subject to many
 mischiefs; for if you be fair, it is hard to be chaste;
 if chaste, impossible to be safe; if you be young, you
 will quickly bend; if bend, you are suddenly broken. If
 you be foul, you shall seldom be flattered; if you be not
 flattered, you will ever be sorrowful. Beauty is a firm
 fickleness, youth a feeble staidness, deformity a continual
 sadness. (I, ii, 124-30)

Fidelity's role is to be admired in itself and for its rhetorical prowess rather than lending much to the plot as a whole.

Act II brings the intervention of the gods, Ceres and Cupid, and their inclusion, typical of Lylian drama, suggests the elegant, posed form of the play. The argument they pursue takes the shape of a debate once more. The following stichomythic exchange is indicative of their function in the play:

CERES: What is the substance of love?

CUPID: Constancy and secrecy.

CERES: What the signs?

CUPID: Sighs and tears.

CERES: What the causes?

CUPID: Wit and idleness.

CERES: What the means?

CUPID: Opportunity and importunity.

CERES: What the end?

CUPID: Happiness without end. (II, i, 104-13)

Following this scene, as well as other views on love, Lyly brings all three pairs of lovers together in the third Act. In turn, and in a dance-like fashion, each of the women rejects her suitor; Celia turns down Montanus in typical fashion:

MONTANUS: I would thy words were, as thy lookes are, lovely.

CELIA: I would thy looks were, as thy affection is, blind.

MONTANUS: Fair faces should have smooth hearts.

CELIA: Fresh flowers have crooked roots. (III, i, 50-4)

The wit of such an exchange is elegant and refined. It is a typical instance of the self-conscious artificiality of Lylian drama.

Like Campaspe, this later play has few physically-enacted routines, and what there is comes through the sub-plot (some of Apemantus' scenes in Campaspe and some of Erisichthon's in Love's Metamorphosis). The wealth of metamorphoses that take place in the later play do, however, create some cause for audience admiration and demand that the boys make some adroit transformations on stage. Hunter describes Protea's transformation, for example, as "clanking mechanics", although he does go on to find some structural justification for the inclusion of this episode.²¹ In a consideration of acting style such a link is less important than a recognition that the drama is more akin to dance than to Renaissance theatre as a whole. Lyly's arrangement of the three men, the three women, and finally the three couples create an overall effect that is visually entrancing and verbally interesting. These are, however, a series of tableaux rather than more sophisticated drama. Comparison with approximately contemporary plays, Love's Labour's Lost and As You Like It, reveals the equally stylized and artificial endings of these plays, but, because of the development of character that has been enacted on stage in previous scenes, the artificiality of these conclusions is drawn to the audience's attention. Furthermore, the speeches of Berowne in coming to terms with his twelve-month wait and of Jaques on his self-imposed exile subvert the otherwise neat outcome. Lyly's play contains no such threat. The artificial mode is apparent throughout and any hint of cynicism is

²¹Hunter, p. 209

firmly dispelled in the final scene.

Both Shapiro and Hunter note the cynical tone of much of Love's Metamorphosis' final Act. Hunter points out that it marks the growing distance between the boys' companies and the Court in that the drama is not the mirror of Elizabeth's excellence as was the case with earlier works by Lyly: "The image of Ceres is never detached from or raised above these activities demands of the plot , and the activities themselves cannot be plausibly translated into happenings in the court of Elizabeth".²² The resolution in Act V does indicate a slight change for Lyly; the squabbling between Ceres and Cupid does not simply and neatly resolve the problems set up earlier in the play. The last scene (somewhat long for Lyly's plays at one hundred and eighty lines) brings everyone on stage, suggesting the approach of the usual happy denouement, but this is almost subverted as the nymphs suggest they would rather live with their metamorphoses than accept their inept lovers. Ultimately, of course, the lovers are all united on stage and Erisichthon sees the error of his ways. The doubt, or cynicism, is then more clearly disposed of than would be the case in a Shakespearean version.

In any event and for the purposes of the present discussion, it is evident that the text of Love's Metamorphosis made very much the same demands of the boy actors as its predecessors. The audience were being offered a graceful entertainment, with a focus on the boys' vocal

²²Hunter, p. 212.

skills and little dramatic action to demand physical acting ability. The wit again was refined and courtly, and not in the same vein as its public theatre counterpart.

Cynthia's Revels, written by Ben Jonson at about the same time and also for the children, reveals many of the above traits. It does, however, also include certain innovations as far as the boy actors are concerned, and marks a step toward the format common to the later repertory. As well as acknowledging the vocal talents of the children, this text also patently requires some measure of acting ability (in the sense of personation) and explores possibilities of harnessing their 'childish' acting to the interests of the play.

Obvious comparison between Jonson's play and its Lylian antecedents can be drawn in the use of song, virtuoso set speeches, and stylized scenes. In common with Campaspe and Love's Metamorphosis, scenes are generally short and work collectively to present visual pictures of contrasts and/or similarities, the effects arising from the specific groupings of characters. Songs are inevitably included to display the choristers' excellence, but, as was the case in Campaspe, are occasionally used structurally to control the tone of a particular scene. The hymn that opens the sixth scene of the final Act is a good example of this. There are also practised set speeches demonstrating the other emphasis in the boys' education. In this instance, Crites' soliloquy (the duration of III, iii) is typical.

The second half of the final Act is perhaps the closest to a Lylian structure. Cynthia's long speeches are appropriately decorous

and elegant to reflect her importance. The inclusion of the two masques and the uniting dance are also akin to the overt stylization apparent in Lyly's plays. Clearly these closing scenes demand a choreographed performance and follow the already-established pattern of boys' plays. Indeed, if Cynthia's Revels were to be considered merely from Prologue through to Epilogue, then the framework might well be termed Lylian and the variations on Lyly's format less obvious and interesting. The inclusion of the Induction to the play, however, changes this and points up demands for other skills from the boys apart from those already highlighted. These demands made by the Induction reflect Jonson's ability to exploit the child actors to particular effect in his drama. In Cynthia's Revels, the performance of the Induction creates a subversive consequence.

Cynthia's Revels is addressed "to the special fountain of manners, the Court" (Jonson's address to the play) yet the Induction is far from mannered. The performance by the three boys is boisterous; Jonson's writing demands that the boys act as themselves, in itself creating a distancing effect, an awareness of the children as children and undermining the idea of their performing simply as puppets of a dance-like drama. Unlike the Lylian examples discussed, this play immediately demonstrates action above words. The play opens with the boys fighting for the cloak and much of the Induction is visually funny. The witticisms of Boy 3, made in parenthesis to the audience, back up the visual humour and act to create a subversive undercurrent to speeches made in earnest. The satire is also taken beyond the stage scenario and into the audience, with the boys' precocious imitation of

a gallant buying his sixpenny stool on the stage. The wit, then, is obviously far removed from the graceful puns of Campaspe and is at once coarser and more direct.

As a whole, Jonson's play is on the one hand an exploitation of the skills with which the boys had gained their reputations, and on the other capitalizes on the boys as boys, and as actors rather than simply highly trained choristers. The result of this is a play with more action and more comedy, but nevertheless only a first stage in the development of a new drama for the children. Overall, Cynthia's Revels is as tedious and undramatic as any play by John Lyly, which Jonas Barish's comments make clear:

Elaboration of rhetoric and baroque syntax reach their height in this play [Cynthia's Revels]. The slight dramatic situation has a heavy load of set pieces to digest, including eight full-length satirical 'caractères', a lengthy discourse from Amorphus on the classification of faces, the minutely elaborated fantasies of the court ladies, the duello and the masque in Act V, and those engines of refined Jonsonian torment, the games of Substantives and Adjectives and A Thing Done and Who Did It, not to mention the formal verse satire in III.iv delivered by Crites, and Cynthia's speeches in the final scenes. The undramatic nature of Jonson's procedure may be judged from the fact that on two successive occasions scenes of sound comic potentiality are passed up and simply alluded to in static scenes of talk.²³

The general criticisms of this passage might equally be levied at Campaspe or Love's Metamorphosis. In consideration of Barish's last sentence, it should be borne in mind that the boy players had no experience of acting "scenes of sound comic potentiality", and where

²³J. Barish, The Language of Prose Comedy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960) p. 114.

such scenes do exist in Cynthia's Revels, they must surely have been experimental. Jonson was perhaps testing both his actors and his audience in an endeavour to see what would prove a commercial success in this new theatre. Experiment was, indeed, a feature of these first revival years.

An obvious innovation in the Jonson play is the inclusion of the Citizen and his wife. Their addition afforded the chance to satirize the public theatre, thus giving a self-conscious superiority to both the private theatre product and audience, and a chance to develop something new with boy players. The Citizen and his wife are patent contrasts to the plethora of stately figures and the accompanying acting would demand similarly different skills. As in the way the impersonation of the gallant in the Induction required parodic performance, so too would these everyday characters.

The language of Jonson's play is also innovative. It is certainly much more varied and ranges from the graceful poetry common to a Lyly play to extreme bawdry. For example, Anaides' bad-tempered exit (IV, iii, 195ff.), "As sure as fate, 'tis so: she has opened all: a pox of all cockatrices. Damn me if she have played loose with me, I'll cut her throat within a hair's breadth, so it may be healed again", is closely followed by songs from Hedon and Amorphus which are much more typical of the boys' tradition, albeit here within Jonson's satiric framework. In Lyly the polished recitations demanded of the boys were often learned borrowings from Ovid, but, in Jonson, it is the French and Italian spoken by the 'sophisticated' courtier that is displayed.

Once more, then, the boy actors are required to perform in a parodic style. Such parody, however, is incorporated into the more usual stylized performance.

Shapiro notes both direct and indirect debts to the Lylian predecessors of Cynthia's Revels and concludes that "Sharing his audience's ambivalence toward Lyly, Jonson grafted on to the traditional Ovidian pastoral stock, a new species of play -- the 'comical satire' . . ."²⁴ For all its weaknesses, Cynthia's Revels is clearly an advance in the dramatic demands made of the boys and John Marston's play, Antonio and Mellida, can be seen to take this development even further.

Antonio and Mellida, similarly a play of the first years of the revival period, demonstrates an overt attempt at harnessing theatre, audience, and most particularly player to a dramatic text. Its Induction is similar to that of Cynthia's Revels. Again the audience is made very aware that the play about to be performed will be acted by boys, and they are introduced to the boys as boys. As in the Jonson play, the boys are required to 'act' themselves. G.K. Hunter comments in his introduction to Antonio and Mellida on these Inductions:

The Inductions of Jonson and Marston obviously ask for a Pirandello-like awareness of the play-world deliberately made unreal. In Antonio and Mellida we begin with the players, discussing among themselves the roles they must shortly assume. We learn not only that the boys are distinct from their roles, but that the roles themselves

²⁴Shapiro, pp. 186-7.

belong to theatrical stock:

FELICHE: Rampum scrampum, mount tufty Tamburlaine! What rattling thunderclap breaks from his lips?

ALBERTO: O, 'tis native to his part. For acting a modern Bragadoch under the person of Matzagente, the Duke of Milan's son, it may seem to suit with good fashion of coherence. (Ind., 86ff.)

As in Pirandello, the characters' lack of self-knowledge is ironically pointed to by a structure which presents this as symptomatic of the whole human condition.²⁵

The effect of the players entering the stage "with parts in their hands, having cloaks cast over their apparel" (opening stage direction) certainly underscores the fact that boys were playing these courtly parts, and a common suggestion is that this heightened the parodic aspects of the play. Clearly the above quotation (Induction, 86ff.) parodies the public theatre player's rendition of Marlowe's text, but the overall effect may well have been more complex. Piero's opening statement, "Faith, we can say our parts; but we are ignorant in what mold we must cast our actors" (Ind., 4-5), not only activates the boys' display of acting skills, but also suggests that the material they have to perform is innovative and alerts the audience to that fact.

That Marston developed his drama not only from Lylian predecessors, but also from the Senecan-flavoured public theatre plays and from his own and other non-dramatic satires, is clearly evident in Antonio and Mellida. This range of influences obviously led to a far more diverse product than was witnessed with the "offerings" of the earlier boys' repertory. Furthermore, in Antonio and Mellida, Marston

²⁵J. Marston, Antonio and Mellida (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965) ed. G.K. Hunter. Hunter's introduction, p. xvi.

was experimenting not only with his actors, but also with their theatre, and, indeed, with language itself. The play employs many new words (and boys trained in voice were surely the best choice to master this innovative vocabulary) and, with regard to the theatre itself, both uses and exploits standard conventions. The range of Marston's demands on his actor is evident before the play gets underway.

Yet, like Lyly and Jonson, Marston exploits the boys' particular training. In Antonio and Mellida, songs and dances are introduced frequently; indeed, the music, singing and mime are arguably as important as the parodic elements of the play. It is not simply a jibe at public theatre fustian, but a play which experiments with changes of pace, scene and mood. Thus it demonstrates the range of talents inherent in the boy players which Gair identifies as one of the attractions of the children for innovative writers:

So too the audience is not allowed to forget the experimental and provisional nature of the play, for Balurdo and Rossaline are shown practising expressions and gestures suitable for different moods, and it is stressed that the short period now available for their performances, the limited plot of the play, and their restricted acting area prevent a full display of their talents (1069-72): surely a blatant example of advertizing?²⁶

In conclusion, discussion of these plays from the first years of the boys' revival has highlighted these years as a turning point. By reviving Lyly, the companies may well have attracted back their courtly audience; however, the new material not only marked changes in taste, but also broadened the appeal of the drama. Cynthia's Revels

²⁶Gair, Elizabethan Theatre VI, p. 25.

and Antonio and Mellida are important texts in this regard and will be discussed more fully in a later chapter.

The increased commercialization (as Shapiro discussed) did not mean exorbitant entrance charges; these charges were higher than those for the public theatre but this was surely to maintain the air of superiority. More importantly, commercialization meant increased accessibility and, indeed, the audience was soon no longer simply court-oriented, but was drawn from a much broader section of London's population. This both demanded and led to a 'new' product for the boys' performance, and the innovations located in the Jonson and Marston plays transpired to be key elements of the drama that was prominent in the last, and most successful, phase of the children's history.

IV

ASPECTS OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PERFORMANCE

1. Introduction to the Repertory

When the two boys' companies re-appeared as part of the London theatre scene at the end of the sixteenth century, the plays they staged were chiefly those of John Lyly, the playwright whose work had dominated the repertory of the 1580s, and neo-Lylian texts. The fact that both the companies performed Love's Metamorphosis as an opening play in this new phase of their history indicates that the companies were, initially at least, simply returning to the kind of drama that had formed the hallmark of their earlier success.

It may be that revivals of Lyly and other previously successful plays (for example, the Children of the Chapel Royal performed The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality, a play staged at Paul's in the 1570s), along with new plays from John Lyly and other drama similarly modelled (such as the anonymous The Maid's Metamorphosis) were in fact attempts to recapture the companies' previous audience. Because of their long court association, much of the boys' drama had, not surprisingly, reflected the interests and sophistication of Queen Elizabeth and her circle. But, with her reign almost at an end and the 'golden age' seemingly over, such drama was obviously out-dated. Plays such as Love's Metamorphosis were thus residual rather than part of the dominant mode. In the interim, Shakespeare and Dekker had become the

pre-eminent writers, and if the boys' companies were to re-emerge as the most fashionable troupes in the City and were to be commercially viable, then they would need to establish a repertory that would challenge, and provide a sophisticated alternative to, the success of the Chamberlain's Men and the Admiral's Men with the plays from these new playwrights.

The "alternative" that was established by these two boys' companies led to the employment of almost all the major playwrights of their period. Only Shakespeare and Heywood are absent from the list of contributors to the children's repertories. George Chapman, it would appear, was lured from writing for the Admiral's Men at the Rose and, starting with May Day (performed by the Children of the Chapel Royal in 1601), he wrote exclusively for the two children's companies until Chabot. (This play was performed in 1613 by the Lady Elizabeth's Men, which company had absorbed the remnants of the children's companies who were, by this time, companies of adult, rather than child, actors.) Other public theatre playwrights, such as Jonson and Dekker, began to contribute to the boys' repertory, and new talents were discovered by the companies' management. Of the many dramatists whose careers started with the Paul's Children and the Children of the Chapel Royal, Marston wrote exclusively for the two companies, and others (such as Thomas Middleton) only had plays produced elsewhere when the fortunes of the children's companies were clearly on the wane. John Fletcher, probably the most prolific writer in the seventeenth century, wrote his first play, The Faithful Shepherdess, for a 1608 performance by the Queen's

Revels Children (formerly the Children of the Chapel Royal), while his sometime partner, Francis Beaumont, started with The Woman Hater for the Paul's Children. Their first collaboration, Cupid's Revenge, was also written for the children.

With the benefits of access to the works of so many playwrights with diverse and often contrasting backgrounds, the boys' companies performed a very varied repertory. Perhaps because Middleton wrote almost all his city comedies for the boys (but his later tragedies, The Changeling and Women Beware Women for adults), and because these city comedies formed the core of the boys' repertories, the children have usually been categorized as comic/parodic actors. Yet, for both the Children of Paul's and the Children of the Chapel Royal, the evidence is of a much broader repertory, demanding much more than simple comedic skills. It should be noted that the Children of Paul's performed Bussy D'Ambois as well as Michaelmas Term and A Trick To Catch The Old One, and that Philotas, Sophonisba and Cupid's Revenge were performed as well as The Dutch Courtesan and Eastward Ho! at the Blackfriars theatre. A complete description of the companies' repertories, as listed by Michael Shapiro in Children of the Revels, is given as Appendix I.

A selection of play texts representing the full range of the boys' repertories has been examined and, from these, certain characteristics emerge which can be considered features of the boys' performance. These are songs, dance, and music; visual effects; emphasis on women and romance; and set piece and virtuoso routines. These categories are obviously not all-encompassing, but highlight some of the areas where

the boys' specific talents and training led to the ten years of notable success for the two companies.

2. Songs, Dance, and Music

As the boys' acting companies had grown from the long tradition of choir schools, it is not unexpected that they enjoyed a widespread reputation for the quality of their musical performance. This tradition was maintained by the two masters in charge of Paul's at the time of revival; both Thomas Gyles (1584-1600) and Edward Pearce (1599-1612) were noted for the excellent musical education they provided. This is evidenced in Pearce's case from the report of one of his former pupils, Thomas Ravenscroft, who had, in adulthood, become a renowned lutenist and composer.¹ The Preface to Ravenscroft's Briefe Discourse (1614) provides a detailed illustration of the Master's role:

. . . Maister Edward Pearce the first, sometimes Maister of the Children of Saint Poules in London, and there my Master, a man of singular eminency in his Profession, both in the Educating of children for the ordering of the Voyce so, as the Quality might afterward credit him and preferre them: And also in his those his Compositions to the Lute, whereof, the world enioyes many, (as from the Maister of that Instrument) together with his skilfull Instructions for other Instruments too, as his fruits can beare him witness.²

Other seventeenth-century evidence indicates that songs and music generally were an important part of the evening's entertainment as a whole. This is established in the account of Duke Philip Julius of

¹Gair, The Children of Paul's, p. 36

²Quoted in Gair, p. 36.

Stettin-Pomerania's visit to the Blackfriars theatre in 1602. His secretary's diary described that "he heard . . . an hour-long offering by a broken consort"³ before the play began. A broken consort consisted of organ, lute, mandolin, bandora, viol, and pipe, and this selection of instruments is certainly wider than the wind and percussion sections generally found in the public theatres⁴. As Shapiro points out, scholars dispute whether the music from the broken consort in fact preceded the play performance, or whether it was used (as was common in Italian Renaissance theatre) as act divisions. It may be that music was employed in both contexts and, as such, formed a frame for the play itself.

Certainly musicians must have been in evidence throughout the performance as many of the texts call upon them to provide varying types of musical accompaniment. Both the Paul's and Blackfriars theatres had rooms above the stage where it is believed the musicians were positioned,⁵ and thus their presence would have been obvious to, and expected by, the private theatre audiences. Along with the introduction and/or entr'acte music, there were songs, dances, and occasionally solo instrumental performances by the boys themselves. It is clear that a visit to either the Paul's or Blackfriars theatres meant a musical, as well as dramatic, entertainment. In fact, the

³Shapiro, p. 250.

⁴M. Hattaway, Elizabethan Popular Theatre (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982) p.62.

⁵Gurr, pp. 97 and 106.

musical content of their programme was expanded, rather than contracted, when the companies became fully commercial in the seventeenth century:

Instrumental music was used even more frequently in children's plays acted after the late 1590s than in those acted before 1591. . . . Probably for acoustical reasons, the indoor private theatres used different instruments from those used in the larger, open-roofed public theatres.⁶

It is the case in the early seventeenth century, however, that this wealth of musical entertainment is generally little more than ornament, rarely contributing to the dramatic situation being presented on stage. For example, the majority of the songs (and, indeed, music generally) in Antonio and Mellida serve the purpose of divertissement and have scant relevance to the play's plot development. One such instance is the inclusion in the final Act (scene ii) of a singing competition for the prize of a golden harp. The three boys who are the singers in this competition are not otherwise involved in the main action of the play, and this scene recalls the set pieces typical of Lyly's drama (such as the performance of Silvius' sons in Campaspe). Both Lyly and Marston were taking the opportunity (and were perhaps requested) to display the choir's finest voices. Furthermore, Jonson includes an exchange of songs for Hedon and Amorphus in Cynthia's Revels (IV, iii) which too is clearly a self-contained entertainment; it is not written as a competition between the two voices, but the scene was perhaps set up for the audience to debate which voice was the finer.

⁶Shapiro, p. 253.

In these first plays, then, as with sixteenth-century performance, songs are generally displays of talent and not integral to the plays' action. The inclusion of musical interludes for the enjoyment of a sophisticated and refined audience is apparent from the text of The Knight of the Burning Pestle. At the end of the first Act, the stage direction reads "Boy danceth. Music." There is no evidence as to how long or short these interludes were, but the comments of the Citizen's Wife give an indication that this was a solo dance performance by a boy to a musical accompaniment:

Hark, hark, husband, hark! fiddles, fiddles! Now surely they go finely. They say 'tis present death for these fiddlers to tune their rebecks before the great Turk's grace, is't not, George? But look, look, here's a youth dances. -- Now, good youth, do a turn o'th'toe. -- Sweetheart, i'faith, I'll have Rafe come and do some of his gambols. (Interlude I, 2-7)

A later interlude in the play (at the end of the third Act) has the same direction, and on this occasion the Citizen's Wife calls for beer and then enters into a conversation with the boy dancer;

WIFE: Look, George, the little boy's come again; methinks he looks something like the Prince of Orange in his long stocking, if he had a little harness about his neck. George, I will have him dance 'Fading'. -- 'Fading' is a fine jig, I'll assure you, gentlemen. -- Begin, brother. -- Now a turn o'th'toe, and then tumble. Cannot you tumble, youth?

BOY: No, indeed, forsooth.

WIFE: Nor eat fire?

BOY: Neither. (Interlude III, 7-15)

This latter example suggests, appropriately to Beaumont's mockery of

public theatre tastes, that the Wife was expecting one of Will Kempe's jigs rather than the more refined and stylized dances traditional to the private theatre. The Boy's response makes it clear that he has no intention of lowering his standards to those of the common player and both examples stress the more elegant shape of the private theatre dance.

As Bernard Harris points out in his introduction to The Malcontent, the public theatres were only just beginning to exploit the possibilities of music, with Jonson's Sejanus (1603) incorporating music between the acts.⁷ The Malcontent itself, supposedly 'acquired' by the King's Men from the Queen's Revels Children during the War of the Theatres, points up the different traditions. There is much less music called for in the extant text (the one for the Globe) than is the case with other Marston plays written for the boys' performance (such as Antonio and Mellida, Antonio's Revenge and The Fawn). Burbage explains in the new induction that this is an amendment made necessary by the transfer to an adult company:

SLY: What are your additions?

BURBAGE: Sooth, not greatly needful, only as your sallet to your great feast, to entertain a little more time, and to abridge the not-received custom of music in our theatre.
(Induction, 78-81)

Clearly music was a noted and time-consuming custom in the

⁷J. Marston, The Malcontent (London: Ernest Benn, 1967) ed. B. Harris. Harris' introduction page xiv.

private theatres. But with the influx of new writers for the boys and their varied approaches, the display of chorister skills became inevitably only one of the many approaches to songs and music.

Samuel Daniel and George Chapman, writing tragedies for the children, seem to have virtually ignored their musical training. At least the extant texts give little indication that music was incorporated into their plays. Chapman, however, does make a single inclusion in The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois (V, v) of a stage direction for incidental music; it is to herald Bussy's ghost, and in Daniel's Philotas, Antigonas's grief is underscored by a song.

Such use of music, to establish or reinforce mood, was only very occasionally evident in Lyly's plays. This technique was, however, greatly developed in the seventeenth century, and music became a far more integral part of the drama. It was no longer used simply for diversion or display, but operated as a structural feature. Marston, who made prolific use of song and music in Antonio and Mellida largely independent of the action, harnesses it much more integrally in the sequel, Antonio's Revenge. In the latter play, Antonio, having 'lost' Mellida (II, iii), is left on stage with Piero and Strotzo:

PIERO: . . . Strotzo, cause me straight
Some plaining ditty to augment despair.
Triumph, Piero; hark, he groans, O rare!

ANTONIO: Behold a prostrate wretch laid on his tomb;
His epitaph thus: 'Ne plus ultra'. Ho!
Let none out-woe me, mine's Herculean woe.

(They sing) (II, iii, 128-33)

As Gair's footnote remarks: "Piero sends Strotzo to arrange a 'plaining ditty' to conclude this scene (see 128-9 above), and Piero and Antonio can hardly be the singers, for it is designed to deepen Antonio's grief: presumably it is sung by the choirboys in the gallery."⁸ Whoever the singers were, it is an instance of musical expertise being used to reinforce the action, the visual picture on stage. Furthermore, it is possible that if the boys had difficulty in presenting the grief with any conviction -- a charge that would be levied by those who see their ability as limited and thus their style parodic -- then the 'mood' music might well provide a helpful 'prop'.

A similar example is apparent in Field's A Woman Is A Weathercock. In the first scene of Act II, music is used to elaborate upon Scudmore's emotional state. As the first church music plays (line 111), Scudmore comments:

Oh hark they come,
 Nevill my friend, well I must something do:
 Oh, why should Music, which joys every part,
 Strike such sharp killing discords to my heart? (II, i, 112-5)

There then follows the entrance of fourteen characters to join Scudmore, Nevill and the Parson for the marriage, and following the description of this crowd, the stage direction indicates "a Boy sings to the tun'd Music". (This again suggests the employment of a particularly fine voice from the choir.) The song, quoted in the text, is on the subject of blessed marriages "that never repent". Such joys in love and marriage

⁸J. Marston, Antonio's Revenge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978) ed. R. Gair. Editor's footnote to line 133, p. 97.

extolled in the song are almost immediately subverted by the wedding party's abrupt treatment of Scudmore's attempted intervention. This play, written by Nathan Field, a chorister-actor himself, makes extensive use of music to complement the action and this underscores the importance of music to the private theatre actor.

Structural use of music, song, and dance becomes an obvious feature of the boys' drama and even in Cupid's Revenge, a play that more closely resembles a Lyly play and shares little with the contemporary plays of Marston and Middleton, these aspects are integrated more skilfully than had been the case in Lyly's drama. In fact, Beaumont and Fletcher's use of music and dance is almost Brechtian in the way it draws attention to the process of the play. In the second scene of Act I, the priest of Cupid enters with his boy, "four young men and maids" and his opening speech is followed by a song which, along with the Priest's speech, creates an ironic hindsight for the audience on Hidaspes' 'birthday wish' and makes possible an abrupt change in tone when Nilo enters and interrupts the measure:

No more of this: here break your rights for ever,
The Duke commands it so; Priest do not stare,
I must deface your temple, though unwilling, (I, ii, 35-7)

It is a feature of Fletcher's dramatic technique to work set pieces, which the audience might expect to see during the course of a play, in a structural context that forces that audience to re-view events they have just witnessed, to trigger a change in tone, or to relax the mood before a climactic scene. Here he is using the polished songs and

dances of the boys, while later, for the King's Men, he used the stock routines of the clown.

All the above examples show the importance the playwrights attached to the music of the choristers in their drama, but it is increasingly being used as a part of the play, rather than an incidental attraction performed by boys renowned for their vocal skills. In general, however, it can be seen that one of the advantages of the boys as actors was this musical expertise. Their music was a feature of their company style and it clearly made a private theatre visit different from one to the public theatre.

As the first decade of the seventeenth century progresses, however, this exploitation of music ceases to be such a prominent feature. Three reasons can be suggested. Firstly, this is accounted for by the change in writers. Jonson and Marston always in some way explored the dramatic possibilities of music, whereas Middleton, now becoming the major writer for the boys, was seemingly less interested in it. Commercial success may also have been the cause. Gair sees the initial audience attracted (back) to the boys' companies as a kind of club with "a collective consciousness of itself" for whom the actors performed a known product, but he continues:

The situation [of audience as club], however, changed drastically as a result of the Poets' War: notoriety bred commercial success and Woodford arrived to manage the theatre. Woodford was a speculator in the theatre business and stayed involved only so long as there was a good chance of a profit.⁹

⁹Gair, p. 170

In other words, the companies had become further and further (if not completely) separated from the choir schools. They were first and foremost commercial theatre troupes with established companies of actors. The severing of the link with the choir school meant that no new children were being enlisted to the troupes and thus the boys now had a higher average age. The exquisite boy soprano who had performed all the pages' songs in the early plays would be four years older and be more appropriate for women's roles or perhaps was now old enough for his voice to have broken. The increased age of the actors, the overt commercialism of the theatre management, accompanied by the change of interests in the playwrights, obviously all led to the change in status for songs and music.

In the later plays, the frequency of songs (as well as dances) diminishes. Gair observes that "from an average of seven songs in a play at the beginning of the revival, the incidence gradually declines under Middleton/Woodford to only one".¹⁰ The decrease is not quite so marked in the case of the Blackfriars' children but, overall, there is a marked shift. Moreover the songs are usually sung by only one or, at most, two characters in the play. This suggests again that the boys were older. Where songs are used, they are fully integrated into the drama and used as part of characterization. This can be illustrated with an example from The Knight of the Burning Pestle: Beaumont uses songs to define Old Merrythought's character. Merrythought's voice is heard

¹⁰Gair, p. 159.

(I, i) before his first stage appearance and the refrain from a popular song, ex-chorister Thomas Ravenscroft's Deuteromelia, prefigures the entrance of an obviously visually comic character:

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (sings): Nose, nose, jolly red nose,
And who gave thee this jolly red nose?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT: Hark, my husband; he's singing and
hoiting, and I'm fain to cark and care, and all little
enough. -- Husband, Charles, Charles Merrythought.

Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (sings): Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves,
And they gave me this jolly red nose.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT: If you would consider your stage, you
would have little list to sing, iwis.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT: It should never be considered while it were
an estate, if I thought it would spoil my singing.

As well as providing a comic entrance, the catches from the song, in combination with his opening remark to his wife, tell the audience exactly what to expect from the character in the play. Merrythought continues to act through song as, at the end of the third Act, he keeps his wife out of their house by responding to her questions, pleas and invective with extracts from other popular tunes:

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (sings within): Go from my window, love, go;
Go from my window, my dear;
The wind and the rain
Will drive you back again;
You cannot be lodged here. (III, 497-502)

Beaumont also uses different types of song to stress character. Since Merrythought is recognized as a 'prodigal' by the grocers, it is not surprising that he sings popular songs, an echo of the popular stage. By contrast, the other songs in the play are more serious and presumably

composed by the playwright. These 'art-songs' are performed by Jasper and Luce, who are, of course, the serious romantic component of the play.

Popular songs are also exploited in Eastward Ho! This collaboration between Jonson, Marston, and Chapman incorporates a number of the then most popular lyrics to be sung by central characters, Quicksilver and Gertrude. Gertrude sings a selection from Dowland, Campion and Ravenscroft, but, as well as exploiting the popular tune, she also parodies Ophelia's song (Hamlet: IV, v, 188-97):

His head as white as milk,
 All flaxen was his hair;
 But now he is dead,
 And laid in his bed,
 And never will come again. (III, ii, 78-82)

Apart from the songs of Gertrude and Quicksilver, music occurs only on two other occasions in Eastward Ho! Both such occasions typify the new manner in which the playwrights were now exploiting the boys' vocal training. The first of these instances is in Act III, where the stage direction reads: "They compass in Winifred, dance the drunken round, and drink carouses" (III, iv, 153). The stylized measure and accompanying elegant song has been replaced with the drinking song. Something similar occurs in Old Merrythought's songs, and generally reflects the attention being paid to the detail of London life, often centering on the 'colour' of the local tavern. The grammar school rules of 1586, quoted by Gair, explain that a Paul's boy was forbidden to "sometymes go the bowlinge alley, sometymes to beare baytinge, some-

times to see playes and tumblers for his recreation and sometymes beare his friends companie to ye taverne and such bawquets".¹¹ As the boys grew older and as the companies had loosened their ties with religious institutions, it is likely that they were habitués of "ye taverne" and could perform such scenes without suggestion of incongruity.

The second instance in Eastward Ho! of an independent song is Security's lament in the final Act. This is a further development of the structural use of song evidenced in some earlier plays. In this situation, Security is in prison, having been justifiably ridiculed and paying the price of his greed, but the song cues his release and some small measure of clemency. Therefore, the song effects a turn-about in the moral judgment of the drama, assuring a comfortable resolution appropriate to comedy. A similarly marked shift is brought about in A Trick To Catch The Old One by Audrey's song (opening Act II). It acts as a sophisticated device to signal the mood of the scene; her hatred of Dampit expressed in the lyrics establishes the tone as Dampit, previously a comic grotesque, here is clearly a loathsome and ugly character who has lost any comic dimension for the audience.

Further examples of songs being limited to one or two characters within a play occur in Marston's The Dutch Courtesan. Written four or five years after Antonio and Mellida, there are far fewer songs and

¹¹Gair, p. 40. He is quoting Sir M. McDonnell, The Annals of St. Pauls School (1959) p. 129.

where they do appear, are sung by the title character and by Freevill. Franceschina accompanies herself on the lute and the play text interestingly quotes her song (I, ii, 115ff.) in 'perfect' English as against the absurd Dutch/English she speaks elsewhere; this suggests the words of the popular song were perhaps more important to the audience than coherent characterization. By contrast, Freevill's songs are to the romantic heroine, Beatrice. His songs occur in the first scene of the second Act (words not printed in text) and in the second scene of Act V. In this latter case, the words are given and it may be that it was a repetition of the earlier song. If this were the case, it would show a further use of song in a structural mode to forge a conscious pattern between the two scenes.

This general development of song, from display to a more integrated aspect of performance, is one that is mirrored in the other highlighted aspects of the boys' acting. In all the cases, the feature starts as simply a display of a particular skill by the boys but, as their experience increases and the playwrights become more familiar with the troupes, these aspects of acting style become a sophisticated part of the plays themselves.

3. Visual Effects

The potential for exploitation of the trained voice must have been an attraction to writing for the boy players, but an even greater potential for dramatic effect was inherent simply in the size of the young actors. In the sixteenth century, the plays exploited this

factor only to a limited degree. The youngest and smallest played the parts of pages. Those with unbroken voices were used for pages and women while the older boys played men's roles. Only occasionally had the masters acted in the drama. Cornish and Crane are recorded as participants in the entertainments they wrote for the boys and their involvement obviously added to the visual possibilities. The discrepancy between the size, age and authority of the master and the remainder of the performers must have been particularly obvious. In the seventeenth century, the playwrights exploited this pattern of size in a very self-conscious manner.

Generally, the nature of theatre fosters a complex interaction between audience and player, divided by Wilfred Passow into five categories:

(A) scenic interaction within the 'make-believe world' (fictitious scenic interaction) (B) the interaction of the audience with this 'make-believe world' (audience-stage interaction in the field of fiction) . . . (C) the interaction of the members of the theatre company amongst each other (real interaction on stage) (D) the interaction of the audience with the actors (real audience-stage interaction) and (E) the interaction with the audience.¹²

It was relationships (B), (C) and (D) that the playwrights exploited to a particularly self-conscious effect with the child actors. One manner in which this could be achieved was through an Induction which patently emphasized the age (and, indeed, size) of the actors about to perform. Jonson, in Cynthia's Revels, increases the

¹²W. Passow, "Analysis of Theatrical Performance", Poetics Today, 1981, p. 240

complication of Passow's formula when he requires the boys to act themselves as they squabble over the cloak in that play's Induction:

3: Well said, resolute Jack, I am content too: so we draw first. Make the cuts.

1: But will you not snatch my cloak, while I am stooping?

3: No, we scorn treachery.

2: Which cut shall speak it?

3: The shortest.

1: Agreed. Draw. The shortest is come to the shortest. (Ind., 17-25)

This then builds visually on the verbal humour, serves as a means of introducing the players (remembering this is one of the first plays in the revival period) and relaxes the audience before moving into the largely stylized action of the main body of the play. Furthermore, there is, at line 176 of the Induction, a reference to the "umbræ" of the past, making a conscious link with the boys' past prestige.

Such a situation is further complicated by Francis Beaumont in The Knight of the Burning Pestle when the Citizen and his Wife subvert the performance of the boy actor delivering the Prologue. In this instance, therefore, actors must act the parts in the play, 'themselves', and members of the audience.

Another visual effect exploited frequently in the opening scenes of seventeenth-century texts is the relationship between pages (that is, the youngest actors) and their lords (that is, the oldest actors). The witty Page is occasionally used to subvert the authority of his employer (recalling the tradition of the Boy Bishop ceremony),

but a simple, yet nevertheless effective, technique more often employed is to use the size difference between the oldest and youngest boys to project the authority of the older character. Presumably the youngest and smallest actors still played these page roles (and they would be up to ten years old) while their lords would be acted by the companies' oldest members (in 1599/1600, these would be boys in their early teens and, of course, proportionately older as the decade progressed). There are abundant examples of plays with pages introduced in the opening sections -- Monsieur and his two pages greet Bussy at line 33 in Bussy D'Ambois, a page enquires for Touchstone's shop in the opening scene of Eastward Ho!, Count Frederick is attended by a page in Field's A Woman Is A Weathercock, Clerimont brings on his boy in Epiccoene, three pages herald the opening entrance in The Dutch Courtesan, and so on. This straightforward device establishes a relative scale by which the stature and authority of the older actors are enhanced. Costumes would also obviously assist in reinforcing age and status differences.

It seems that the boys' performances could be persuasively realistic. The best evidence of convincing acting comes from Salomon Pavy's infamous ability to play old men with skill. His reputation was captured in Ben Jonson's epitaph:

'Twas a child, that so did thrive
 In grace, and feature,
 As Heaven and Nature seemed to strive
 Which owned the creature.
 Years he numbered scarce thirteen
 When Fates turned cruel,
 Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
 The stage's jewel;

And did act (what now we moan)
 Old men so duly,
 As, sooth, the Parcae thought him one,
 He played so truly.¹³

Even at the age of thirteen, it appears that three years' acting experience had sufficed to have earned him such a reputation, and certainly the play of the boys' repertory provide ample old man roles with which Pavy might have demonstrated his prowess. Nathan Field also achieved renown as a fine comic actor.

The boys are also considered to have been parodying certain members of the audience with some of the stock characters they portrayed (such as Dampit, Old Merrythought, and Bramble). Lawyers seemingly formed a significant proportion of the private theatre audience and satire, albeit clearly at their expense (culminating in Middleton's comedy, Michaelmas Term) may well have been more easily acceptable (and perhaps enjoyed) when played by obviously younger actors. Their youth was not considered sufficient excuse by all critics, however, as Thomas Heywood's An Apology for Actors makes clear:

Now to speake of some Abuse lately crept into the Quality
 as an inveighing against the State, the Court, the Law,
 the Cittie, and their Governements, with the particularizing
 of private Mens Humors (yet alive) Noble-men, and others, I
 know it distastes many; neither do I any way approve it; nor
 dare I by any Meanes excuse it The liberty which some arrogate
 to themselves, Committing their Bitternesse, and liberall
 Invectives against all Estates, to the Mouthes of Children,
 supposing their juniority to be a Priviledge for any rayling,
 be it never so violent, I could advise all such, to curbe

¹³B. Jonson, "Epitaph on S.P., a Child of Q[ueen] El[izabeth's] Chapel", The Complete Poems (New Haven: Yale Press, 1975) ed. G. Parfitt, p. 81.

and limit this presumed Liberty within the Bounds of Discretion and Government. But wise and Juditiiall Censurers, before whom such Compliments shall at any time hereafter come, wil not (I hope) impute these Abuses to any Transgression in us, who have ever been carefull and provident to shun the like.¹⁴

While Heywood is clearly defending the public theatre, Hillebrand comments on the passage as follows: "The explanation offered here is, I believe, a true as it certainly is a plausible one. Children dared go farther than men in their satirical attacks because their youth gave them a fancied immunity, 'a privilege for railing'.¹⁵ It was surely the playwrights' decision to "go farther", but this does point up the choice available. The children could be used either to give the impression of 'truth' or could "go farther" and give the impression of parody.

Michael Hattaway comments too on the discrepancy between part and player (particularly emphasized in those plays employing an Induction), highlighting other effects that they might have achieved:

It is difficult to believe, however, that on occasions the boys did not provoke a more immediate appeal, flaunt their sexuality and enjoy their travesty roles to the delight of their audiences and the outrage of moralistic members of the community. Shakespeare at least once seems to refer disparagingly to the boys when Cleopatra imagines herself captive and forced to watch a pageant depicting her own life:

Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see

¹⁴T. Heywood, An Apology for Actors (1612). This extract is quoted in Hillebrand, p. 269

¹⁵Hillebrand, pp. 269-70.

Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I'th' posture of a whore. (V, ii, 216-9)

Yet she is referring more to the libel that will be done to her character than to the inability of young players to embody her greatness.¹⁶

Jonson certainly tries to project a sense of the boys' enthusiasm and precociousness in the induction to Cynthia's Revels, and Hattaway's analysis suggests that the boys used travesty roles for visually entertaining effects.

The travesty roles should, in fact, be identified as part of a broader category of disguise. This is another self-conscious device employed with great frequency in the plays for the boys. In its simplest form, it can draw attention to the actors as boys. An example of this occurs in Antonio's Revenge when Balurdo enters "With a beard half off, half on" (stage direction: II, i, 20). Gair comments in his introduction to the play:

Marston consistently breaks dramatic illusion to create an intimate sense of shared decorum with the spectators. His characters share private jokes with their audience -- like Balurdo appearing with a beard which will not stick on . . . Since beards were not used at Paul's, this represents a deliberately startling breach of dramatic illusion and theatrical practice which serves to draw the audience closer to the context of the play.¹⁷

Gair sees such breaks in illusion as separating the characters from the text, making them commentators on the emotions being expressed. The boys' inadequacy as actors, he suggests, is used to imply that "mimesis" itself breaks down in the attempt to convey adequately the agonies of

¹⁶Hattaway, p. 84.

¹⁷Gair's introduction to Antonio's Revenge, p. 38

the human dilemma".¹⁸ The beard routine also adds a comic dimension to a generally gruesome drama. It follows the dumb show of Andrugio's death and Piero's soliloquy on vengeance and is typical of Marston's shifts in tone. In this instance, such a shift acts as a form of emotional release.

Disguise is also adopted in the more common context of permitting a character to behave outside his 'usual character'. The city comedies exploit this again and again to effect the central character's schemes to gull and/or insult unsympathetic family, employers, and/or foes. An obvious example of this is the use of assorted disguises for Cocledemoy in The Dutch Courtesan. The practice was perhaps meant to recall Saturnalian ritual, when the young knave or apprentice (like the Boy Bishop) was allowed to get the better of his older and superior, either his master or the holder of the money, but only for the duration of the drama. Hillebrand notes that the Boy Bishop ceremony "was no mummery or mere game, except in the extra-cathedral revels which attended it, but a widely popular custom, with many honorable traditions".¹⁹ It is not surprising, then, that it had some influence on later theatre.

The frequency with which travesty disguise is used suggests that this was popular with author, actor and audience. For the same ends as Cocledemoy, Follywit (in A Mad World, My Masters) assumes a female dis-

¹⁸Gair's introduction to Antonio's Revenge, p. 38.

¹⁹Hillebrand, p. 28.

guise. His dress is that of a courtesan and it is used to ridicule Gunwater; his disguise is, of course, a parodic version of the Courtesan who appears elsewhere in the play. Taking the example of Act IV, scene iii -- a particularly comic scene -- it is easy to imagine Follywit as something akin to the pantomime dame in visual appearance and behaviour in satirizing the ambitious Gunwater.

Travesty is complicated yet further when texts call upon the boy actors playing women to disguise themselves as men, the so-called 'breeches parts'. The ironies of such a convention were obviously popular too as this is another well-worked device. Its popularity is evidenced not only by the frequency with which it occurs in private theatre plays (Mellida in Antonio and Mellida, Urania in Cupid's Revenge), but also by its use in the public theatre (Mary and Moll in The Roaring Girl, Viola in Twelfth Night, Rosalind in As You Like It). Such an exploitation of sexual identity was traditional with the boy actors and had been used over a long period. As Gair points out, transvestism is a major theme of Lyly's Gallathea, "with Gallathea and Phillida (both boys acting girls' parts) disguised as boys, each wishing to be a boy, or at least of a sex other than what they are".²⁰ The boys must have been talented exploiters of such sexual ambiguities afforded by these disguise sequences otherwise they would not have been used so often and over so long a period of time.

Apart from such visual effects created through the specific

²⁰Gair, The Children of Paul's, p. 106.

performance of a single character, private theatre plays also aimed at larger visual effects. These were developed from the stylized dances and processions typical of the sixteenth-century drama, and from the inns of court plays which had introduced dumb shows (plays such as Gorboduc). The latter feature had been successfully incorporated into public theatre drama (Marlowe makes extensive use of dumb show in Tamburlaine) and Hattaway comments that "Dumb shows are simply extended examples of the visual emblems that are so important in Elizabethan drama. Entrances in particular often established an informing image for the ensuing scene".²¹

The plays written for the boys around 1600 extend the use of dumb show and pageant. These mime sequences adopted some of the spectacle that had been proving popular with public theatre audiences and private theatre playwrights were quick to incorporate such successful features into their own drama. Chapman, for example, has his Friar summon Behemoth and the spirits in Bussy D'Ambois (IV,ii,52ff.) and this clearly recalls Marlowe's Dr. Faustus. This Marlowe play is also echoed with the pageant of allegorical figures in the final Act of Marston's The Fawn (line 140) and David Elostein also remarks, in his footnote to this stage direction, that: "This short pageant has aspects of the masque about it, and particularly foreshadows what Jonson was later to call the anti-masque (in his introduction to The Masque of Queens (1609)), a group of grotesque anarchic figures which are dis-

²¹Hattaway, p. 65

pelled by powers of reason or beauty".²² Considering the boys' training in the elegant enactment of pageantry and dance, it is easy to imagine that they were excellent performers of such set pieces and, indeed, may have contributed to the development of the masque.

Pageantry had certainly always been a feature of the boys' performances and, as was the case with music, became subject to increasingly sophisticated exploitation. Initially simply display, the visual effects became more integrated to the concerns of the individual plays in later years. Because of the obvious visual discrepancy between part and player, it was possible either to use such differences (as in the example of the page and employer scenes) in a straightforward manner in the context of the play, or to draw attention to them in a self-conscious manner (as with the inductions between the boys 'themselves') so as to set up a quasi-Brechtian alienation effect, making the familiar (city figures) strange and drawing attention to the process of the action. A third strategy was to ignore the discrepancy altogether, but the plays which do this (such as Daniel's Philotas) tend to be the dramatically least adroit in the repertory.

4. Emphasis on Women and Romance

With boy actors assigned female roles at both public and private theatres, it is not surprising that the Paul's and Queen's Revels Children repertories had a substantial number of good roles for 'women'.

²²J. Marston, The Fawn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978) ed. D.A. Blostein. Blostein's footnote to V, 139, p. 219.

Furthermore, the boys had a tradition of performing in plays which revolved around a central female character. Michael Shapiro notes:

Euripides, Seneca, and the "Christian Seneca" tradition . . . had a considerable influence on the repertories of the leading children's troupes of London in the middle of the sixteenth century. The most popular plays of the two classical authors seemsto have been those with female protagonists -- Phaedra, Jocasta, Iphigenia, Alcestis, Medea -- and these works inspired a large number of neo-classical tragedies about Sophonisba, Dido, Cleopatra, and other ancient heroines. . . . By the middle of Elizabeth's reign, pathetic-heroine plays had become something of a speciality for the major London children's troupes, as well as for university and inns-of-court students.²³

Late sixteenth century public theatre plays, by contrast, placed far less importance on the female role. Marlowe and Greene include few parts of any size for 'women' and play titles in general reflect the greater interest in the male protagonist -- Mucedorus, Edward II, Arden of Faversham, Titus Andronicus, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.

The private theatre tradition of focus on the heroine continued, however, into the seventeenth century. A survey of the boys' repertories reveals that there were invariably more female roles than might be found in contemporary public theatre plays. There were usually at least five and that number is one or two more than the average in the adult company plays. For example, in the comparison of two Jonson plays, Volpone (a public theatre play and, of course, titled after the central male character) has only two women's roles (Celia and Lady Would-Be), whereas Epicoene (a private theatre play and titled after the central, apparently 'female' character) has parts

²³Shapiro, pp. 154-5.

for five wives.

As the drama developed in the seventeenth century, women's parts in the private theatre plays not only became more numerous, but were also distinct from those typical of public theatre drama. The major female roles in the public theatre were those of the romantic heroine (typically Shakespeare's witty women in the romantic comedies such as Much Ado About Nothing and As You Like It) or relatives of the central male protagonist (Lady Macbeth, Lear's daughters, Desdemona, and Gertrude). Even in the instances of the central romantic heroine, the women are inevitably bound by the rules of social decorum. As C.L. Barber illustrates in Shakespeare's Festive Comedy and particularly in his discussion of As You Like It, the freedoms accorded to the women in disguise provide:

The humorous recognition . . . of the limits of nature's moment, [which] reflects not only the growing consciousness necessary to enjoy holiday attitudes with poise, but also the fact that in English Christian culture saturnalia was never fully enfranchised. Saturnalian customs existed along with the courtly tradition of romantic love . . .²⁴

Thus, Rosalind can enjoy the freedoms of male disguise in the Forest of Arden, but the conclusion must reverse this Saturnalian trend and fall more closely in tandem with the traditions of courtly love. Rosalind marries the person she loves, but also, by marrying and by returning to her rightful place in society, obeys that society's rules. Such women's parts, though witty, romantic and central, do not ultimately subvert

²⁴C.L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 238.

social codes of behaviour. In the private theatre plays, however, the female characters often ignore the bounds of decorum and their comedy becomes far more overtly bawdy than anything on the Shakespearean stage.

This is a clear example of the changing role of the private theatre. Neither the Paul's Children nor the Queen's Revels Children were primarily court entertainers. Indeed, after the offence caused by Eastward Ho! in 1605, the latter company had even to drop the Queen's name from their title and became simply the Revels Children. The plays were no longer a mirror of courtly values, but were obviously now a reflexion of urban realities. Eastward Ho!, in fact, includes an excellent example of the new 'women's' role in the urban drama. In this play, Gertrude makes a major contribution to the plot action and is, as a whole, a very comic character. Her first scene (I, ii) where she dresses and greets Sir Petronel is very comic, both visually and verbally, and her social climbing is parodied at length. Her post-wedding scene is equally comic, and when Gertrude reminds Quicksilver: "Dost remember since thou and I clapped what-d'ye-call'ts in the garret?" (III, ii, 74-5), C.G. Petter notes that this is a "None too subtle reference to sexual matters, characteristic of the licentious Gertrude".²⁵ Marston's Donna Zoya in The Fawn is an equally forthright and indecorous lady. In the second Act, she declares to her motley audience of braggart Herod Frappatore, courtier Nymphodoro,

²⁵B. Jonson/G. Chapman/J. Marston, Eastward Ho! (London: Ernest Benn, 1973) ed. C.G. Petter. Petter's footnote, p. 50.

and the fool Dondolo that:

. . . I am resolute Donna Zoya. Ha, that wives were of my metal! I would make these ridiculously jealous fools howl like a starved dog before he got a bit. I was created of such an unsanctified member, and will boil him in his own syrup. (II, 345-50)

This shift from courtly manners to urban morals (or lack of them) is perhaps most clearly highlighted by the frequent appearance of a courtesan in the boys' plays. In fact, such a character even becomes the title role in Marston's play, The Dutch Courtesan. The inclusion of prostitutes was certainly appropriate for plays reflecting the life of the surrounding City area. As Reavley Gair makes apparent, Paul's Churchyard was a notorious meeting place:

Certainly there seem to have been bawdy houses in the churchyard. In 1592 Edward Guilpin in Skialetheia remarks "There in the window mistress minkes doth stand/And to some copesmate beckneth her hand" (Diiii), and this takes place in Paul's yard. As far as the boys themselves were concerned, Philip Stubbes in 1583 had already suspected them (and players generally) of numerous fleshly offences; they "in their secret conclaves (covertly) . . . play the Sodomits or worse". Later, in 1619, a certain I.H. in The House of Correction, said of a whore: "Faine would she have beene a Quorster at Paul's, but that she loves not to stand in a Surplesse: yet many times she repayres thither, especially unto the lower end of the Middle Ile."²⁶

It is likely, therefore, that a local courtesan would have been considered equally good material for parody as the preening gallants, the lawyers, or the local notorious cutpurses. This is surely an instance where the boys may well have played up the transvestite and sexually ambiguous aspects of their roles and taken the parodic

²⁶Gair, p. 28.

elements to the extreme. Outlandish and perhaps grotesque costumes may have been used to enhance the visual effect and garish make-up may have been used. On the subject of make-up, Michael Hattaway notes:

"Encouraged by the example of the ageing Queen, Court ladies had begun to paint their faces in the 1590s -- the practice is satirized in III. ii. of Marston's Antonio and Mellida -- and the boy players presumably followed suit".²⁷ Flavia and Rossaline's attention to make-up is not Marston's only piece of satire on this topic. He returns to the subject in The Malcontent when courtesan Maquerelle provides her 'advice' to Bianca and Emilia. This scene (II, iv) is only very loosely related to the main plot action and is obviously intended as a set piece comic satire.²⁸

MAQUERELLE: Why then, eat me of this posset, quicken your blood, and preserve your beauty. Do you know Doctor Plaster-face? By this curd, he is the most exquisite in forging of veins, sprightening of eyes, dyeing of hair, sleeking of skins, blushing of cheeks, surphling of breasts, blanching and bleaching of teeth, that ever made an old lady gracious by torchlight; by this curd, la.

BIANCA: We are resolved, what God has given us we'll cherish.

MAQUERELLE: Cherish anything saving your husband; keep him not too high lest he leap the pale. But for your beauty, let it

²⁷Hattaway, p. 85

²⁸Bernard Harris in his Introduction to The Malcontent disagrees. He finds echoes of Il Pastor Fido in Maquerelle's advice to the younger bawds and feels that the placing of the scene "increases the dramatic, as well as the literary, propriety of Marston's use of Guarini" (pp. xxvi-xxvii). I agree that it occupies the time between "the declaration of murderous intent and the execution of the deed", but not that it succeeds in reorganizing our feelings. The scene is more simply comic.

Maquerelle's 'advice' is an excellent example of the practice Hattaway describes.

be your saint, bequeath two hours to it every morning in your closet. I ha' been young, and yet in my conscience I am not above five and twenty, but believe me, preserve and use your beauty, for youth and beauty once gone, we are like beehives without honey, out o'fashion apparel that no man will wear; therefore, use me your beauty. (II, iv, 26-41)

The courtesan appears with great frequency in the early seventeenth-century plays. In A Trick To Catch The Old One, the Courtesan is unnamed, leaving scope for suggesting in performance a locally well-known woman, while others in the 'city' plays are named to suggest their character: Frank Gullman (in A Mad World, My Masters), Wagtail (in A Woman Is A Weathercock) and Sindefy (in Eastward Ho!). As C.G. Petter notes, Sindefy is particularly well named; her full name reveals her Puritan stock, but the shortened version, used by Quicksilver, 'Sin' demonstrates how her urban existence corrupts.²⁹ There is also a courtesan in Beaumont's The Woman Hater (Julia), and even in Samuel Daniel's heavy and serious tragedy, Philotas. Here, the courtesan (Thais) acts as a foil for Antigona's pure view of love:

ANTIGONA: Loves! Out alas! Love such a one as he,
That seeks t'undo my Love, and in him me?

THAIS: Tush, love his fortunes, love his state, his place,
What ever greatness doth, it must have grace.

ANTIGONA: I weigh not greatness, I must please mine eye.

. . .
The day time joy, what comfort hath the night?

THAIS: If pow'r procure not that, what can it do?

ANTIGONA: I know not how that can b'attain'd unto.

THAIS: Nor will I teach thee, if thou know'st it not:
Tis vain, I see, to learn an Asian wit. (Exit)

²⁹Petter's introduction to Eastward Ho!, p. 4.

ANTIGONA: If this be that great wit, that learned skill,
 You Greeks profess, let me be foolish still,
 So I be faithful. And now, being alone,
 Let me record the heavy notes of moan. (Cantat)³⁰
 (III,ii)

Not surprisingly, the citizen or minor aristocrat's wife is also a feature of the 'City' plays and thus sets up a trap for the husband (as with Mistress Harebrain and 'Lady' Gullman in A Mad World, My Masters). Otherwise they may simply be included to demonstrate the follies and bad taste of the 'nouveaux riche' as with the Citizen's wife in The Knight of the Burning Pestle or Lady Ninnie in A Woman Is A Weathercock.

In general, while the boys' companies had in the sixteenth century used women's roles as a focus of the thematic interests of the play without being concerned with three-dimensional characterization (Campaspe, and, indeed, Daniel's play maintain the old-fashioned use of women), the later plays increased the range available and more attention was now being given to characterization. The number of women's roles available could, furthermore, permit the presentation of various types: (i) romantic heroines (Mellida, Urania, Beatrice, Luce), as well as their more independent counterparts (Gertrude); (ii) courtesans (the urban equivalent of the public theatre 'maid', largely performing as a foil to the more sober characters); and (iii) wives, either citizens or aristocracy, but in any case comic and often ridiculous.

³⁰ A rare example of Daniel using song. It reinforces yet further Antigona's purity.

Therefore, it is a feature of the boys' plays that not only were there more good female roles, but that the range of characters covered also broadened the range of acting possibilities. Perhaps most notably in these female roles, the boys' acting must have been both stylized and 'natural', parodic and 'straight'. In the private theatres, the 'straight' heroine was given a clearer perspective by being seen in relation to other female roles, and female characterization was as complex as male. It is interesting that women do not emerge as the central figures on the public theatre stage until after the demise of the boys' companies; only then do they become of major interest (as in many of Fletcher's plays, such as The Maid's Tragedy (1610), Webster's The Duchess of Malfi (1614) and Shakespeare's Cymbeline (1609)).

5. Virtuoso Performance

The final area for examination is the virtuoso, or set piece, performance. The wealth of such material in the plays for private theatre performance may well result from the benefits of ample rehearsal time. The boys, it is thought, performed once a week (on Sundays in the earlier part of the evening) and at least part of the remaining six days was devoted to their education, both as schoolboys and as actors. Even if their performances were in fact more frequent, the public theatre schedule was undoubtedly much more hectic. Henslowe indicates in his diary that the Admiral's Men, over a twenty-five day period, never offered the same play on following days, and covered fifteen different plays in this period. This in itself suggests very

little rehearsal time in the public theatre. By contrast, the boys had a much more relaxed performance schedule and benefited from the instruction of the master.³¹ The master acted as an early director figure, and it is further possible that the playwright also assisted with the staging of the plays. The public theatre companies would only have had the playwrights' help, if indeed they did participate in the staging of their texts.

As with the other categories, the first set pieces performed by the boy actors took the form of display. These were the songs, dances, dumb shows and processions described, as well as the verbal virtuoso demonstrations that were so much in evidence in Lyly's drama. The tradition of the delivery of polished rhetoric continues into the seventeenth century, largely in the tragic repertoire. Samuel Daniel's Philotas, a tragedy in classical form (including Chorus), makes prolific use of the grand rhetorical delivery and, indeed, has little else to commend it. Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois and its sequel, The Revenge Of Bussy D'Ambois, both display many skilfully constructed pieces of rhetoric. A good example is Clermont's reply to Baligny's question "Why, is not all the world esteem'd a stage?" (in The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois). This defence of the theatre is an obvious re-working of Jaques' famous speech, perhaps by this time a common set topic in the practice of rhetorical skills:

The stage and actors are not so contemptful
 As every innovating Puritan
 And sweater-out of zealous envy,

³¹Details of performance schedules are in Gurr, pp. 36 & 57.

Would have the world imagine. And besides
 That all things have been liken'd to the mirth
 Us'd upon stages, and for stages fitted,
 The splenative philosopher that ever
 Laugh'd at them all, were worthy the enstaging:
 All objects, were they ne'er so full of tears,
 He so conceited that he could distil thence
 Matter that still fed his ridiculous humour.
 Heard he a lawyer, never so vehement pleading
 He stood and laugh'd. Heard he a tradesman swearing
 Never so thriftily selling his wares,
 He stood and laugh'd. Heard he an holy brother,
 For hollow ostentation, at his prayers
 Ne'er so impetuously, he stood and laugh'd.

. . .

Now whether he suppos'd all these presentments
 Were only maskeries, and wore false faces,
 Or else were simply vain, I take no care;
 But still he laugh'd, how grave soe'er they were. (I,ii, 348-74)

This speech, more than forty lines in total length, is interesting in its inclusion of a counter-attack on the Puritans, but Guise's response to this virtuoso performance by Clermont makes clear its function in the play:

And might right well, my Clermont; and for this
 Virtuous digression, we will thank the scoffs
 Of vicious Monsieur. But now for the main point
 Of your late resolution for revenge
 Of your slain brother. (I, ii, 375-8)

Guise draws attention to the fact that this long speech is not in the least important in terms of plot.

Like songs, however, such set piece speeches do generally become more clearly integrated into plot as the drama develops. An example of this is Mendoza's soliloquy commenting on Ferneze's liaison with Maquerelle (in The Malcontent):

. . . Nothing so holy,
 No band of nature so strong,
 No law of friendship so sacred,
 But I'll profane, burst, violate,

'Fore I'll endure disgrace, contempt and poverty.
 Shall I, whose very 'hum' struck all heads bare,
 Whose face made silence, creaking of whose shoe
 Forced the most private passages fly ope,
 Scrape like a servile dog at some latched door?
 Learn now to make a leg, and cry 'Beseech ye,
 Pray ye, is such a lord within? -- be awed
 At some odd usher's scoffed formality?
 First sear my brains! 'Unde cadis, non quo, refert'. (II,i,14-30)

Mendoza's thirty line speech is a self-contained scene, commenting on the preceding mimed action:

Enter Mendoza with a sponce, to observe Ferneze's entrance, who, whilst the act is playing, enter unbraced, two pages before him with lights, is met by Maquerelle, and conveyed in. The pages are sent away. (II,i, s.d.)

The speech is obviously a set piece, but is also integral to the drama in charting Mendoza's reaction to the situation.

The induction scene was an innovative use of the set piece and first occurs in the post-1599 revival period. Both Marston (in Antonio and Mellida) and Jonson (in Cynthia's Revels) use an induction and this is clearly to introduce the companies to the audience. Francis Beaumont complicates this set piece further by asking his actors to perform both as themselves and as audience in the Induction to The Knight of the Burning Pestle. In all these cases, when the discrepancy between parts and players must have been patent, such a blatant underscoring of the craft of acting could well have made the in-play performances more readily acceptable. If the audience only tacitly accepts the world of illusion -- that is, they know they are attending a play -- then that world of illusion should be credible as such. If the acceptance is made overt -- the players displaying their 'real'

identities and discussing the difficulties of the parts -- then that need for credibility is undermined and emphasis drawn more towards the process.

As the first decade of the seventeenth century progressed, certain of the boys apparently emerged with talents for particular types of characters. One of the most famous, Solomon Pavy, trained at Paul's where:

In 1600 he was 'apprentice to one Peerce' and in The Faery Pastorall one of Percy's 'dramatis personae' is 'Saloman A Schoole Boy' (f.62). During the course of the play he acts the part of a 'Philosopher without a Beard' (f.69) and during the last two acts disguises himself as a monster to frighten his schoolmaster: he may also have doubled in the role of Tiresias. In addition his command of Latin is fluent and erudite and he is a player on the 'getterne' (f.75v)³²

In 1601, Pavy moved to the Chapel Children; the reasons for this are, however, not known. With that company, he earned the reputation captured in Ben Jonson's epitaph and the poem suggests that Pavy's immaturity was no drawback in his being able to give convincing performances. That such actors achieved notoriety for a particular role accounts for the inclusion of some set pieces which are not necessarily integral to the main action of a play. The audience at Blackfriars no doubt looked forward to seeing Pavy as an old man, and thus a playwright would have been well advised to write in such a scene. It may be that the Dampit sequences in A Trick To Catch The Old One were so designed. Other self-contained segments which might have been constructed with the forte of a particular actor in mind include the performance of Slitgut. He is the butcher's apprentice in Eastward Ho! who makes a

³²Gair, p. 64

single appearance in the fourth Act. His performance is largely a commentary on the fate of those cast down the Thames and is conveyed, by and large, in three longish speeches. He is, like Dampit, an unusual character and not a part of the main action. At best, his role is important in that it places other aspects of the play into a different perspective.

As the players mature, there are also less set pieces between pages. Scenes of bawdy jokes, such as those played out by Dildo and Catzo in Antonio and Mellida, become less frequent as these boys are clearly older. Such comic routines are appropriately re-allocated to the apprentices -- Quicksilver in Eastward Ho!, Jasper in The Knight Of The Burning Pestle -- or to the young knave -- Follywit in A Mad World, My Masters, Cocledemoy in The Dutch Courtesan. The opening scene of Eastward Ho!, involving the scrapping between Quicksilver and Golding, is a good example of the mature version of the tumbling pages of Lyly's plays.

In many respects, the private theatres are taking over the comic traditions of the popular theatre. These virtuoso performances are akin to the renown of solo performers such as Kempe and Tarlton. While comedians were being instructed "to speak no more than is set down for them" (Hamlet, III,ii,41-2) in their performances on the public theatre stage, the boys' plays give much more freedom for lengthy stock comic scenes whatever the genre. The one-to-one stock routines naturally abound in the city comedies, but are also included in tragedies. For example, Monsieur and Pero (Tamyra's maid) perform an extended riddle

in Bussy D'Ambois (III,ii,247-74) and, in more romantic material, Wagtail and the Page in A Woman Is A Weathercock (II,ii,1-70) provide a comic digression. Other plays use unrelated citizen scenes for comic relief. Examples of this can be found in Cynthia's Revels and Cupid's Revenge. Not all one-to-one stock routines are unrelated to plot, however. A Mad World, My Masters includes a hilariously funny scene between Penitent Brothel and the Succubus (IV, i) which creates much comedy from Penitent's terror. The scene provides both a comic version of the stage ghost, so popular in both public and private theatre tragedies, and a sophisticated incorporation of song into the drama. The Succubus is also, of course, disguised "in her shape" (that is, in the shape of Mistress Harebrain). The confusion caused to Penitent and the fuller knowledge of the audience are adroitly exploited in this set piece.

One popular sequence seems to have been the 'barber sketch'. It is used both in The Dutch Courtesan and in The Knight Of The Burning Pestle. In the first play, Cocledemoy, after his meeting with Holifernes Reinscure, the barber's apprentice, adopts the persona of barber and arrives to shave Mulligrub. This routine allows Cocledemoy to place a coxcomb on his victim's head, and the scene is obviously intended to be as visually funny as it is from the ironies of Mulligrub's questions to Andrew (the disguised Cocledemoy). Such a sequence is also exploited in Beaumont's play in the Barbaroso episode. Here the barber takes on the dimension of mythic giant and his opponent, Rafe, is introduced by George as follows:

Puissant Knight of the Burning Pestle hight,
 See here another wretch, whom this foul beast
 Hath scorched and scored in this inhuman wise. (III, 377-9)

Here the local tradesman is parodied as part of Beaumont's wholehearted parody of popular taste.

The popular theatre comedian's tradition of extempore acting was clearly being stifled at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Indeed, material written at this time for King's Men comedian, Robert Armin, has an obviously more reflective and witty shape than the visually and more traditionally comic routines of his predecessor, Will Kempe. Therefore, the boys can be considered the major representatives of comic acting on the early seventeenth-century stage. The city comedies, it is suggested, have more in common with Italian commedia dell'arte than with the boys' academic antecedents or medieval vice traditions.³³ The strengths of these plays are based on the sheer pace of the comedy, much of which relies on excellent timing to succeed. A good example occurs in the fourth Act of A Mad World, My Masters when Cocledemoy succeeds not only in getting Mulligrub put into the stocks (for no real crime), but also in gulling him of his money and then

³³The direct influence of commedia dell'arte cannot be proven, but it is interesting to note R.B. Parker's reference in his Introduction to Thomas Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (London: Revels Plays, 1969) to Allardyce Nicol's work, The World of Harlequin (1963, p. 169), which states that an Italian commedia dell'arte troupe performed in London in 1602. This was just as Middleton was beginning his playwriting career and much of the comedy he wrote for the boys reflects the shape of commedia dell'arte lazzi. One of the many examples is the fight between Sam Freedom and Moneylove in A Trick To Catch The Old One (I, iii).

finally having him dragged off by the constables. This scene (IV, v) is played through at a furious and chaotic pace, involving eleven different characters (including Cocledemoy appearing both as himself and in disguise), as well as fourteen entrances and exits, within the space of one hundred and thirty lines. At the time of first performance for A Mad World, My Masters (possibly one of the last plays staged at Paul's), the boys would have been acting together for at least five years, and perhaps as many as seven, and thus a slick, well-executed enactment would surely have been achieved. Acting by this time for both the companies was clearly a troupe performance.

This survey of the general characteristics of the boy companies' plays has identified trends in performance techniques. Through the close reading of a smaller number of plays, the overall nature of their acting can now be more fully discussed. This will also allow an examination of how the individual playwright structured his material with the limitations and/or strengths of the children in mind.

TEXTS IN PERFORMANCE

Six plays have been selected for close reading. These are Marston's Antonio and Mellida and Antonio's Revenge, Jonson's Cynthia's Revels and Epicoene, and Middleton's A Trick To Catch The Old One and (in collaboration with Dekker) The Roaring Girl.

The two Marston plays were selected as representative of the early years of the revival period. Antonio and Mellida was an opening text for the Paul's Children and, along with its sequel, points up many of the innovations of the boys' theatre. Furthermore, these plays suggest that Marston was seeking to achieve particular effects specifically through the child actors' techniques.

Cynthia's Revels was an opening play for the Chapel Children, performed in 1600, while Epicoene was one of their last, performed around 1610. The comparison of the two Jonson plays discusses changes in format and acting styles. These plays represent the beginning and the end of the revival period.

A Trick To Catch The Old One and The Roaring Girl are approximately contemporary plays, the former a private theatre text and the latter a public theatre text. Both involve the work of Thomas Middleton. A Trick To Catch The Old One, representative of the core of the boys' repertory, was a solo composition, but The Roaring Girl

Middleton wrote with Dekker.

1. Antonio and Mellida; Antonio's Revenge

Antonio and Mellida is important to any discussion of the acting style of the boy players. Not only does it include many references to the nature of performance, but it is the text which has polarized the views of theorists on the subject of the boys' style. R.A. Foakes uses the two Marston plays -- but basing his argument largely on the 'facts' of the Induction to Antonio and Mellida -- to posit a theory of grotesque parody or burlesque:

. . . the serious fantastical is exemplified in the Antonio plays, in which children were made to posture and rant for a special purpose. They may be seen not as failed tragedies, or ineffective moral satires, but as grotesque plays, or, in a word, Marston's fantasticalities.¹

Ejner Jensen, on the other hand, suggests a close similarity between the boys' style and the prevailing mode of the adult actor:

Still other facts of theatrical history support the case for similar styles. Surely the merging of whole companies -- as in the case of the Queen's Revels and Lady Elizabeth's Men -- which brought men and boys together in a single group is strong evidence for such a view. . . . These indications point, then, to the boys' having no serious deficiencies which would prevent them for creating plays as rich and wide-ranging as those of the adults.²

It does, in fact, seem as if the boys' performance style was somewhere between these two hypotheses. On the one side, there is

¹R.A. Foakes, 'John Marston's Fantastical Plays: Antonio and Mellida and Antonio's Revenge', Philological Quarterly 41 (1962) p. 239.

²E. Jensen, 'The Style of the Boy Actors', Comparative Drama, 2, (1968), p. 108.

much to suggest the boys' ability at convincing portrayal, but, on the other, their youth, especially their youthful appearance, was an unmistakable *donnée* of any production.

A close examination of the structure of Marston's first play, which was instrumental in re-establishing the Paul's Children as an important London theatre company, shows the attention the playwright paid to shaping his material specifically for young actors.³ The sequel to Antonio and Mellida, Antonio's Revenge is a further illustration of Marston's awareness and exploitation of the boys as boys, and can be read as a development of those effects that had attracted attention, if not praise, after the performance of the earlier play.

R.A. Foakes sees Antonio and Mellida as a play in which "Marston directly lays open his main figures to melodramatic contrasts and a touch of bathos"⁴, but it is clearly more than a simple burlesque of public theatre performances. The playwright has obviously paid much attention to the structure of the play, dividing his action almost equally between 'serious' scenes, usually furthering the plot, and more or less related comic scenes. The play can be

³It is also noticeable that Marston had the architectural possibilities and limitations of the Paul's theatre very much in mind. For example, Gair notes (p. 120) "the prominent use of the upper and lower stages" and that the early part of the play exploits "the architectural improvements to the playhouse's interior facade".

⁴Foakes, p. 231.

divided as follows:

<u>ACT I</u>	1.	INDUCTION		comic/boys as boys
	2.	PROLOGUE		bridge/sets new tone
	*3.	ANTONIO'S SOLILOQUY	music	establishes plot line
	*4.	PIERO'S COURT	music	introduces characters
	5.	MATZAGENTE/LADIES	music	comic/stock material
	6.	ANTONIO(FLORIZELL)/LADIES	music	comic irony/disguise
<u>ACT II</u>	7.	PAGES/FLAVIA	songs	comic/sexual innuendo
	8.	MASTERS/ROSSALINE/FELICHE	music	comic/stock material
	*9.	COURT SCENE	music	stylization/changes tone
	*10.	ANTONIO/MELLIDA	music	romantic
<u>ACT III</u>	*11.	ANDRUGIO/LUCIO	song	plot/song reinforces tone
	*12.	FELICHE		re-views theme of 11
	13.	CASTILLO/PAGE	song	comic/stock material
	14.	LADIES 'GLASS' SCENE		comic/satire
	*15.	PIERO/LETTER		serious version of 13
	*16.	ANTONIO/FELICHE		plot/stylization
	*17.	PIERO		counter-plot to 16
	*18.	ANTONIO/MELLIDA	song	serious version of 6
<u>ACT IV</u>	*19.	ANTONIO		distracted version of 3
	*20.	ANDRUGIO/ANTONIO	song	stylization/song changes tone in anticipation of reunion (also stylized)
	*21.	ANTONIO/MELLIDA		breaks dramatic illusion
	22.	BOY'S INTERPOLATION		plot complication
	*23.	PIERO'S COURT		comic/subversive as 8
	24.	BALURDO/PAGE		tragic/return to tone of 20
	*25.	ANDRUGIO/ANTONIO		
<u>ACT V</u>	26.	PAINTER SCENE		comic/stock material
	27.	BALURDO		comic/stock material
	28.	PAGES/SONG COMPETITION	songs	interlude before climax
	29.	MASQUE	music	stylization as 9
	*30.	ANDRUGIO'S ENTRANCE	music	expected conclusion
	*31.	ANTONIO'S RESURRECTION	music	shock reversal
	32.	EPILOGUE		return to 1

The asterisk indicates serious material related to main plot interest.

Even in such a skeletal diagrammatic form, it is clear that Marston's play has a complex structure. He is using both the Induction and Epilogue (plus the brief digression by the Page in Act IV), along with the range of comic and musical entertainment, to put the serious action of the plot into a distinct perspective.

As the diagram shows, there are within the play several re-workings of material. These are made in a different tone (as in the case of 13 and 15) which suggest that there is more to the play than mere parody. Furthermore, the obvious numerous and varied shifts in tone show Marston's subtlety in the psychological manipulation of an audience. This is most marked in the build-up to the expected conclusion in Act V (30) with threatened death and a 'volte face' which is then completely reversed with the surprise resurrection of Antonio. Songs and music are used extensively to add in the creation of mood, but are evidently less crucial when the plot has been established and is in process of complication (12-27). Marston returns to an extensive use of music in the closing sequences when precise control of audience response is crucial to the drama. This is far from naïve dramaturgy.

The breaks in dramatic illusion (the Induction, the Act IV interpolation, and the Epilogue) are used as a framework to the play. Certainly, the Induction is particularly crucial to the presentation and reception of the text. The opening exchange gives a picture of what acting style is demanded by the parts the boys are soon to under-

take:

PIERO: Faith, we can say our parts; but we are ignorant in what mold we must cast our actors.

ALBERTO: Whom do you personate?

PIERO: Piero, Duke of Venice.

ALBERTO: O, ho; then thus frame your exterior shape
To haughty form of elate majesty
As if you held the palsy-shaking head
Of reeling chance under your fortune's belt
In strictest vassalage; grow big in thought
As swoll'n with glory of successful arms.

PIERO: If that be all, fear not, I'll suit it right. (3-13)

Using this exchange as an example, Michael Hattaway comments generally on the nature of Elizabethan acting:

It has been argued that the appearance of the word 'personate' about 1600 -- "Whom do you personate?" asks Alberto in the Induction to Antonio and Mellida (1599) -- is indicative of an assumption that drama is turning to the depiction of individuals, characters with a particular "identity" or inner self. Yet the word did not at that period lose the connotations it derived from its etymology (from the Latin 'persona', a mask) of the generic and the feigned. It did not imply singularity. . . . Marston's insistence on the "exterior shape" reminds us that characters may be built not from a theory of an individual's psychology but from without: from a costume, a catch phrase . . . or the famous "Tu quoque" of the Jacobean clown, Thomas Greene, or from a physical mannerism.⁵

If these sign systems were what constituted 'naturalism' to the Renaissance audience, then it is easily conceivable that the boys were no less convincing at the "depiction of individuals".

Piero continues in the Induction to Antonio and Mellida (line 14): "Who cannot be proud, stroke up the hair and strut?" and Alberto

⁵Hattaway, pp. 77-8.

replies: "Truth. Such rank custom is grown popular;". Thus, within the opening seconds of the play, the boys (as 'themselves') have acknowledged the successes of the common player in their own absence from the London stage, and suggested not that they will necessarily perform in a different manner, or that they cannot match their adult competition, but that they will be superior performers. This notion is developed in a precocious manner with Antonio's doubt as to his own ability to fulfil the assigned role with conviction:

Faith, I know not what, an hermaphrodite, two parts in one; my true person being Antonio son to the Duke of Genoa, though for the love of Mellida, Piero's daughter, I take this feigned presence of an Amazon, calling myself Florizel and I know not what. I a voice to play a lady! I shall ne'er do it.

ALBERTIO: O, an Amazon should have such a voice, virago-like. Not play two parts in one? away, away; 'tis common fashion. Nay, if you cannot bear two subtle fronts under one hood, idiot go by, go by, off this world's stage. O time's impurity!
(68-76)

Once again the boys acknowledge what is common practice (for boys to play 'breeches parts') and use the feigned doubt to deliver a bawdy joke (lines 77-80) via a bastardization of The Spanish Tragedy ("idiot go by, go by"). This 'doubt' also fulfills the function of relating key plot detail and of preparing the audience for Antonio's first (serious) entrance as Florizel (I, i). It also sets up some licence, or indulgence, towards his female 'personation'. In the event, by making the disguised Antonio an Amazon, Marston prevents one of the older and presumably more obviously masculine actors having to compete with the other ladies in the play. Their shared scene (I,i,164ff.)

makes this clear; Mellida opens the questioning and this is developed by

Rossaline:

MELLIDA: Lady, your strange habit doth beget
Our pregnant thoughts, even great of much desire
To be acquaint with your condition.

ROSSALINE: Good sweet lady, without more ceremonies,
What country claims your birth? and, sweet, your name? (I,i,164-8)

Antonio's disguised appearance clearly fascinates the women and is probably intended to have a like effect on the audience. This sequence is also a good illustration of the range of characterizations that the boys were portraying even at this early stage in their revival. Mellida is truly the romantic heroine, Rossaline a more witty female (reminiscent of her Shakespearean namesake in Love's Labour's Lost), and Antonio/Florizel, the 'strange' woman. If the boys were such inadequate actors, it seems unlikely that Marston would have taken the pains to discriminate so subtly, at least between the ladies at court.

To return to the Induction, the discussion of exactly how Antonio will circumvent the problems of transvestism is interrupted by Matzagente's burst into verse which precedes his exit. Feliche comments (certainly in this instance parodically): "Rampum scrapum, mount tufty Tamburlaine! What rattling thunderclap breaks from his lips?" (86-7). The ensuing discussion of Matzagente's character identifies him for the audience as the stock miles gloriosus of Plautine, as well as more recent Italian and English, comedy and, of course, parodies the ranting of Alleyn's portrayal of Tamburlaine on the public theatre stage.

In each of these examples, the Induction to Antonio and Mellida can be seen to serve a three-fold purpose: it introduces the actors as actors, it introduces the characters and their parts in the play, and it suggests that the boys are endeavouring to perform these parts with conviction without resorting to the ranting and strutting of the Marlovian actor. Jensen comments along similar lines:

. . . the "Induction" to Antonio and Mellida . . . gives grounds for assuming that the boy actors were challenging the adults not with a radically dissimilar kind of entertainment but with plays and a style of acting which they willingly offered for comparison. . . . it is conceivable that Marston would have his boy actors point to and even exaggerate the crudeness of the adults and even (with a nod to his select audience) connect the faults of his rivals with their reliance on popular favor, the need to please the crowd. But it is surely inconceivable that in the "Induction" Marston would stress the very weaknesses of his own actors while calling attention to the strengths of the adults -- power, passion -- which they could not achieve.⁶

Although Jensen seems to ignore the fact that the private theatre players were equally dependent on the need to please their audience, albeit a self-consciously more select crowd, the concluding sentence of the quotation is surely indisputable. To take Jensen's analysis a step further, it not only is unlikely that the Induction should serve as an advertisement for the competition, but it is also ingenious audience psychology to alert the indulgence of the audience to any problems or shortcomings that may follow.

Another reason for disputing Marston's intention to write in a solely parodic vein is the care he takes in forging the transition

⁶Jensen, p. 107

between the Induction and the play proper. The dramatist does not leap from the prose deliberation on acting and its difficulties to Antonio's rhetorical display of grief, but includes a self-depreciating prologue. This passage, framed with Lylian grace, acts as a bridge between the two styles and, as the Induction, demands indulgence from the audience (but in the more orthodox manner):

Yet, most ingenious, deign to veil our wants,
 With sleek acceptance polish these rude scenes,
 And if our slightness your large hope beguiles,
 Check not with bended brow, but dimpled smiles. (20-4)

The Prologue, it should be noted, invites "smiles", and not laughter, as a response to the following scenes.

Marston takes the first act of the play to establish the plot interests clearly, and then opens the second with an unrelated comic scene. Pages, Dildo and Catzo, are introduced, their bawdiness signalled even in their names. They seem designed, not only to indicate the physical scale of the actors, as pages in the opening scenes of other boys' plays often did, but also to scale down the tone of the action itself. Their ribald humour and appearance (Catzo enters gnawing at a capon) is surely intended to offer comic diversion, and is built upon with the arrival of Balurdo, Castilio and Rossaline, whose courtly manners the pages quickly subvert. This again argues against Antonio and Mellida as simple burlesque. If this were the case, Marston's careful delineation of tone would be somewhat wasted. From the rhetoric, somber music, and stylization of the first Act, the plays moves rapidly into a sequence of visual and verbal humour, backed

by song and the introduction of set piece characters, such as the Pages and the railing Feliche.

The return to matters concerning the title characters is marked by a return to stylization, the symmetrical dance of the ladies. This device is used again in the final Act (ii) where symmetry is created in three short sequences with Mellida and Galeatzo, then Rossaline and Matzagentze, and finally Flavia and Balurdo. (This is reminiscent of the dénouements of both Love's Labour's Lost and Love's Metamorphosis.) The humour of the earlier scene (II,i), derived from Piero's declaration to the "beauteous Amazon", is obviously ironic and not in the same vein as the lewd jokes the audience enjoys with the Pages. Antonio and Mellida is clearly an experimental play and, as such, packed with innovative material and changes of both pace and tone to develop the basic plot action.

Not surprisingly, songs and music play an important role in the play. As is usual in the private theatre plays, they herald courtly entrances, dances, and re-inforce mood. The song competition is undoubtedly a display piece and has the effect of building up the tension for the play's final outcome. Yet Marston is also experimenting with the dramatic possibilities of the boys' vocal skills. Two instances can be cited. One occurs in Act III where Andrugio, who has, with Lucio, spent some hundred lines bemoaning the state of the world, says to his boy (another example of page included for 'stature' purposes):

My soul grows heavy; boy, let's have a song.
We'll sing yet, faith, even despite of fate.

Cantant

'Tis a good boy; and, by my troth, well sung.
O, and thou felt'st my grief, I warrant thee,
Thou would'st have struck division to the height,
And made the life of music breathe. Hold, boy. Why so?
(Boy weeps) (III,i,103-10)

In the second sense of 'stature', the boy fulfils the purpose of asserting Andrugio's authority and maturity in handling his particular situation. In contrast to the boy's resort to tears, Andrugio concludes the scene more philosophically with one of the many borrowings from Seneca's Thyestes (lines 925-6): "I was a duke; that's all./No matter whither but from whence we fall." (III,i,114-5)

The second instance of experimentation with voice occurs in the opening scene of the following Act with Antonio's plea to the boy to sing to console his grief:

Pray thee, pray thee sing,
Or I shall ne'er ha' done; when I am in,
'Tis harder for me end than to begin.

(The boy runs a note; Antonio breaks it.)

For look thee boy, my grief that hath noeend
I may begin to plain, but -- Pray thee sing.

(Cantant.) (IV,i,154-7)

This sequence first thwarts the expectation of a song, then reinforces it and the overall effect is to make a double emphasis on the misery of Antonio's situation.

Another common feature exploited in this play is that of disguise. Lucio brings on a shepherd's gown for Andrugio (thwarted

expectation of disguise set piece), Antonio plays both Amazon and sailor, and Mellida, a breeches' role, as a page. Antonio and Mellida's simultaneous disguise is crucial to the plot and also effects their reunion (IV,i); it is typical of Marston's experiment with exploiting stock dramatic devices to their maximum potential that he should have his two central characters disguised at the same time. At the time of their reunion, the lovers switch to the Italian language for their dialogue and this does, indeed, merit the description of "quasi-operatic"⁷. Such a stylization of emotion may well raise some doubt as to the effect the acting must have wrought, but it should be noted that this scene is immediately followed by an address to the audience by a Page:

I think confusion of Babel is fall'n upon these lovers, that they change their language; but I fear me my master, having but feigned the person of a woman, hath got their unfeigned imperfection and is grown double tongu'd. As for Mellida, she were no woman if she could not yield strange language. But howsoever, if I should sit in judgment, 'tis an error easier to be pardoned by the auditors' than excused by the author's; and yet some private respect may rebate the edge of the keener censure. (IV,i,219-27)

The ironies of that passage are self-evident and do encourage the "smiles" of the "auditors". As with the introductory addresses, the Page is seeking indulgence from the audience. The sense in this commentary that the play has gone too far -- in other words, ceased to be convincing -- is mitigated by laying the blame on the author. Once

⁷R. Gair's Introduction to Antonio's Revenge, (p. 39). He is, in fact, using the term to describe events in the sequel play, but "quasi-operatic" does seem particularly apt in this instance.

again, it is not the actors' ability which is questioned but the design of the play. Marston may well be using a wealth of experimental material but this is done tentatively and with an acute awareness of how it may be received. Throughout the play, however, the actors are at pains to stress their desire to convince the audience.

Along with songs, music, and disguise routines, Marston similarly exploits stock scenarios, many of which are common to both private and public theatre plays. He re-works the dramatic possibilities of mirrors and painting (the painter was a figure of interest and used, of course, in Campaspe); he also uses the insomnia of the malcontent (a standard 'sign' for such a character; it is adopted again by Marston for Malevole); the victim of society's ills, Andrugio (his speech at IV,i,30ff. is clearly a source for Timon's outburst when stripped of his rank and wealth in the second half of Timon of Athens -- see IV,iii, 1-44 -- which play also incorporates a 'painter's scene'); Balurdo's outrageous gallant costume (V,i,77ff.; he prefigures the wealth of overdressed fashion-seekers in the city comedies), and, Marston's piece de resistance, the resurrection of Antonio in the final scene (209ff.). The dénouement of Marston's play is perhaps his most successful experiment. Andrugio's entrance sets up the expectation of the delivery of his own bloody head, the thwarting of which brings about the volte face in Piero (lines 132ff.). This scene is adroitly set up as a conclusion consonant with the tragic leanings of the plot. But Marston takes the thwarting of audience expectation yet another step further with the stunning resurrection of Antonio. The initial effect of this

device must have been startling, and seemingly proved to be a popular routine with both authors and audience as Marston's innovation is rapidly made a stock routine (adopted, for example, by Beaumont in The Knight of the Burning Pestle and by Middleton in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside).

The sequel, Antonio's Revenge, is more obviously a tragic play. Perhaps reassured by the success of Antonio and Mellida, Marston spends less time craving the indulgence of his audience. This is apparent from the beginning; in this play a couplet concluding the Prologue suffices: "When our scenes falter, or invention halts,/Your favour will give crutches to our faults." (32-3) Assuming that the boys were successful in performing all aspects of the earlier play, it is not surprising that Marston spends less time on subtle contrasts of mood and narrows the divertive aspects of the play. (Such diversion do still exist, however, in the character of Nutriche, Balurdo's half-on, half-off beard, and the occasional bawdy scene like Balurdo's sexual punning with the bass viol (III,ii), a stock device which re-appears many times in the city comedies). In their place, Marston adopts a wealth of public theatre sensations -- ghosts, hanging bodies, ripped-out tongues and other severed human limbs -- so making it difficult to distinguish between public and private theatrical techniques.

The assertions made by the boys in the Induction to Antonio and Mellida are now integrated into the action of the play. The criticisms of the public theatre actor are no longer discussed boy-to-boy, but

become aspects of characterization in Antonio's Revenge:

ALBERTIO: Uncle, this laughter ill becomes your grief.

PANDULPHO: Wouldst have me cry, run raving up and down
 For my son's loss? Wouldst have me turn rank mad,
 Or wring my face with mimic action,
 Stamp, curse, weep, rage, and then my bosom strike?
 Away, 'tis apish action, player-like. (I,v,75-80)

Gair notes that the actor "refused to behave like Hieronimo in The Spanish Tragedy",⁸ but what he omits to note is that Pandulpho mirrors precisely Titus' reaction to the receipt of his two sons' heads in Titus Andronicus (III,i,264ff.). Marston seemingly is selective in his adoption of public theatre style. The Spanish Tragedy was an obvious and much-struck-at target of private theatre disdain. It was the popular play and the induction of Antonio and Mellida made it clear that they would not be behaving in a like manner. But Marston, it would seem, felt that Shakespeare's portrayal of Titus' grief was effective and one that would be equally effective in his own drama.

Acting is again discussed by Antonio:

Madam,
 I will not swell like a tragedian
 In forced passion of affected strains.
 If I had present power of ought but pitying you
 I would be as ready to redress your wrongs
 As to pursue your love. (II,iii,103-7)

The plea contained in this extract is clearly one for verisimilitude, suiting the action to the word and the word to the action.

Marston also further sophisticates the use of song, once more

⁸Gair's footnote in Antonio's Revenge, p.78.

to thwart audience expectation. When Antonio, Alberto, and Pandulpho are preparing Feliche's grave (IV,v), Antonio addresses his Page: "Will't sing a dirge, boy?". Pandulpho's and Alberto's responses, however, prevent the song and harness its absence in a manner which effects the emotion of the scene:

PANDULPHO: No; no song; 'twill be vile out of tune.

ALBERTO: Indeed he's hoarse; the poor boy's voice is cracked.

PANDULPHO: Why, coz, why should it not be hoarse and cracked,
When all the strings of nature's symphony
Are cracked and jar? (IV,v,66-70)

This exchange, as Gair notes⁹, is another borrowing from The Spanish Tragedy, but it also demonstrates the sophistication with which Marston is exploiting a feature of the boys' acting. Their songs have now become part of the play's imagery. The absence of the song stresses the extreme misery of the scene and Gair highlights how effective this is in plot terms:

While Piero may continue to use music for merely ceremonial purposes, the effects of his tyranny are to cause the breakdown of the musical ability both microcosmically in Feliche and macrocosmically, for "All the strings of nature's symphony/Are cracked and jar".¹⁰

Antonio's Revenge is not without further innovation. Marston devises Antonio's disguise as a fool, using the ambiguity between disguise and distraction as a sophistication of the stock device. Hattaway notes that "the large number of climactic scenes in which women

⁹Gair's footnote in Antonio's Revenge, p. 141.

¹⁰Gair's introduction to Antonio's Revenge, p. 34

appear mad or distracted is probably due to the fact that the stylized playing they demand was more accessible to boys than was naturalism"¹¹. The thin line between sanity and madness that Antonio is made to tread, however, requires undoubtedly some subtlety in performance. His scene blowing bubbles is particularly effective:

BALURDO: Stand back there, fool; I do hate a fool most -- most pathetically. O, these that have no sap of -- of retort and obtuse wit in them -- faugh!

ANTONIO (blowing bubbles): Puff! hold, world! Puff! hold, bubble! Puff! hold, world! Puff! break not behind! Puff! thou art full of wind; puff! keep up thy wind. Puff! 'tis broke; and now I laugh like a good fool at the breath of mine own lips: he, he, he, he, he. (IV,ii,28-32)

and makes obvious ironic comment on the true fool of the scene, Balurdo. This episode is echoed closely in Middleton and Rowley's The Changeling in a scene between Lollio and the Antonio of that play.

In general, Antonio's Revenge has much in common with the successful dramas of contemporary public theatre. In Antonio and Mellida, Marston had experimented with his playing space, his players and, indeed, his own dramatic style. It seems that, as a result of this, he had decided that there were no barriers which would prevent his staging an "adult" play. Yet the fact that the boys were at this time largely in the ten-fourteen age-bracket means that the visual effect certainly cannot have been the same as that on the public stage. R.A. Foakes considers the tone of the Induction of Antonio and Mellida as informing both the plays and suggests that:

¹¹Hattaway, p. 85.

By the end of the Induction, in fact, it is clear that the play to follow will parody old ranting styles, make the children out-strut the adult tragedians, who were still performing the plays of Kyd and Marlowe, and burlesque common conventions. It will be a play in which the author, consciously using child actors for a special effect, will keep his audience consciously aware that they are watching children imitating adults. . . . Even in the final scene of Antonio's Revenge, Balurdo appears comically as one of the maskers preparing to kill Piero, . . . in addition the whole business of the murder is an inflated imitation of Hieronimo's vengeance in The Spanish Tragedy, deliberately outraging in its calculated enormity a conventional ending which would have punished Antonio.¹²

The latter part of this extract is undoubtedly true, but the first sentence is certainly open to challenge. It is difficult to believe that a playwright would have experimented quite so extensively with techniques and introduced so many innovative sequences with a group of actors who were only thought able to offer a parodic imitation of their elders and betters. I have suggested instead that the effect of the Induction to Antonio and Mellida was to write an overt contract between audience and player, to acknowledge the discrepancy between part and player. After this, the actors' serious attempts to portray the gamut of emotions carried in these plays could be more readily accepted and, indeed, the discrepancy exploited to draw attention to the very real horrors explored in the texts. Foakes' discussion of the conclusion of Antonio's Revenge insists "we are not allowed to take their passions or motives seriously".¹³ This comment, along with that

¹²Foakes, pp. 229-36

¹³Foakes, p. 236

of the previous quotation, refers to the second scene of the final Act, and he generally neglects to take account of the ensuing action. There are a further four scenes. The audience is not left with the sensation of carnage, but, as in a public theatre play such as Hamlet (in the example of Fortinbras' closing speech), the acts of vengeance are commented on, albeit by Antonio:

Sound doleful tunes, a solemn hymn advance,
 To close the last act of my vengeance;
 And when the subject of your passion's spent,
 Sing 'Mellida is dead', all hearts will relent
 In sad condolment at that heavy sound;
 Never more woe in lesser plot was found.
 And, O, if ever time create a muse
 That to th' immortal fame of virgin faith
 Dares once engage his pen to write her death,
 Presenting it in some black tragedy,
 May it prove gracious, may his style be decked
 With freshest blooms of purest elegance;
 May it have gentle presence, and the scenes sucked up
 By calm attention of choice audience;
 And when the closing Epilogue appears,
 Instead of claps, may it obtain but tears.

(They sing) (V,vi,54-69)

The concerns of the actor for the audience's reception of the play, reinforced by a final song, again suggest that the material was in fact intended for presentation in all seriousness. Foakes was obviously correct to note that Marston strove for deliberate effect, and, in reaction to his essay, Jensen went too far in denying the difference between adult and boy actor. Nevertheless, Foakes' conclusion of parody does not match the evidence provided by the text. We should rather see that Marston used the youth of the company to exploit, subvert, and generally draw attention to conventions successful on the public theatre stage, and to introduce new dramatic possibilities through the skills of

well-rehearsed and competent performers. The effect was a new, more sophisticated product. Whether the product was in fact superior remains open to question.

2. Cynthia's Revels; Epicoene

The two Jonson plays for the children are not related in the way Marston's Antonio texts are, but nevertheless make an interesting study of the development of those actors. Cynthia's Revels, acted "in the yeere 1600 By the then Children of Queene Elizabeth's Chapel" (title page) is one of the first plays of the revival period. Epicoene was performed by "the Children of her Maiesties Revells" (that is, of course, the same company) at some time between December 1609 and February 1610. It is, therefore, one of their last plays. In the decade between the two plays, the boys had certainly added extensively to their dramatic experience and, if they had been in their early teens at the beginning of the century, were at this time no longer boys but men over twenty years of age.

Cynthia's Revels is typical of an early play in the repertory and, like Antonio and Mellida, exploits the novelty of the re-emergence of the companies of child actors. Jonson, for this effect, employs the same device as Marston, the Induction, but with a somewhat different focus. The Induction to Cynthia's Revels is visually more entertaining. It serves the same purpose as Marston's of introducing the company and play, and of 'warming-up' the audience, but pursues the comic aspects

further in order to set the stage for "a comicall satyre" (as the title-page describes the play). The three boys who deliver the Induction first squabble for the right to deliver the Prologue and then, when one boy has won the honour by drawing, he is made to fight off the continual distractions and interruptions of the other two boy actors:

Here is the court of Cynthia, whither he brings Cupid
(travelling on foot) resolved to turn page. By the way,
Cupid meets with Mercury (as that's a thing to be noted,
take any of our play-books without a Cupid or a Mercury
in it, and burn it for an heretic in poetry) -----Pray
thee, let me alone. Mercury, he (in the nature of a
conjurer) raises up Echo, . . . (38-43)

While Marston was keen to stress the acting possibilities and problems of the boys' ensuing performance, Jonson is far more interested in them simply as children. He plays on their immaturity in this Induction and exploits the sexual ambiguities of their roles:

All the courtiers must provide for revels; they conclude
upon a masque, the device of which is ----(what, will you
ravish me?) that each of these vices, being to appear
before Cynthia, would seem other than indeed they are:
and therefore assume the most neighbouring virtues as
their masking habits. ----(I'd cry a rape, but that you
are children.) (82-8)

He also makes continual reference to the fact his actors are diminutive, both here -- "look, these emmets put me out here" (line 56) -- and later in the play.

The third boy, obviously one of the company's 'star turns', is then given the opportunity to do two 'gallant' impersonations. These parodies prefigure one of the main areas of interest in the play itself, but also mirror the facts of their own theatre. They reveal that it costs sixpence to have a stool on the stage and that the company is

newly revived with the warning that "if your house be haunted with such hobgoblins, 'twill fright away all your spectators quickly" (179-81). (The "hobgoblins" refer to old, out-dated plays.)

The lampooning of the gallant (and it may well have been an impersonation of a locally well-known figure) also includes a jibe at the state of the public theatre:

'Slid the boy takes me for a piece of perspective (I hold my life) or some silk curtain come to hang the stage here!
Sir crack, I am none of your fresh pictures that use to beautify the decayed dead arras, in a public theatre. (132-40)

This set piece by the 'gallant' also includes several disparaging remarks about the boy actors, again drawing attention to their size:

By this light, I wonder than any man is so made to come to see these rascally tits play here ---- They do act like so many wrens, or pismires ---- not the fifth part of a good face amongst them all ---- and then their music is abominable ---- able to stretch a man's ears worse than ten ---- pillories (104-8)

The 'gallant' is, of course, himself played by one of these "rascally tits" and this self-conscious parody is effective in forging a link between audience and player. The attack on their music is obviously the reverse of the truth and, in general, these are not genuine criticisms, or emphases on their shortcomings, but a means of underscoring the novelty of the play. Although the overall tone is quite different from that of Marston's Induction, it does follow the same shape and is similarly followed by a Prologue which acts as a bridge sequence. The move from the witty prose of the Induction to the rhyming couplets of the Prologue is noticeably abrupt in the Jonson play, however, and concludes:

. . . then cast those piercing rays,
 Round as a crown, instead of honoured bays,
 About his poesy; which, he knows, affords
 Words above action: matter above words. (17-20)

The craft of acting then is placed at the bottom of the list. "Matter" is seen as most important and this is perhaps an attempt to channel the audience's attentions away from the boys' performance to more serious concerns.

The opening exchange of the play proper seems to herald a Lylian situation:

CUPID: Who goes there?

MERCURY: 'Tis I, blind archer.

CUPID: Who? Mercury?

MERCURY: Aye. (I,i,1-4)

but this static exchange of questions soon becomes clearly comic. The meeting has none of the refinement and grace a similar situation would have merited in one of John Lyly's plays, but is clearly satirical and a vehicle for a virtuoso performance by the diminutive Cupid. He was obviously intended to be played by one of the smallest actors as Mercury makes reference to his youth and short stature at almost every opportunity; he calls Cupid "my little rover", "boy" and "infant" in the single lines that punctuate Cupid's grandiloquent speech. Mercury finally cuts off a twenty-five line outburst in mid-stream: "How now! My dancing braggart in decimo sexto! Charm your skipping tongue, or I'll----" (I,i,44-5). Cupid interrupts this in turn and is obviously enjoying his performance, acting with precociousness.

Cupid's performance in this opening scene is only one of many set pieces in Cynthia's Revels. The play is structured around the behaviour of the gallant (those guilty of "self-love", the theme of the text) and the characters are introduced (such as Hedon in II, ii) and then subverted by Mercury's ironic commentary. Hedon's appearance stimulates Cupid to ask "Is that a courtier too?" (II,ii,70) which is a cue for Mercury's set piece delineation of the difference between courtier and gallant:

Troth no; he has two essential parts of the courtier, pride and ignorance; marry, the rest come somewhat after the ordinary gallant. . . . He is a great proficient in all the illiberal sciences, as cheating, drinking, swaggering, whoring, and such like: never kneels but to pledge healths, nor prays but for a pipe of pudding tobacco. (II,ii,71-86)

It is not, however, only the mortal characters that are open to this subversion and ridicule. Echo rising from the fountain in the play's second scene is a stock piece of action. It is a similar sequence to the head in the well in Greene's The Old Wives Tale. Yet the stylized poetry common in such episodes is completely undermined by Mercury's pithy responses. Echo's first long speech (lines 18-54) is, for example, replied to by Mercury as follows: "Echo, be brief, Saturnia is abroad/And if she hear, she'll storm at Jove's high will." (I,ii,54-5). Echo does not heed Mercury's warning and continues in the same vein, in fact incorporating a song to match the mood. Mercury, at the end of the song, asks "Now, ha' you done?" (76) and no doubt his acting in the interim had matched the impatience ably demonstrated by the boys in the play's Induction.

Other set pieces include more descriptions of the appropriate conduct for members of the court. These are always, of course, delivered in a satirical vein and offer good opportunities for parodic acting. Amorphus (in II,iii) provides a humorous digression on "the particular and distinct face of every your most noted species of persons" which is undoubtedly designed to be both visually and verbally amusing. Not surprisingly, Amorphus concentrates on the appearance of the courtier:

Your courtier theoretic is he that hath arrived to his farthest, and doth now know the court rather by speculation than practice; and this is his face: a fastidious and oblique face, that looks as it went with a vice, and were screwed thus. . . . Your courtier elementary is one but newly entered, or as it were in the alphabet, or ut-re-mi-fa-sol-la of courtship. Note well this face, for it is this you must practice. (33-44)

Other examples include Amorphus' lesson to Asotus on how to approach a lady (III,v) and the riddles and games played with the ladies: Phantaste, Philautia, Argurion and Moria. These pieces are all extra to the plot of the play, but are comical means of displaying Jonson's interest, an exposure of the vanity and ridiculousness of the supposedly sophisticated court. The play as a whole marks the beginnings of the successful city comedies with their satirical exposes and, like those later plays, attempts the complex practice of both complimenting and insulting the audience at the same time. The youth of the actors may well have proved a useful distancing device; the boys could charmingly act the satire for the amusement of the audience but were ultimately 'only children' and therefore diminished the risk of going too far and turning humour into patent insult. Thomas Heywood's anger

at the boys' performances suggests that this device was not altogether successful.

The main features of the boys' acting performance are all in evidence in Cynthia's Revels. There are many songs, mostly as diversion; disguise is used (notably the cases of Cupid and Mercury as pages, signalling comic action); and Jonson also makes much use of the large, processional scene. Much of the early part of the final Act is taken up with the challenge which involves the introduction of a Citizen, his Wife, pages and a Tailor to see the Wife's brother "play the prizes" (V,iii). Their entrance is followed a few lines later by another large group ("Hedon, Anaides, Ladies, Tailor, Mercer, Perfumer, Jeweller, etc." and such scenes require stereotypic acting (and probably costuming) to create interest in them as another audience (apart from the realy, paying one) to the action. From the comedy of the gallants' challenge and the set piece jokes performed by the merchants (such as the interchange between the Mercer and the Jew; V,iv,315ff.), the action is brought to a close with Mercury's underscoring the moral of the lesson to Crites:

Then let the truth of these things strengthen thee
 In thy exempt and only manlike course:
 Like it the more, the less it is respected;
 Though man fail, virtue is by gods protected. (V,iv,588-91)

As abruptly as the shift was made from Induction to Prologue, the latter part of the play moves from parodic comedy to stylized masques and songs in celebration of Cynthia. The closing seven scenes are strongly reminiscent of Lyly's plays in design; they are polished

and celebratory. The praise of Cynthia marks a close resemblance to the form of Endimion, performed at Paul's in 1587. The Epilogue is typical of the self-denying form of these pieces whether performed at public or private theatres. Yet Jonson does not miss the opportunity to highlight yet again that the play was performed by children and suggests that any faults in their acting should not be criticized:

. . . Let's see; to lay the blame
 Upon the Children's action, that were lame.
 To crave your favour with a begging knee
 Were to distrust the writer's faculty. (11-4)

In general, Jonson does not seem to be as confident with the boy actors at Blackfriars as Marston was with the Children of Paul's. His constant reference to their youth is more consciously used than Marston's devices to crave the audience's indulgence. But whereas Marston appeared to try to assert that the boys' acting was equal, if not superior, to the performances at the public theatres, Jonson chose to exploit the boys' previous techniques, those required by the stylized sixteenth-century drama, into a new comic form that reflected their proven abilities, rather than tested or developed them. Michael Shapiro notes that: "When Ben Jonson wrote Cynthia's Revels for the Chapel Children shortly after Blackfriars reopened in the fall of 1600, he too used Lylyesque conventions both ironically and seriously".¹⁴

Jonson's attempt to exploit the nature of both player and audience was perhaps less ambitious than Marston's experiments at

¹⁴Shapiro, p. 186

Paul's. Cynthia's Revels, however, represents a logical progression in the development of drama for children's performance. It adopts the material of Lylyian drama that the boys had experience of performing and subtly twists it to satirical ends. In a play that is designed to emphasize "words above action, matter above words", developments in acting style would be less of a concern. This play is important, then, in its use of children as children within the context of the drama; this is well illustrated by Anaiides' comment (IV,v,34-5): "Death, what talk you of his learning? He understands no more than a schoolboy;". Despite the lack of innovation in acting technique, this play, more than Antonio and Mellida, provides the model from which the satiric comedies, performed regularly at the peak of the boys' history, evolved.

The end of that evolution can be seen in Epicoene. It is a far more relaxed play than Cynthia's Revels. While it shares many of the concerns of the earlier drama, the influence of the interim city comedies is easily apparent and Jonson, by this time, is obviously confident in the abilities of the actors. Clerimont, Truewit and Dauphine are the Jacobean descendents of Hedon, Amorphus and Anaiides, but are more energetic in their schemes, if less so in their lives. The later play eschews the framework of court and travel, and is grounded, as were Middleton's comedies, in the local city area. Despite the fact that almost all the characters clearly ape courtly manners, Jonson aims his play at an urban audience and intends it as a criticism of that audience's pretensions to the suspect decorum of courtly behaviour.

Although Epicoe has a different setting from that of the earlier play, many of the standard features are incorporated. As befits a later play, there is only one song, performed by a boy to Clerimont in the opening scene (85ff.). The subject of the boy's song is Clerimont's preference for a natural woman; the boy comments in the second verse:

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me,
Than all th'adulteries of art.
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart. (I,i,91-6)

Even the single song is implicitly made to seem old-fashioned. Its subject heralds a set piece from Truewit:

And I am clearly o'the other side: I love a good dressing before any beauty o'the world. Oh, a woman is then like a delicate garden; nor is there one kind of it: she may vary every hour, take often counsel of her glass and choose the best. If she have good ears, shew 'em; good hair, lay it out; good legs, wear short clothes; a good hand, discover it often; practice any art to mend breath, cleanse teeth, repair eyebrows, paint, and profess it. (I,i,97-104)

Jonson is clearly satirizing the urban mores, although Truewit is, for the audience, a sympathetic character. The possession of a boy to perform songs is perhaps set up as a symptom of the idle and wasted life of the gallant. Rejection of the 'city' has given Truewit and his company the leisure to pen songs, summon a boy to sing them and to debate the subject idly both before and after, but Jonson obviously disapproves of this imitation of, in his opinion, the dubiously worthy life at court. Furthermore, the characters are a mirror of the social composition of the play's audience, thus making them a like-

wise object of the satire.

Music is, of course, also employed in the tormenting of Morose, when Otter brings his trumpeters and drummers to the wedding 'party'. The scenes with Morose are constructed to be both visually and verbally funny, and the desire to be silent, naturally, encourages mime routines as indicated in the scene with the Mute (II,i). Here the stage direction reads: "At the breaches, still the fellow makes legs or signs" (line 9). Truewit's noisy and verbose interruption in the following contrast is then particularly subversive and comic in effect. This scene certainly requires a virtuoso performance from the actor playing Truewit (perhaps Nathan Field as his name heads a list of principal comedians given at the end of the text). In a scene of one hundred and forty lines, all but sixteen fall to Truewit.

The play is as a whole a gallery of set piece performances. As well as the three gallants, there is La Foole, an aptly-named character who delivers a long set speech on his family:

They all come out of our house, the La Fooles o' the north,
the La Fooles of the west, the La Fooles of the east and
south -- we are as ancient a family as any in Europe --
but I myself am descended lineally of the French La
Fooles . . . (I,iv,34-7)

Sir Jack Daw, another knight/gallant, is parodied as he displays himself to be the model dilettante, reciting his dreadful "madrigal of modesty" (II,iii,21). Otter, the captain, is undermined at all times by his wife, a superbly comic, shrewish wife, so well presented that an audience cannot help but sympathize with Morose when he notices her

arrival at the wedding feast: "Is that Gorgon, that Medusa come? Hide me, hide me." (III,vii,21).

Certainly the boys' performance of over-bearing wives had, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, become a featured part of their repertory. Where Jonson exploits the boys' renown at playing women is in the creation of the play's title character, Epiccoene. L.A.

Beaurline comments:

Dramatically speaking, what eventually draws Epiccoene together is a spectacular stage device: casting the usual boy actor as a woman; marrying this unnatural silent woman to Morose; transforming her into the other extreme of monsterhood, a jabbering woman, a collegiate lady; sullyng her reputation with tales of promiscuity; and finally, just when she has most fully created the illusion of an aggressive modern woman, a mannish creature, a very hermaphrodite -- suddenly revealing that the illusion is the reality. Or more precisely, theatrical necessity is metamorphosed into dramatic life; the game is in earnest.¹⁵

Jonson, in his contempt for the social malaise of London life, has, with Epiccoene, taken the tradition of the independent heroine and that of the courtesan so common in boys' plays, and turned tradition into spectacle. It is paradoxical that a play that in all other respects is typical of later plays for the boys (no longer custom-designed to their youth, but more clearly a reflexion of their long experience as troupes) reverts to a show-stopping artifice to resolve its plot and delight the audience. The ultimate revelation of the silent woman's true identity and sex must have had an effect similar to that of the unexpected resurrection of Antonio at the climax of Antonio and Mellida. The "clanking

¹⁵B. Jonson, Epiccoene (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966) ed. L.A. Beaurline. Beaurline's introduction, p. 11.

mechanics" of Love's Metamorphosis had developed into sophisticated drama.

Earlier plays had explicitly flattered and mirrored their audience, and Jonson's Epicoene also develops that position. As well as evoking delight at its artifice, it is clearly intended to provoke some reaction concerning prevailing social attitudes. Although the plot involves what is in fact a reversal of the common 'breeches part', Jonson does not make overt reference to the boy players in the way that was apparent in Cynthia's Revels. This is surely because the boys were simply no longer boys. Thus, at this point, there was no real distinction in acting styles between the private and public theatres. Nonetheless, the boys did have a more learned background and Epicoene, as does Cynthia's Revels, relies very much on sophisticated or pseudo-sophisticated speaking of the lines. This again makes a comment on the decline of so-called courtly behaviour and implicates the boys themselves, as purveyors of such fare, in this social malaise.

Ultimately, however, Epicoene has more in common with Jonson's next composition, The Alchemist, written for adult actors than with his other plays for the children. Our next comparison between private and public theatre texts written by Middleton largely substantiates the idea that the boys and adults were performing in a very similar fashion, but does draw attention to some differences which gave the boys' companies their own particular identity.

3. A Trick To Catch The Old One; The Roaring Girl

Although there are acknowledged problems in the dating of both these plays, they are approximately contemporary. The most likely first performance date for A Trick To Catch The Old One is 1605-6 and for The Roaring Girl 1607-8. The plays do, of course, share a common author in Thomas Middleton. The object of the comparison is to identify differences between Middleton's composition for the boys and his composition for adults. The two texts do have some interesting differences in format from which distinguishing features in acting style may be inferred.

A Trick To Catch The Old One is typical of Middleton's city comedies for the boys' companies. Like A Mad World, My Masters and Michaelmas Term, the play centres on the enjoyable schemes and manoeuvres of a young knave at the expense of his elders; the themes of attitudes towards money and sex are common to these plays. The Roaring Girl is perhaps the epitome of the 'breeches part' play and has a similar composition of trickery and intrigue related to sexual matters, although the theme of money is not such an overt concern.

In the private theatre play, Witgood is the obvious and attractive focus, yet the strands of action are manifold and, in the course of the plot, complicated to an extreme degree involving schemes other than his own. Witgood himself is involved in scenes with the Courtesan, Hoard, Lucre, the Creditors, the Host, Joyce (Hoard's niece), Dampit and Gulf, and Sam Freedom. This number in itself indicates the

complexities of the plot. As well as Witgood's schemes, Middleton also includes the rivalry between Lucre and Hoard, the ironic marriage between the Courtesan and Hoard, the exchange of Sam Freedom and Moneylove, the relationship between Lucre and his wife, the Dampit sequences, and sundry other minor characters designed to develop the interests of the plot. The end product is a structure requiring a far more detailed and lengthy description than was provided in the diagrammatic analysis for Antonio and Mellida.

Throughout the play, Middleton makes effective use of farce routines. One such routine takes place early in the play (I,iii) with the quarrel between the old men, Lucre and Hoard. The scene's opening stage direction reads "Enter Lucre and Hoard quarrelling; Lamprey, Spichockc, Freedom, and Moneylove, coming between to pacify them." It is an obviously visually comic entrance and this is built upon in their verbal exchanges. The scene soon degenerates into a name-calling session:

HOARD: Dost scoff at my just anger? O, that I had as much power
as usury has over thee!

LUCRE: Then thou wouldst have as much power as the devil has
over thee.

HOARD: Toad!

LUCRE: Aspice!

HOARD: Serpent!

LUCRE: Viper! (I,iii,50-6)

The scene ends shortly after this with Lamprey and Spichock "drawing off Lucre and Hoard different ways". Lucre and Hoard's hatred of each

other is, of course, crucial to the plot, but it is typical of Middleton's technique to realize this hatred in the terms of comic farce. Another example of the farcical combination of visual and verbal humour comes with the Creditors' changed attitude to Witgood on learning of his 'forthcoming marriage' to the widow of £400 a year (III,i). As the earlier example was structured to show off the acting talents of the two old men, this scene is a vehicle for the talents of the boy in the role of Witgood. While the play as a whole requires a drilled troupe performance to maintain the pace of the plot, within this Middleton leaves room for virtuoso acting in the areas where the boys had particular renown. The young knave/apprentice was one such area and the old man another. The Dampit sequences also require virtuoso performance and, indeed, it is only these scenes which mark any real break in the frantic development and complication of the main plot. This suggests that Middleton had a 'star' performer in mind for the part and whose performance would be appreciated by the audience.

Other set piece routines abound and the diversity of the action also emphasizes the pace. For example, Middleton quite happily introduces a procession of tradespeople, otherwise uninvolved in the play, as a vehicle by which Hoard makes himself look increasingly ridiculous in front of an audience which is all too aware of what he has 'achieved' in his marriage. The brief appearance of the tailor, barber, perfumer, falconer, and huntsman (IV,iv,29ff) is a 'city' version of the parade of allegorical figures in Marston's The Fawn.

The amalgamation of all these set pieces certainly calls upon a well-rehearsed and timed performance. From the careful setting up of the plot in the opening scenes, the situations are made increasingly complex and the pace developed from fast to frantic. By the final Act, the stage has become crowded by the chaotic entrances and exits of many characters. The closing scene brings on fifteen of the play's dramatis personae (only Dampit and Gulf, Freedom and Moneylove of the 'named' roles are not involved) which illustrates how far the actors as a group are exploited.

Wit and pace are the two prominent characteristics of this Middleton play and the resolution, while succinctly resolving all the plot concerns, handles Witgood and the Courtesan's declaration of good intentions somewhat tritely. These declarations are made in the closing forty lines and are delivered in rhyming couplets. The positive moral expressed, however, only serves to highlight the ironic suppression of a moral point of view throughout the play as a whole.

By contrast, The Roaring Girl is a definitely romantic play. The irony is not so pervasive and there is a much more simple plot than that of A Trick To Catch The Old One. Most probably the romantic elements can be accounted for by the collaboration of Dekker with Middleton in the composition of this text, but also because of the public theatre taste for plays based on romantic ideals (catered for in the work of Heywood and the solo ventures of Dekker). Furthermore, the focus on a central romantic heroine is more suited to performance

by individualistic adult actors than by the boys who specialized in presenting a slice of London life. Even the plays' titles suggest this fact: the public theatre play takes its title from a single character whereas the private theatre play has a title which suggests the involvement of a group carrying out the "trick to catch the old one".

Certainly in The Roaring Girl the romantic framework is stressed. This is achieved through the opening scene between Sebastian and the disguised Mary. Sebastian relates the objective of his schemes (which form the bulk of the play's action):

My end is to meet thee: with a side wind
 Must I now sail, else I no haven can find,
 But both must sink forever. There's a wench
 Called Moll, mad Moll, or merry Moll, a creature
 So strange in quality, a whole city takes
 Note of her name and person: all that affection
 I owe to thee, on her in counterfeit passion
 I spend to mad my father:
 . . . these streams
 Shall, I hope, force my father to consent
 That here I anchor, rather than be rent
 Upon a rock so dangerous. (I,i,91-107)

In comparison to this verse avowal of love, couched in sailing imagery, the opening scene of A Trick To Catch The Old One points up the different emphases of that play:

COURTESAN: My love!

WITGOOD: My loathing! has thou been the secret consumption of my
 purse, and now comest to undo my last means, my wits? (I,i,31-4)

The Courtesan describes her lost virginity in financial terms which, of course, mirrors the central concern of the play. The Courtesan's 'value' is not as a lover, but as a means of carrying out Witgood's schemes. The actors' development of character is, then, not as

important as in the public theatre play. In consideration of the boys' acting style, A Trick To Catch The Old One is structured to draw attention to the working out of a detailed plot rather than to the development and fate of the hero and heroine (as in the case in The Roaring Girl).

The conclusion in The Roaring Girl of Sebastian's marriage to his true love, accompanied by Sir Alexander's blessing --

Your loves make my joys proud.
 Bring forth those deeds of land my care laid ready,
 And which, old knight, thy nobleness may challenge,
 Joined with thy daughter's virtues, whom I prize now
 As dearly as that flesh I call mine own.
 Forgive me, worthy gentlewoman, 'twas my blindness:
 When I rejected thee, I saw thee not,
 Sorrow and wilful rashness grew like films
 Over the eyes of judgment; now so clear
 I see the brightness of thy worth appear. (V,ii,187-95)

-- confirms the play's concern with decorum and the focus on romance. The fact that Sir Alexander's confession of his folly occurs almost two hundred lines before the close (which is then followed by Moll's Epilogus) adds more weight to its content. It cannot be dismissed like the pat confessions of Witgood and the Courtesan. The romantic heroine of the boys' play, Joyce, is very much a minor character. In contrast to the many stage appearances of Mary, Joyce is not revealed until mid-way through the third Act. In three appearances, she has only twenty lines in total and her marriage to Witgood is not the on-stage dénouement of the play. The audience is simply told of the marriage and it provides the cue for Witgood's ironic assessment of his relationship to the Courtesan:

Alas, sir, I was pricked in conscience to see her well bestowed, and where could I bestow her better than upon your pitiful worship? Excepting but myself, I dare swear she's a virgin; and now, by marrying your niece, I have banished myself for ever from her: she's mine aunt now, by my faith, and there's no meddling with mine aunt, you know: a sin against my muncle. (V,ii,150-6)

These very different conclusions suggest the differences in acting style. The adult actors' focus on the portrayal of the individual invites empathy with the central characters, whereas the boys' ensemble playing invites cynical amusement at the situation. The emphasis of the boys' performance is surely on well-executed comedy.

The romantic emphasis of The Roaring Girl also means a simpler plot. There is only one other main area of interest apart from the Sebastian/Mary/Moll scheme. This is the sub-plot concerning the Gallipots. Obviously this leads to a far less frantic pace and generally scenes are longer than those in A Trick To Catch The Old One. In The Roaring Girl there are many long asides and pedantic relations of information. Sir Alexander's story (I,ii,68ff.), for example, is so long-winded that it kills any potential for the kind of pace witnessed in the private theatre play. Although the boys had a tradition of performing long set piece speeches, drama such as A Trick To Catch The Old One relies on group rehearsal, the quick recognition of cue lines to further the comic action.

The humour of the public theatre play is largely derived from dramatic irony and is neither as satirical nor generally physical. Some of Middleton's stock characters and routines are involved

nevertheless. Curtilax and Hanger, along with Jack Dapper and Gull, are typical of the pairs used by Middleton for his satiric scenes. These roles in The Roaring Girl are, however, minor in comparison with their predominance in A Trick To Catch The Old One (Witgood and Host, Lucre and Hoard, Lamprey and Spichcock, Dampit and Gulf, Freedom and Moneylove). Troupe comic routines are thus a small diversion in the public theatre play and not the modus operandi as in the other. Generally, The Roaring Girl has fewer virtuoso roles than its private theatre counterpart. Roles such as Sir Guy, Sir Alexander, Sir Adam, Sir Thomas Long and Lord Noland, could be played by any stock actor and do not require the detailed caricature of, say, Dampit or Lucre.

Moll, of course, is an independent heroine who might equally suit a private theatre play. She is an example of the 'breeches part' often exploited by the boys' plays. Her drinking song in low-life cant (V,i,195-208) and her many witty exchanges of sexual puns (as in the scene with Trapdoor; II,i,317ff.) are worthy of a private theatre play, but the clearly moral framework of the play makes it clear that she is an unusual character. By contrast, Epicoene, an equally unusual character, is accepted into the world of that play. With the ensemble performance of the boys, a playwright could create a panorama of society, and caricature, rather than character-ization, lends well to the presentation of that society's moral defects. Thus, while Moll might be at home in the world of the private theatre play, her way of life is clearly identified as abnormal in The Roaring

Girl. Furthermore, she is given some strongly moral speeches which stress the playwrights' interest in making a sympathetic character. It is, then, entirely appropriate that a play concerned with the particular fate of individuals should be performed by actors whose strength lay in their individual performance.

Overall, the differences between the two plays result from their different vision of London life. Yet there is little to suggest that either play could not be performed by either adult or boy actors. Despite this, it is clear that Middleton has in his city comedies for the boys exploited their homogenous playing to create a picture of the pervasiveness of greed and self-interest in urban society.

VI

CONCLUSION

As a result of the examination of common features in private theatre plays, a clear pattern can be observed. The acting performance develops from display, or stylized representation, through a phase of experimentation and innovation where the traditional features of the boys' style are refined and up-dated, into a more polished and relaxed troupe execution of tried and tested structures.

In general, however, it is difficult to select a single term which denotes the acting style demanded by the plays. The range of the diverse repertoires suggests the need for both parodic and (in the Elizabethan sense of the word) naturalistic performance, rather than one or the other. Certainly the boys can be seen to have attempted the creation of convincing performances; Solomon Pavy obviously succeeded and it seems unlikely that he was the only success among boys impressed by masters who "thought [them] moste fittest to acte and furnish the said playes".¹ Nathan Field also had a thriving career, both as comic actor and as playwright for both boys and men.

A further reason for suggesting that the boys had the ability to convince an audience as well as any adult actor is the care which all the

¹R.F. Brinkley, Nathan Field, The Actor-Playwright (Hamden: Archon Books, 1973), p. 21. She is quoting from Clifton's complaint.

the playwrights gave to the delineation of character. Boys with scant acting skills, or with only the ability to offer parodic, second-rate versions of adult performance, would not have merited such a range of skilfully drawn parts. In the majority of the plays examined, the minor roles are at least as demanding as their public theatre counterparts. In many cases, they are even more demanding.

Along with the idea of parodic acting goes the theory that the boys' success could be accounted for through novelty. As a counter-argument to this, their long tradition as performers must be remembered, and the fact that boys played female and, of course, juvenile (especially page) roles in the public theatre means that boy actors were a common sight. Thus a regular playgoer would need to make no great leap of faith when watching a play performed by one of the children's companies. Furthermore, as Michael Hattaway rightly comments in his discussion of boys playing women on the public theatre stage: ". . . as anyone who has seen a modern production in which all the parts are taken by males can testify, problems of disbelief do not occur, as few plays make a claim for pure showing or complete naturalism".²

Novelty might better be used to describe the wealth of innovation that occurs in the boys' plays. 'New' material -- such as the bawdy (Antonio and Mellida), the coffin artifice (also Antonio and Mellida), the game of chess (Bussy D'Ambois) and experiment with the masque (Jonson and Marston) -- becomes, within a few years of introduction at the

²Hattaway, p. 83

private theatres, material of stock conventions on the Jacobean stage in general. It has been argued that only well-rehearsed and competent actors could have carried off such novelties. Poor performance would have heralded the companies' demise in a matter of months rather than years. As Michael Shapiro comments, the boys used different styles and traditions as the texts demanded and "in juxtaposing styles they succeeded in creating unusual effects and keeping their audience off balance. For the boy companies acting style was intimately related to the entire theatrical occasion".³

That the boys' companies remained at the forefront of innovation and fashion for approximately ten years is evidence that they generally pleased their audience. The 'alternative' hoped for in the 1599-1600 revival had obviously been achieved, and not merely by imitating the older competitors. It should also be remembered that the boys were maturing quickly themselves and that that maturation was taking place in an acting environment. By 1610, the average age of the company must have been twenty to twenty-two years. The children of ten were only that young (and that small) in the first year of revival and were used then for roles where their patent immaturity was not so much a handicap as an advantage. Reavley Gair points up the effect of their maturation in his discussion of Chapman's character, Bussy D'Ambois

An actor who was extremely young was highly unlikely to have been able to command the stage presence needed for an effective performance, but fortunately by this date (c. 1604) there appears every probability that the 'children'

³Shapiro, p. 137

had become young adults, of nineteen or twenty, and Bussy grows enormously in credibility and stature when performed by a young man of modern university age.⁴

Not only did the boys gain a wealth of stage experience as they grew up, but they also seem to have developed close relationships with the playwrights with whom they worked:

The relation between the young actors and their poets was a friendly one. The gentler side of Jonson's nature is revealed when he takes time to help the boy Field with his lessons, and when he pours out his sense of personal loss in the "Epitaph on Salathiel Pavy" . . . Field's attitude of hero-worship is shown in the verses prefixed to Volpone. Here he addresses Jonson as "worthiest Maister", and says that it is "damnable presumption" on his part to dare to commend Jonson or the play. When Jonson produced Catiline in 1611, Field again wrote verses . . . In Field's verses commending Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess, there is indication of a warm personal relationship between the two young poets, for Field addresses Fletcher as "loved friend" and alludes to some private conversation in which he had discussed his own dramatic aspirations with Fletcher. The older playwright, Chapman, was also attracted by Field and calls him "loved son" in an encouraging letter of commendation prefixed to Field's first play, A Woman Is A Weathercock.⁵

Although Brinkley somewhat ignores the possibilities of mannered flattery in the above examples, her description does point up a working relationship between playwright and actor. The boys also reaped the benefits of a close working relationship with the companies' masters and their provision of good all-round tuition. Thomas Tusser, a sixteenth-century pupil at Paul's, comments on the

⁴Gair, The Children of Paul's, p. 159

⁵Brinkley, pp. 22-3.

benefits of his education under the guidance of a skilled master:

But mark the chance, myself to 'vance,
By friendship's lot to Paule's I got;
So found I grace a certain space
Still to remain

With Redford there, the like nowhere
For cunning such, and virtue much,
By whom some part of Musick's art
So did I gain.⁶

As the boys matured into adulthood, there was clearly less need to design plays self-consciously for children, and inadequacies (such as they were) in acting style would have diminished with experience. The discrepancy between part and player would no longer be so apparent but had, over the course of the decade, been a powerful device in drawing the audience's attention to the process of the play, encouraging them to view and re-view the action and to acknowledge the artifice of performance. Hattaway's discussion of Brechtian techniques in Marlowe might be equally applicable to the effect of this part-player discrepancy, especially when it was overtly highlighted as in the Page's interruption in Antonio and Mellida (IV,i,219ff.): "Brecht's technique is like Marlowe's technique: just as the audience is getting used to the roll of the mighty line it is interrupted -- by bathos often, or by the entrance of a new kind of character -- and the spectators are forced to take stock. The spectacle is suddenly ionized or, to change the metaphor, arranges itself into an icon".⁷

⁶Quoted in Gair, p. 33.

⁷Hattaway, p. 96.

After almost four hundred years, very little concrete evidence of acting style is available. Only theories and suggestions can be put forward. The refinement of techniques over the ten year period does, however, suggest that the boys' style was one which at least rivalled that of their adult counterparts. The boys' limitations in the earlier years may well have been their strength in that they encouraged playwrights to re-shape conventions and innovate to meet their requirements. A modern analogy of the boys' initial attraction for the audience might be offered in, say, the appearance of a young boy soprano in the part of Cupid in Monteverdi's opera, The Coronation of Poppea. His entrances have the effect of interruption (as described in Hattaway's analysis), and the pleasure of his performance is largely derived from the boy's precociousness. As such, it is indulged with "smiles" (as Marston anticipated) from the audience. Quality of voice in this instance, as might have been the case in some of the boys' early plays, is obviously the captivating attraction compelling the audience's initial sympathy for his performance.

Comparing the boys' performance schedule with that of the adult companies, a further modern analogy might be drawn by comparing the trained theatre actor who is hired for a lengthy rehearsal period and recording of a major production on film (such as a B.B.C. Shakespeare play) and today's 'common player', the television actor who invariably records the next episode in his series within twenty-four hours of receiving his script. Such a script succeeds with its actor and audience because of the shared reliance on stock characters and

conventions to portray the individual scenes. In the former case, there is naturally more time for, and interest in, experimentation. This analogy then might also point up the more polished nature of the boys' performance.

The final question in relation to the children's performance is, however, that if the boys were acting on an equal basis with the men, why then did both the Paul's and Revels' companies fade from the London theatre scene? Gair suggests a number of reasons for the failure of the Paul's Children:

Like other playhouses, Paul's had been troubled by very frequent official stoppages after 1602. . . . Some of the supporters of the playhouse had drifted away; . . . The Children of Paul's, too, had themselves grown older and lost some of their distinctive character; they had become like the other London playhouses but could not directly compete with them because of their small capacity . . . Perhaps most important of all, Pearce never seems to have been content to run the playhouse alone: his interest was the music; he needed a manager for the plays and Kirkham may not have proved a congenial associate.

Fashion had changed too and the children, who were now men, could no longer command the following they had once enjoyed . . .⁸

If the boys were no longer offering a significantly different product, then they were certainly most likely to lose their special attraction. Clearly the companies were also suffering from economic and managerial pressures and this would have obviously hastened the decline. Many of the 'boy' actors did, of course, stay in theatre.

⁸Gair, pp. 172-3

They formed the core of a new company, the Lady Elizabeth's Men, which performed two outstanding plays of the post-1610 decade, Bartholomew Fair and A Chaste Maid In Cheapside. This is, in itself, evidence that the children's companies bred some notable acting talent. A final reason for the failure of the boys' companies might be the post-1600 failure to bring in new recruits. No-one has suggested a reason for this sudden lack of recruiting, but it may well be a result of the seventeenth-century commercialization and subsequent severing of connections with the choir schools which had previously provided the fresh talent. This change in organization, bringing about a loss of the benefit of continuity in tradition and common training, was surely an important factor in the companies' decline.

In conclusion, however, it is apparent that, whatever the strengths and weaknesses of their acting performance, the boys are an important part of theatre history. As Gair indicates, they "played a formative role in the development of the commercial exploitation of the drama in Renaissance England".⁹

⁹Gair, p. 43

APPENDIX I

POST-1599 REPERTORIES OF THE CHILDREN'S TROUPES¹

THE CHILDREN OF PAUL'S

<u>Love's Metamorphosis</u> (see Chapel)	Lyly	1597 (?)
<u>The Maid's Metamorphosis</u>		1597-1600
<u>The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll</u>		1597-1600
<u>Antonio and Mellida</u>	Marston	1599-1600
<u>Antonio's Revenge</u>	Marston	1599-1600
<u>Jack Drum's Entertainment</u>	Marston	1600
<u>Satiromastix</u>	Marston and Dekker	1601
<u>What You Will</u> (?)	Marston	c. 1601
<u>Blurt, Master Constable</u>	Dekker (?)	1601-2
<u>The Family of Love</u> (?)	Middleton and Barry(?)	1602-3(?)
<u>The Old Joiner of Aldgate</u> (lost)	Chapman	1603
<u>The Phoenix</u>	Middleton	1603-4
<u>The Fawn</u> (see Chapel)	Marston	1604
<u>Bussy D'Ambois</u>	Chapman	1604
<u>Westward Ho!</u>	Dekker and Webster	1604
<u>A Trick To Catch The Old One</u> (see Chapel)	Middleton	1604-6
<u>Michaelmas Term</u>	Middleton	1604-6
<u>A Mad World, My Masters</u>	Middleton	1604-6
<u>Northward Ho!</u>	Dekker and Webster	1605
<u>The Woman Hater</u>	Beaumont	1605-7
<u>The Puritan</u>	Middleton	1606
<u>Abuses</u> (lost)		1606

¹This Appendix is an adaptation of Shapiro, pp. 261-6. "Highly speculative dates and attributions to troupes and dramatists" are indicated by (?).

THE CHILDREN OF THE CHAPEL ROYAL

<u>Hieronimo</u>		1600-4
<u>Love's Metamorphosis</u> (see Paul's)	Lyly	1600
<u>Cynthia's Revels</u>	Jonson	1600
<u>The Contention Between Liberality and Prodigality (?)</u>		1600-1
<u>The Case Is Altered</u>	Jonson	1600-8
<u>Poetaster</u>	Jonson	1601
<u>May Day</u>	Chapman	1601-2
<u>Sir Giles Goosecap</u>	Chapman (?)	1601-3
<u>The Gentleman Usher</u> (?)	Chapman	1602-3
<u>The Malcontent</u>	Marston	c. 1603
<u>The Dutch Courtesan</u>	Marston	1603-5
<u>The Fawn</u> (see Paul's)	Marston	c. 1604
<u>All Fool's</u>	Chapman	1604
<u>Philotas</u>	Daniel	1604
<u>Monsieur D'Olive</u>	Chapman	1604-5
<u>A Trick To Catch The Old One</u> (see Paul's)	Middleton	1604-6
<u>Your Five Gallants</u>	Middleton	1604-7
<u>Law Tricks</u> (?)	Day	1604-7(?)
<u>Eastward Ho!</u>	Chapman, Marston and Jonson	1605
<u>The Widow's Tears</u>	Chapman	c. 1605
<u>Sophonisba</u>	Marston	1605-6
<u>The Isle of Gulls</u>	Day	1606
<u>The Fleer</u>	Sharpham	1606
<u>The Viper and Her Brood</u> (Lost)	Middleton	1606
<u>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</u>	Beaumont	1607
<u>Cupid's Revenge</u>	Beaumont and Fletcher	1607-8
<u>The Contention and Tragedy of Byron</u>	Chapman	1608
<u>The Faithful Shepherdess</u>	Fletcher	1608
<u>The Coxcomb</u>	Beaumont and Fletcher	1609

<u>A Woman Is A Weathercock</u>	Field	1609-10
<u>Epiccoene</u>	Jonson	1609-10
<u>The Insatiable Countess</u>	Marston and Barkstead	1609-11
<u>The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois</u>	Chapman	1610
<u>Amends for Ladies</u>	Field	1610-11
<u>The Scornful Lady</u>	Beaumont and Fletcher	c. 1610

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