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**This Is Not Every Night: Space, Time, and Group Identity in the
Jacobean Court Masque**

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by

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Dedication

For my twin sister, Meg, and for my parents, Sam and Deb.

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This dissertation explores the relationship between space, time, dramatic narrative, and group identity in the Jacobean court masque. In early 17th century England, the court masque was a high-profile and multimodal seasonal event for the nation's royal family and their court. Critics have recognized many of the ways the masque bonded this group together, but have not shown how its cohesive power manifested in individual masques. Following critical consensus, this dissertation first shows how all masque events, regardless of their particular elements and contexts, involved courtiers in embodied experiences of group inclusion, socio-political hierarchy, and royal favor. Next, in a series of case studies, this dissertation shows how three Jacobean masques tapped into these experiences in order to orient the court around various human centers, namely King James I, Queen Anna, Prince Henry, and Gentlemen of the royal Bedchamber. These case studies demonstrate how masques used dramatic narrative to engineer group experience and group identity, specifically by making meaning out their own socio-political realities in space and time. In general, then, this dissertation envisions the court masque as a highly self-referential form of participatory drama and social partying that worked to shape group identity by collapsing the court's present realities into its socio-politically meaningful dramatic fictions.

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Introduction

THIS IS NOT EVERY NIGHT

On the night of New Year's Day, January 1, 1611, the Jacobean court assembled in Whitehall's Banqueting House to watch Prince Henry star in his first court masque. The court had been watching Henry participate in masques since his adolescence, but *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* was different.¹ In earlier masques, Henry danced only in the social revels, after the events' principal dancers finished their choreographed ballets.² But in *Oberon*, he was a principal dancer in his own right. He was, in fact, *the* principal dancer, a singular star amongst a constellation of high-profile aristocratic performers, the fulcrum around which the masque's drama and dancing revolved. In this way, Henry's featured status within the masque reflected his new place within the Jacobean court. Roughly seven months prior, in May 1610, King James had created Henry as Prince of Wales, a formal position in England's royal hierarchy that had not been occupied since Henry VIII was still heir. And Henry had embraced his position with gusto, forming an independent household, building a retinue of attendants and servants, and organizing networks of princely favor and patronage.³ Thus, as the court gathered in the Banqueting House before *Oberon*, they gathered to participate in something brand new, something inaugural, something they would never experience again: the debut masque for their

¹ Ben Jonson, *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), cited hereafter in text by line number.

² Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 77.

³ On the formation of Henry's household, see Jean MacIntyre, "Prince Henry's Satyrs: Topicality in Jonson's *Oberon*," in *A Search for Meaning: Critical Essays on Early Modern Literature*, ed. Paula Harms Payne (New York: Peter Lange Publishing, 2004), and Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), esp. 25-57.

king-to-be, a burgeoning nexus of social organization at court, England's first Prince of Wales in roughly one hundred years.

Appropriately, then, the masque expresses a sense of newness, singularity, and urgency when it sends Henry out to dance his first ballet. As Prince Oberon, Henry appears on stage amidst a scenic fairy palace and surrounded by a retinue of fairy musicians. When the time comes for him to descend to the Banqueting House dance floor, those musicians sing, "Then, princely Oberon, / Go on, / This is not every night" (321-23). Later in the masque, after Henry and his fellow masquers complete their first ballet, the singers are eager for them to continue: "Nay, nay," they sing, "You must not stay, / Nor be weary yet" (328-29). And still later, after the second ballet, singers on stage declare that their dancing will keep the masque event from being overtaken by the coming day:

Nor yet, nor yet, O you in this night blessed,
Must you have will or hope to rest.
If you use the smallest stay,
You'll be overta'en by day. (340-43)

In response, Henry and his fellow dancers take out ladies for the event's social revels, which continue for hours until the figure of Phosphorous appears to call the masque to a close: "To rest, to rest!" Phosphorous sings, "the herald of the day, / Bright Phosphorous, commands you hence" (362-65). In all these ways, *Oberon* celebrates Henry's presence on the dance floor even as it glamorizes its own ephemerality. Its calls for more dancing are conventional and playful, as the court knows Henry and his fellows will keep performing even without prompting from the stage, but those calls also dramatize fundamental and meaningful facts: the masque is a special, seasonal, nighttime event meant for dancing, and it cannot last indefinitely. It is, as the singers say, "not every night." And as a fiction of fleeting fairyland dalliance, it performs its own impermanent

nature in order to assert value for Henry, his dancing, and his new status within the court community.

Oberon celebrates Henry with a fictional conceit of playful ephemerality, but simultaneously telegraphs to its audience that they are experiencing a new and ongoing reality. For instance, before Henry appears to dance, a *Silenus* and a group of young satyrs look forward to his arrival. “These are nights,” *Silenus* declares,

Solemn to the shining rites
Of the Fairy Prince and knights,
While the moon their orgies lights.
2nd Satyr Will they come abroad anon?
3rd Satyr Shall we see young *Oberon*?
4th Satyr Is he such a princely one
As you spake him long ago?
Silenus Satyrs, he doth fill with grace
Every season, every place;
Beauty dwells but in his face:
He is the height of all our race.
...
He is lovelier than in May
Is the spring, and there can stay
As little as he can decay.
Chorus O that he would come away!
3rd Satyr Grandsire, we shall leave to play
With *Lyaeus* now, and
serve only *Ob’ron*? (41-64)

Silenus’s messages about Henry’s immortality are hyperbolic, but his conversation with the satyrs expresses the prince’s very new and very real status at court, both in general and within the masque itself. For instance, *Silenus* alludes to the Prince’s investiture in “May” of the previous year and anticipates his presence on the Banqueting House dance floor, which he and his fellow masquers will “fill with grace” through dancing, and then “fill” with fellow courtiers during the social revels. In response, the satyrs playfully mirror the court’s present relationship with their new prince. Like the satyrs, onlookers

are also waiting for Henry to “come away,” as his dancing will constitute the event’s primary highlight and draw some of them onto the dance floor. And like the satyrs, who want to “serve only Ob’ron,” so too does the court look toward Henry as a new nexus of social organization, patronage, and favor. In *Oberon*, then, the masque’s ephemeral fiction collapses into court’s present reality.

Tragically, *Oberon*’s drama was only too prescient in its messages of impermanence, and the socio-political reality it crystallized for the court was almost as fleeting as the masque itself. Henry lived to star in just one more court masque, Ben Jonson’s *Love Restored*, in January 1612. He died suddenly of typhoid in October that same year, just months shy of his 19th birthday and barely two years after his investiture. In a negative and ironic fashion, then, *Oberon* and Henry’s death throw into sharp relief a key function of the Jacobean masque: to organize courtiers socially, politically, and affectively around central figures in England’s aristocratic hierarchy. And they throw into even sharper relief a key strategy that masques used to achieve such effects: gathering courtiers in the Banqueting House for singular events and making meaning out of their shared presence therein. Put another way, *Oberon* suggests that if we want to understand how masques worked in court society, we have to consider how they made courtiers feel in time and space: in particular moments, in a particular place, in a physically present social hierarchy, and in proximity to important centers, such as Henry. Such examination will show that individual masques did not simply dramatize, symbolize, or allegorize court realities, such as Henry’s burgeoning centrality, but engineered those realities in real-time.

In the broadest terms, this argument participates in a larger conversation about how the masque bonded court society together. As I will outline shortly, critics have already laid out a comprehensive set of mechanisms that masques used in order foster

group cohesion at court. Generally, these mechanisms comprise discrete material practices, such as gift-giving and conspicuous consumption, as well as various theatrical and behavioral forms, such as costumes and dancing. Accordingly, the masques' socially organizing power looks generically universal and non-textual, as though it manifested in the same ways across the Jacobean period and had little to do with the form's individual dramas, which were always wholly unique to each masque event. This vision of the masque's efficacy is helpful because it points up the importance of the form's material, embodied, and non-narrative elements, but it mostly ignores how individual masques organized embodied experience within their unique and singular social narratives. Accordingly, masque criticism has yet to show how particular masques tried to engineer embodied, spatial experience in real-time. And as a result, we have yet to realize the extent to which masque narratives tap into their event's own spatial and temporal realities as sources of meaning and experience.

In what follows, I will focus on three individual masques, including *Oberon*, each of which worked to organize the court around a new socio-political center, or around a pre-existing center recently possessed of new power or even greater centrality. *Oberon* will be the subject of my second case study. My first will examine Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones's *Masque of Blackness*. Staged in 1605, *Blackness* was the Stuarts' fourth court masque in England and the second to feature Queen Anna and her ladies. It was also the first masque created by Jonson and Jones, and the first to be staged in the Banqueting House at Whitehall, which thereafter became the Stuarts' preferred masquing venue. After moving on to *Oberon*, also by Jonson and Jones, my third and final case study will examine Jonson's *The Golden Age Restored* from 1616, which starred Gentlemen and Grooms from James's private royal Bedchamber, including the rising new favorite and future Duke of Buckingham, George Villiers. Each of these masques served an inaugural

or introductory function for the court and some of its most important figures, namely members of the royal family and their closest servants. And each centers its capacity for social efficacy on those figures, attempting to orient the court around their new or burgeoning centrality within England's broader royal and aristocratic establishment.

DRAMAS AND DANCE PARTIES

Court masques always comprised many moving parts, so before going on, I want to offer a brief description of the form and lay out the terms I will use to discuss it in subsequent chapters. In the most basic sense, masques were elaborate and costumed dance parties organized by dramatic conceits, which typically drew heavily from classical myth and prose romance. With some exceptions, they always occurred in the Great Hall or the Banqueting House at Whitehall. For instance, *Blackness*, *Oberon*, and *Golden Age* all went up in the latter space. Before each masque, professional builders constructed a proscenium stage at one end of the hall and tiered banks of seating benches at the other—more spatial specifics later. The proscenium stage housed the masque's drama, which typically featured elaborate perspectival sets capable of two or more scenic changes. And in general terms, each masque drama served an organizing function for the larger event. In every drama, a crew of professional performers appeared on stage to establish a fictional conceit. In turn, that conceit explained and built meaning around the subsequent appearance of the event's main aristocratic performers, whom I will refer to as principal dancers or masquers.

In more precise terms, each masque drama consisted of two to three movements. Many opened with antimasques, comedic or grotesque shows of disorder performed by

professionals, such as Shakespeare's company, the King's Men.⁴ Antimasques often had their own scenes, and they always contrasted the rest of the event in some meaningful way. In *The Masque of Queens*, for instance, a group of hags try to breach the secrets of royal power and then get banished in order to point up the Banqueting House's exclusiveness and integrity. After such an antimasque, a masque's scene typically changed and more professional performers appeared to perform the event's induction. The induction announced, responded to, or otherwise introduced the event's aristocratic masquers, who either materialized immediately after the antimasque or sometime later, in another moment of scenic change. Sometime shortly after they appeared, the masquers descended from the stage to dance one or more choreographed ballets. These ballets were not widely known social dances, but specially developed and rehearsed for each individual masque. After the event's choreographed ballets, the masquers turned to the court to take out dance partners of the opposite gender, thus initiating the social revels in a process Leeds Barroll calls "taking-out."⁵

During a masque's ballets and revels, professional performers remained on stage to both accompany and punctuate the social dancing that dominated the rest of the event. For the most part, their music functioned as accompaniment, which means it was instrumental and non-lyrical. In between individual dances, however, the performers on stage often sang brief lyrical songs. These songs comprised a loose final movement for the masque's drama—its third movement if there had been an antimasque, its second if there had not. Collectively, these songs extended the event's fictional conceit into the ballets and revels, punctuated the overall dancing, offered performers opportunities to

⁴ For instance, David M. Bergeron notes that James kept his King's Men on retainer to prepare for festivities surrounding Henry's investiture, despite plague in London and the closing of the public theaters there. See "Creating Entertainments for Prince Henry's Creation," *Comparative Drama* 42 (2008): 433-49.

⁵ Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 84-87.

rest and select new partners, and finally closed out the masque by calling the principal dancers back into the scene, a movement I might occasionally term “the retreat.” In general, too, these songs always layered dramatic narrative into otherwise conventional movements, which is to say movements that would have occurred with or without the songs in question. As we saw in *Oberon*, for instance, the fairy musicians instruct Henry and the masquers to take out ladies for the social revels, which layers dramatic significance into a planned and expected event.

The revels were, by far, the longest part of any masque. In *Oberon*, we will see, Jonson describes them simply as “*the measures, corantos, galliards, etc.,*” but this description obscures their length and complexity as a movement in the larger masque event (350). As Barroll describes them, the revels involved a slow cascade of increasing social involvement.⁶ First, the masquers took out high-profile courtiers of the opposite gender for measures, thereby doubling the number of dancers on the floor. The measures were stately processional dances involving graceful turns and shuffles. Once they ended, Barroll writes, the masquers and their original partners took out new partners. This group, now presumably four times larger than the original set of masquers, danced corantos, lively dances with fast tempos and successions of quick steps and hops. At some point, Barroll speculates, all the dancers probably got to select still new partners for the next round of dancing, which typically consisted of galliards, vigorous dances with hops and leaps. And as this pattern went on, Barroll suggests, the revels likely opened up to younger courtiers of lower rank, who presumably had the energy and stamina to continue where their older counterparts could not. Meanwhile, other participating courtiers likely continued to dance or sat out depending on the nature of the dance at hand, their own

⁶ See Barroll’s extended description of the revels (*Ibid.*, 84-87).

energy or inclination, and the amount of space on the dance floor. Ultimately, Barroll's description suggests an exponentially expanding group of dancers, but the total number depended on the dance floor's size, which I will discuss more later.

FRIVOLITY TO EFFICACY: THE MASQUE IN CRITICISM

Thinking about space, time, and social organization in the court masque means participating in a broader conversation about the masque's ability to shape court society and politics. This conversation has origins in very early masque criticism, from as far back as the late 19th century and early 20th century. During that period, prevailing intellectual trends made it difficult for some critics to countenance the idea that the masque had any sort of legitimate relationship with English society and politics. The period's most prominent historians, such as G. M. Trevelyan, tended to view the Stuart court as insular, decadent, and corrupt.⁷ In this view, the extravagant and self-congratulatory masque was symptomatic of the court's and the nation's seemingly inevitable movement toward civil war. At the same time, the period's dominant mode of critical inquiry was formalist, so many scholars approached the masque with a mixture of admiration and discomfort. They admired the form for its artistic sophistication and intellectual erudition (e.g. Ben Jonson's learned poetry), but were by turns dismissive and regretful of its involvement in court politics. For instance, in his introduction to an 1890 edition of Ben Jonson's dramatic works, Henry Morley emphasizes the masque's rich evocations of European festive traditions while also construing the form as a symptom of James's and Anna's predilections for frivolity and lavish expenditure.⁸ Similarly,

⁷ G. M. Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1914).

⁸ Henry Morley, "Introduction," in *Plays and Masques, by Ben Jonson*, ed. Henry Morley (London: Routledge and Sons, 1890).

commentators C. H. Herford and H. H. Child both praise Ben Jonson's artistry but insist that his mandate to flatter James hamstrung his creative qualities, causing him to produce frivolous trivialities.⁹

In contrast to the likes of Morley, Herford, and Child, however, some early critics of the masque take a more nuanced view of the form and its relationship with court politics and society.¹⁰ In his 1899 *History of English Dramatic Literature*, A. W. Ward dismisses the idea that the masque substantially affected political policy but acknowledges its relationship with court identity. For Ward, the masque appealed to the court's collective desire for "refined splendor" and gratified a sense of "aristocratic exclusiveness."¹¹ In her 1928 *The Court Masque*, Enid Welsford takes an even more sympathetic view of the masque. She argues that it was a form of revelry through which the court responded to and expressed collective feelings of satisfaction, ease, and community. For Welsford, the masque satisfied a communal desire to celebrate and assert the value of the group's present moment in time.¹² The early 20th century's most sustained argument for the masque's efficacy, however, comes from Mary Sullivan's 1913 *Court Masques of James I*. In this book, Sullivan lays a historical groundwork for understanding the relationship between the court masque and English-European

⁹ C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson, eds., *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), and H. H. Child, review of *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford et al., *The Times Literary Supplement*, November 15, 1941.

¹⁰ Of course, some critics ignored the masque's involvement in court politics and society almost entirely. For instance, other than noting the unavoidable fact that masques complimented the monarch, William Gifford's glowing assessment of the form focuses entirely on Ben Jonson's erudition and poetic skill ("A Comment on Ben Jonson's Masques," in *Plays and Masques, by Ben Jonson*).

¹¹ A. W. Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899), ii, 390.

¹² Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship Between Poetry & the Revels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927). Welsford is not exempt from the ideological and formal predilections of her contemporaries. She claims that the masque was stilted by its imperative toward royal flattery. But she does not dwell on this claim, and she spends considerably more time theorizing the masque's relationship with communal forms of revelry.

diplomacy, and she argues that the masque functioned as an extremely effective “instrument of state” through which English and continental monarchies actualized political power, communicated with one another, and promoted their respective agendas.¹³

Sullivan’s ideas about the relationship between the masque and politics came to dominate masque criticism once a methodology developed that could accommodate them better than early 20th century formalism. In their introduction to *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, David Bevington and Peter Holbrook provide a succinct overview of this shift and its influence on masque criticism.¹⁴ They explain that in the 1960s and 70s historians revised traditional interpretations of English history and re-assessed prevailing attitudes toward the civil war, King James, and his court. In this revision, historians rejected prevailing teleological views of the civil war, emphasized dynamic factionalism in James’s court, rather than absolutist insularity, and developed a more sympathetic understanding of James’s kingship. As Bevington and Holbrook go on to explain, these changes coincided with the rise of New Historicism in literary studies, which took the masque and other forms of Renaissance culture seriously as venues of political activity. In his 1975 *The Illusion of Power*, for instance, Stephen Orgel famously showed that the masque was a physical and theatrical experience of royal authority and courtly social stratification. For Orgel, the court sat around the king’s state in a living emblem of hierarchical order while Jones’s perspectival scenes reified that order in a visual way, by

¹³ Mary Sullivan, *Court Masques of James I: Their Influence on Shakespeare and the Public Theatres* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1913), 82.

¹⁴ David Bevington and Peter Holbrook, “Introduction,” in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

making it such that only the king and those nearest him had an ideal view of the masque's spectacular illusions.¹⁵

Following *The Illusion of Power*, critics continued to take masque politics seriously but also complicated Orgel's argument in important ways. In *The Illusion of Power*, Orgel suggests that the masque's aesthetic, spatial, and political elements tend to be fully coherent and to cleanly mirror one another. In contrast, Jonathan Goldberg's 1983 *James I and the Politics of Literature* points up formal and ideological fractures in the masque. Goldberg argues that these fractures reflect the Machiavellian ambivalences of James's own royal self-posturing and that the masque instantiated those ambivalences into English political discourse.¹⁶ Though many of them predate Goldberg's book by several years, the essays that Leah Marcus collected and revised in *The Politics of Mirth* constitute an even more substantial contribution to political masque criticism than the one Goldberg offers.¹⁷ In her book, Marcus also examines the masque as a means of promulgating royal policy—specifically, royal support for controversial festive pastimes. But unlike Orgel and Goldberg, she emphasizes the masque's involvement in more mundane political negotiation and grapples with its polyvocality, which she attributes to the fact that the masque had multiple creators (e.g. Ben Jonson and the king). For Marcus, James and Charles were not fully absolutist leaders and their masques were necessarily involved in active political change and in a messy political world where subjects, sometimes even the writers of masques, often talked back.

¹⁵ Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 10-11.

¹⁶ Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

¹⁷ Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Marcus's work is especially important because it avoids major pitfalls in Orgel's and Goldberg's monarch-focused arguments. As Bevington and Holbrook put it, such criticism risks "reproducing early modern society's ideological misdescription of itself" as fully absolutist and rigidly hierarchical.¹⁸ By avoiding this pitfall and acknowledging the masque's polyvocality, then, Marcus's *Politics of Mirth* opened up a more complex and nuanced vision of the form's politics than the one proffered by her contemporaries and predecessors. Following her, then, critics such as Bevington, Holbrook, and Martin Butler have argued that authority in the masque was "less a one-way transmission of power than a complex negotiation... involving conflict, compromise and exchange."¹⁹ In this factional line of critical inquiry, Butler advocates a "total" and historically embedded reading of the form.²⁰ Following Marcus, Butler points out that "masques did not passively reflect a stable or pre-existing reality, but were themselves part of an unfolding political narrative."²¹ In any given masque, that narrative involved different individuals and groups performing myriad kinds of political action for varying reasons with different degrees of coherence and success. Thus, Butler suggests, critics ought to attend to the masque's many moving parts—rather than just their royalist messaging—in order to understand their import in court society and politics. Working in this vein, Bevington, Holbrook, and Butler all show that masques were dynamic occasions where courtiers could perform political work in response to specific political issues in real time and through different behavioral forms, such as seating, fiction-making, dance, dress, and role-playing. In this view, the masque distributed its capacity for political efficacy

¹⁸ Bevington and Holbrook, "Introduction," in *Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁰ Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

throughout its participant group and throughout their various forms of experience and behavior.

However, even as they show the masque's socio-political complexity, factional readings risk something of their own: painting an overly grim picture of social life at the Stuart court. In *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, Butler argues that one reason early criticism of the masque generally lacks explanatory power is that it tends to accept the masque's glowing vision of a unified and serenely absolutist court.²² Contemporary criticism of the masque should not make this mistake, but avoiding it should not necessarily mean focusing exclusively on alternatives offered up by factional readings of the masque, such as political fracture, competition, and negotiation. Butler also notes that monarch-focused readings tend to turn the Stuart court into a New Historicist "prison-house" where people are trapped in monolithic and never-ending cycles of political domination, subversion, and containment.²³ If critics who participate in the new factional strain of masque criticism are not careful, we will end up falling victim to a similar weakness: by construing the court as relentlessly competitive we might miss an opportunity to see the masque as a legitimate producer of more benign, positive, salubrious, or unifying social and political effects. To be sure, it is important to emphasize the political empowerment that the masque offered court individuals and factions—that is, contra New Historicism's emphasis on their disempowerment. But we should not do so to the extent that we enshrine factionalism and competition as the solely dominant features of Stuart court life.

²² *Ibid.*, 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, 16.

Butler and another recent critic of the masque, Barbara Ravelhofer, offer insights into how contemporary critics might avoid the potential pitfalls of factional criticism.²⁴ Both advocate what Butler would call a “total” approach to the masque, a mode of inquiry that focuses holistically on the form’s textual, non-textual, and contextual elements.²⁵ This “total” approach shows that the form fostered salubrious political and social effects, such as group bonding, while also enabling factional negotiation. For instance, in Butler’s view, the masque satisfied participants’ desires for courtly inclusion by bringing them into the Banqueting House and then yoked their satisfaction to dramatic “rites of exclusion” that celebrated James’s fictive capacity to banish unwanted elements from the court. Butler also shows how masques both participated in and involved a *mélange* of ceremonial practices that were essential to court cohesion, such as high-profile weddings, seasonal festivity, hospitality, and gift-giving. For Butler, such events and behaviors comprised the *habitus* of courtly social identity, and in the masque they cohered into “rituals of incorporation” that played on the court’s “shared affinities” while also “working to accommodate [its] complex internal differences and rivalries.”²⁶ For her part, Ravelhofer focuses on masque dancing, music, and costumes. She argues that dancing encouraged “muscular bonding” amongst participants, a sense of boundary loss and euphoria that derives from entrained group action.²⁷ She also argues that dance enabled embodied sympathy between dancers and spectators, a sense of self-extension and shared purpose that onlookers could experience even while watching passively.²⁸

²⁴ Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²⁵ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁷ Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 105. Ravelhofer takes the term “muscular bonding” from William H. McNeil’s *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3.

²⁸ Ravelhofer terms this phenomenon “prosthetic self-extension” (*Early Stuart Masque*, 105).

Similarly, she argues that masque costumes emphasized courtly homogeneity in their aesthetic uniformity while music wrapped participants in a shared repository of cadences, rhythms, and tunes that got recycled from masque to masque and emphasized cultural sharing across time.

As suggested earlier, Butler and Ravelhofer have generally described how the masque fostered group cohesion at court, but neither has shown how particular masques did so, at least not in any sustained or focused way. For his part, Butler describes the masque's "rites of exclusion" and "rites of incorporation," but then moves on to a series of period- and issue-focused readings that place the masque back into the factional lens of earlier criticism, showing how they intervene in Stuart policy debates, socio-political struggles, and inter-governmental crises. Similarly, Ravelhofer examines individual masques and shows how their non-textual elements interact with, support, and complicate their textual elements, but her focus is never exclusively on group cohesion and identity. Rather her goal has largely to do with historical and critical perspective: to give primacy to the masque's music, costumes, and dancing over its dramatic and literary elements. As a result, the masque's social efficacy seems to come from its non-textual elements and to be more or less uniform across the genre, unlike its dramatic narratives, which change from masque to masque. And as Butler and Ravelhofer both say, this elision of text and narrative is deliberate. As they rightly point out, critics over-emphasize the masque's dramatic and literary elements. Accordingly, Butler and Ravelhofer focus on the masque's material and behavioral forms in order to correct prevailing critical trends.

Nevertheless, masque dramas evince the form's social efficacy with a richness that has gone largely unobserved. Those dramas worked to shape embodied experience within and around the masque's non-textual mechanisms for inter-subjectivity, mechanisms that are central to Butler's and Ravelhofer's arguments—and that are central

to Orgel's too, as when he shows how masque scenes reified court hierarchy in visual and spatial experience. In particular, *Blackness*, *Oberon*, and *Golden Age* show that Jonson and Jones were especially attuned to the power of space and time as agents of group cohesion. Specifically, each shows how Jonson and Jones used drama to manipulate sources of embodied group experience, which inhered in the form's own spatial and temporal contexts. In the broadest terms, these contexts included the Palace of Whitehall, its large-scale Banqueting House, and the court's annual revels season, an extended period of hospitality and festivity that spanned the Christmas, New Year's, and pre-Lenten holidays. In more particular terms, those contexts included the Banqueting House's masque-specific set-up and the masque's temporal specialness as an ephemeral, one- or two-time-only occurrence. Masque critics have long observed the importance of such contexts, but have not fully recognized how intrinsic they are to the form's dramatic narratives, or how rich they are as sources of group cohesion and identity formation. In the three masques under discussion here, Jonson and Jones repeatedly tap into both as powerful sources of shared understanding and experience, which they use to orient the court around important new centers.

Accordingly, this dissertation will not just close-read the masque's social efficacy in discrete iterations of the form but will also try to reconfigure the way we conceive of dramatic narrative and embodied experience. Orgel observes this relationship rather obliquely when he theorizes the masques' illusions of royal authority and their power to reify court hierarchy in masquing space. Butler observes it, too, when he shows how the masque's "rites of exclusion" affirm participants' inclusion within the hall. But narrative's experience-shaping power goes far beyond Orgel's hierarchizing scenes and Butler's spectacles of expulsion. And it manifests more broadly and more consistently than Ravelhofer suggests when she sees the masque's textual elements only sometimes

in-line with their efficacious bodily elements, namely costume and dance. Repeatedly, masques make meaning out of their own positions in space and time. They do so in order to encourage participation from the court, even from spectators on the margins, who cannot actively participate through dance. And in the close-readings that follow, the masques under discussion appear as tightly coherent, meta-referential, participatory narratives that make their unique spatial and temporal realities into the shaping stuff of group experience and group identity. Before moving on to individual masques, the following chapter will discuss what those spatial and temporal realities were and will offer a theory of how their socially shaping power could manifest in dramatic narrative.

Chapter 1

The Court and the Masque in Space and Time

PRESENCE CHAMBERS AND BEDS' HEADS

In the early years of James's reign, Sir Robert Naunton was a courtier and protégé of Robert Cecil, the powerful earl of Salisbury and Secretary of State.²⁹ In 1605, Naunton wrote about his first glimpse of the king's Presence Chamber, the most public of James's Privy Lodgings, where he held audiences and dined in state.³⁰ Though under Cecil's patronage, Naunton felt stalled in his career at court and he remarked that the Chamber seemed "but a mere passage" that was "little better to improve a man in matters of importance than the road between this [Whitehall] and Royston," one of James's private hunting lodges where he went in the exclusive company of his personal retinue and family members.³¹ In his letter, Naunton expresses frustrated ambitions as a disjuncture between two different experiences in royal space. On one hand, he experiences that space in a practical way. He knows Royston lies down the road from Whitehall, and he knows the Presence Chamber is a "passage" for movement toward other spaces beyond. On the other hand, Naunton experiences royal space in a more abstract, socio-political way. Specifically, he understands that the Presence Chamber and the road to Royston do not

²⁹ Roy E. Schreiber, "Naunton, Sir Robert (1563–1635)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed June 16, 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/19812>.

³⁰ On the function of the Presence Chamber and James Privy Lodgings more generally, see Neil Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage: the Bedchamber of James I," in *The English Court from the War of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey (New York: Longman, 1987), 185-91. See also Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-25," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 39 (1989): 107-24.

³¹ Naunton, quoted in Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 183.

just lead to more royal space, but also to royal patronage, those things that might “improve a man in matters of importance.” The problem for Naunton is that his practical experience in space does not match his socio-political experience. And this disjuncture is not only the source of his frustration, but the precise means through which he feels and expresses that frustration, too. He knows that the Presence Chamber and the road to Royston are conduits toward favor and social elevation, but in his current moment, they are not functioning as such—at least not for him. Instead, he feels the Presence Chamber is a “mere passage” and the route to Royston is a mere “road.” His competent orientation in architectural and geographical space serves only as an experience of alienation in ideological space, relative to the monarch.

In illuminating contrast to Naunton’s missive, George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, once wrote a very different narrative. While traveling in the later part of his court career, he wrote to King James and explained that he had been entertaining himself by wondering “whether you loved me now... better than at the time which I shall never forget at Farnham, where the bed’s head could not be found between the master and his dog.”³² At the time of writing, Villiers was firmly ensconced in the upper echelons of James’s favor, but his letter recalls the early part of his court career, specifically the night he spent with James at Farnham in 1615, just months before he danced in *The Golden Age Restored*. Historians speculate that this was the time when his relationship with James first became sexual, or at least cemented itself in the intense intimacy that would persist until James’s death.³³ As a matter of course, Gentlemen of the Bedchamber did not necessarily sleep in bed with James unless invited to do so. For instance, the head of

³² George Villiers, quoted in Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham 1592-1628* (Longman: New York, 1981), 22.

³³ Lockyer, *Buckingham*, 22, and Michael B. Young, *James VI and I and the History of Homosexuality* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 44-45.

James's Bedchamber staff, the Groom of the Stool, was entitled by his position to sleep inside the Bedchamber, but he slept on a cot unless directed otherwise.³⁴ It is not surprising, then, that Villiers should recall the encounter at Farnham when trying to evoke intimacy across time and space. But it is telling that he should recall the encounter so precisely in terms of highly localized spatial boundaries. Rather than simply mentioning "the time which I shall never forget at Farnham," Villiers goes out of his way to recall "the bed's head." As a boundary, the "bed's head" lends meaning and energy to the show of intimacy that James enacted when he invited Villiers to transgress the bounds of the bed and join him inside. In turn, that asymmetrical show of condescension and closeness subtends the master-dog metaphor that Villiers uses to conceive of himself relative to his king. Accordingly, the letter implies that even the most local of spatial relationships—or perhaps especially the most local of spatial relationships—helped to affirm Villiers's sense of inclusion within the sphere of James's affections and to build his courtly sense-of-self, specifically his "dog"-like posture of affection and subordination toward James.

Respectively, Naunton's and Villiers's letters reveal how space formed identity at court and how the relationship between the two could play out as personal narrative, especially around central figures such as James. For Naunton, Whitehall and the Presence Chamber are psychic arenas of disappointment and frustration. He projects his ideal sense of personal identity into the Privy Lodgings when he desires access to the Bedchamber, where he wants to "improve" himself in "matters of importance." Yet, architectural boundaries and restrictive socio-political codes force him to confront the fact that he cannot achieve that identity in reality. In his letter, then, we see the psychological

³⁴ Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 185.

narrative of a courtier reconciling himself to a non-ideal sense of his own identity vis-à-vis the king and the court. Since the Presence Chamber is a “mere passage” to him, so too must he experience himself as a lowly courtier without royal favor. Of course, even in alienation, Naunton’s sense-of-self still implicitly bespeaks inclusion in James’s larger aristocratic establishment. After all, Naunton only had access to the Presence Chamber in the first place because he was a client of James’s Secretary of State, and though he did not know it in 1605, he would go on to become Secretary of State himself.³⁵ Regardless, his experience in 1606 contrasts tellingly against Villiers’s, who understands his own elevated status specifically as a form of spatial intimacy with James, so much so that his primary mechanism for remembering and sustaining that intimacy across space and time is a narrative of movement and boundary-crossing within the royal Bedchamber and the royal bed.

COURT SPACE, NARRATIVE, AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

All court spaces involved courtiers in narratives of personal and social identity that operated somewhere between Naunton’s sense of alienation on one hand and Villiers’s memory of extreme royal intimacy on the other. The court itself was always inherently spatial, but not necessarily tied to any particular place. It cohered around James, members of the royal family, and high-ranking aristocrats. Specifically, it comprised the broad group of aristocrats, gentry, and upwardly ascendant commoners that pursued a place within or access to the broad systems of favor and patronage that flowed from the king, his family members, especially Anna and Henry, and their ministers and intimate aristocratic servants, such as James’s Privy Councilors and Anna’s

³⁵ Schreiber, “Naunton, Sir Robert (1563–1635).”

Ladies of the Privy Chamber. Access to this system was the structuring stuff of court life, and as Naunton and Villiers are both keenly aware, such access often came from, coincided with, or required spatial access to the high-ranking court personages at the system's center. Thus, all court spaces were set-up and policed so as to control such access.³⁶ For the court, then, space was fundamental to individual and group identity, the systems of affinity, obligation, and inter-subjectivity that formed between courtiers and court sub-groups around particular courtly centers.

During the annual revels season, the court lived in and around Whitehall.³⁷ Whitehall comprised a massive conglomeration of buildings at the heart of Westminster. They sprawled along the western bank of the Thames at a point where it ran south to north away from Westminster Abbey to the southwest and toward the Inns of Court and St. Paul's to the northeast. The large and public Whitehall Highway bisected the palace. The buildings to the west of the road comprised mainly pleasure buildings (e.g. the Tennis Courts and Tiltyard), living apartments, and functional spaces (e.g. horse yards). At their western-most edge, they abutted St. James's Park. To the east, between the highway and the Thames, sat a larger sprawl of living apartments, functional domestic spaces (e.g. the King's Wine Cellar and a number of kitchens), open-air courtyards and gardens, and spaces for the business of state (e.g. the Great Hall, and the King's and Queen's Presence Chambers). At the north end of the palace, these spaces abutted Scotland Yard, and at the south end, a large bowling green. At the rough center of these eastern buildings, the Whitehall Highway met the palace's primary public entrance, the

³⁶ In what follows, this claim will generally follow similar arguments outlined in Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," and Butler's chapter on "Rites of exclusion," in *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁷ The one exception to this rule was James and Anna's first revels season in England, which they spent at Hampton Court because of an outbreak of plague in London.

Court Gate, which opened onto the massive Great Court, a yard that bisected and provided access to a large portion of the eastern part of the palace. The highway then narrowed as it passed, north to south, through the ornate and imposing Holbein Gate.

Adjacent to that important, central spot in the highway, just south of the Great Court, and at the rough geographical center of the palace's eastern buildings, lay the King's Privy Gallery and his Privy Lodgings, which included, from the least to the most public, his Bedchamber, his Withdrawing Chamber, and his Privy Chamber. Nearby stood the Banqueting House, the Great Hall, the King's Wine Cellar, the Guard Chamber, and the royal Presence Chamber. These buildings were all arranged around a large rhomboid courtyard known as the Chapel Court or Preaching Place. Radiating out beyond James's Privy Lodgings were clusters of apartments for other important members of the court, such as high-ranking aristocrats and other members of the royal family. For instance, Anna's substantial apartments sat in the northeast part of the palace, directly on the Thames. Like James, she had her own Bedchamber, Privy Chamber and Presence Chamber where she lived, slept, ate, and conducted her social and political affairs as Queen Consort when she was at Whitehall.

To offer some helpful definitions before proceeding, Whitehall was a particular court place comprised of smaller places and constituent courtly spaces, each with a particular role in structuring individual and group identity amongst James's aristocratic establishment. In general, Janette Dillon observes, geographers and theorists tend to define space and place relative to one another.³⁸ For most, space is the more abstract and

³⁸ See Janette Dillon's discussion of this issue in *The Language of Space in Court Performance, 1400-1625* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7-8. My definitions for space and place will follow Dillon's, whose own work follows the foundational theories of Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992), and Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall, 3rd Ed. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011). Lefebvre's work was only translated into English in 1991, but his *Production of Space* originally came out in 1974, while de Certeau's *Practice of Everyday Life* first appeared in 1980.

amorphous of the two terms. It names an arena or realm of intentionality, action, or movement. Actors and objects thus move through or within space. In contrast, place is the more concrete of the two terms. It names bounded regions of space, or bounded regions in space. Though, a place's boundaries need not be material or physical, and "place" can be a useful term to describe peoples' positions in systems that are not strictly or simply spatial, such as a socio-political hierarchy. In its material and immaterial boundaries, a particular place constrains, directs, or enables the spatial configurations and movements of bodies and objects in space. Thus, Whitehall was a particular place in Westminster while, within it, courtiers moved about in space. Inside its rambling and somewhat porous boundaries, the palace comprised a sprawling conglomeration of smaller, constituent places, such as chambers, yards, gardens, galleries, and halls. And in turn, each of these places demarcated, contained, or bounded their own particular spaces.

As philosopher J. E. Malpas might put it, Whitehall was a place—or a conglomeration of meaningful spaces—where social identity manifested in narratives of inclusion and hierarchy.³⁹ Malpas argues that social identity forms as groups act in particular places and develop shared narratives that, in turn, enable them to account for their past, contextualize their present, and conceive of their future. Since places shape and direct a group's actions, they also shape and direct that group's inter-subjectivity: they structure social identity by opening or foreclosing various possibilities for group action and shared social narrative.⁴⁰ This dynamic works in the opposite direction, too. Social identity does not just manifest through space and place, but configures or reconfigures

³⁹ J. E. Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴⁰ As Dillon points out, Lena Cowen Orlin makes a similar argument in her work on domestic spaces in Tudor London, in which she argues that different domestic spaces produce different ways of being, such that privacy in particular becomes a special mode of social operation in intimate spaces like closets and gardens (*Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

space and place in turn. Drawing specifically on the work of Michel de Certeau, Jean Howard argues that social action makes particular places into “significant social spaces,” realms “marked by the actions, movements, and daily practices of the inhabitants.”⁴¹ Such spaces accrue social meaning and value, and they continue to shape social identity in turn by sanctioning and constraining action in ways that are physical, social, and ideological. Anthony Giddens terms such places “locales,” and defines them as settings for “institutionally embedded social encounters,” arenas where space and society inform, shape, and sustain one another in a dynamic and cyclical fashion.⁴² Similarly, Hilda Kuper refers to such locations as “sites,” places that accrue “a condensation of values,” which persists through the life of a group.⁴³

Yi-Fu Tuan’s foundational ideas about space and place suggest how these dynamics can operate through broad cultural and ideological systems. For Tuan, all societies cultivate two basic mechanisms for orienting themselves in space, one that is quite practical and another that is mythological or ideological.⁴⁴ First, Tuan argues that all people develop an ambient awareness of spatial context as they exist within particular places. This awareness is not map-like in any concrete or literal way, but it enables humans to feel placed within and competent moving about in the larger spaces and places that contain them. Second, Tuan argues that all groups develop mythological or ideological systems in order to explain their place in spaces that they cannot fully master

⁴¹ Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 3.

⁴² Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), xxv.

⁴³ Hilda Kuper, “The Language of Sites in the Politics of Space,” in *Anthropology of Place and Space: Locating Culture*, eds. Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 258.

⁴⁴ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 64.

or know, namely the nation, the cosmos, and the globe. Such mythical or ideological space typically locates a given group amidst some broad spatial realm and explains their position therein by locating around them significant natural forces, divine phenomena, mythical figures and realms, parts of the life cycle, or arenas of socio-cultural distinction. In this regard, groups make shared cultural meaning out of basic cosmic or geographical realities. For instance, many cultures traditionally locate spaces of death and transcendence to the west—e.g. the Blessed Isles—because that is where they see the sun go down and night begin. Similarly, denizens of the U.S.A. often identify socially and culturally with broad regional areas, e.g. “the south” or “the north-east,” even though those areas don’t correspond in any precise or literal way to distinct geographical realities.

To bring all these theories together, then, Jacobean Whitehall was a “locale” or “site” where practical and ideological space fused at the level of architectural place and socio-political structure. Individuals and families came to court in pursuit of resources for social enfranchisement, advancement, and political power. These resources flowed from James, members of the royal family, their high-ranking favorites and servants, and other powerful aristocratic elites.⁴⁵ They manifested as wealth, aristocratic titles, land, expensive gifts, advantageous marriages, robust social networks, lucrative governmental offices, diplomatic posts, and influence over court culture and legislative policy. Accruing these resources enabled recipients to function as channels of patronage and

⁴⁵ On the relationship between royal favor and social organization at court, see Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 36-73, Keith M. Brown, “The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38,” *The Historical Journal* 36 (1993): 543-76, 543-557, Cuddy, “The revival of the entourage,” 173-76, and “Anglo-Scottish Union,” 107-12, Linda Levy Peck, “Monopolizing Favour: Structures of Power in the Early Seventeenth-Century Court,” in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), 54-70, and I. A. A. Thompson, “The Institutional Background to the Rise of the Minister-Favourite,” in *The World of the Favourite*, 13-25.

favor in their own right, and thus to form their own sub-networks of social interconnection and political influence. In Whitehall and other court spaces, courtiers pursued these forms of advancement in part by trying to achieve physical closeness with higher-ranking patrons, which often meant seeking positions in their domestic households or personal retinues. In such positions, a courtier's functionality both required and enabled varying degrees of proximity or intimacy between them and their patron. Thus, physical proximity to one of the court's central figures simultaneously marked and granted access to that figure's favor and to elevated socio-political position. Or, relatedly, a courtier's ability to come close to the court's central figures pointed up their own courtly centrality, as was the case with James and Anna, who both maintained their own independent households and could access one another's Bedchamber for moments of privacy, social interaction, or small-scale ceremonial.

In Whitehall, then, the court operated according to spatial-social systems of inclusion, access, distance, and stratification vis-à-vis its multiple centers. In keeping these seemingly contradictory dynamics in view, I follow Butler, who describes Whitehall as an "amphibious space" that was simultaneously open and closed, public and private.⁴⁶ For instance, when James was in residence, the palace housed daily workings of state, which meant it was a staging ground for the vitality of the king and his court. It had to be somewhat open, then, because petitioners and government ministers needed access to the king, and because the palace's ceremonial and architectural grandeur required audiences in order to function as manifestations of James's majesty.⁴⁷ And even inasmuch as it housed private domestic spaces, such as James's and Anna's Privy

⁴⁶ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 51. On this conception of court space, see also Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 43.

⁴⁷ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 51-52.

Lodgings, Whitehall was never totally private, at least not in any modern sense of the word, because James's and Anna's households were massive. James alone retained hundreds of attendants and servants to participate in and maintain his domestic and ceremonial life.⁴⁸ These people ranged from his high-ranking attendants, i.e. the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, to hangers-on from the bottom fringes of the aristocracy, to workers from England's laboring classes. All such people were technically James's "servants," and many of them lived, worked, and socialized partially within Whitehall.⁴⁹ In a very broad sense, then, Whitehall was an open and inclusive space. It gathered a large and disparate group of individuals and organized them in space around central courtly figures, namely James.

In another way, however, anyone who gained access to Whitehall had to internalize and observe a set of hierarchical social codes governing where they could move, when, and why, especially relative to the monarchs and their respective Privy Lodgings.⁵⁰ As householders, James and Anna both maintained suites of increasingly private chambers and staffed them with discrete groups of aristocratic servants. These servants oversaw or tended to the services most important to the king's and queen's personal needs, such as bathing and dressing. They also offered the monarchs various forms of interpersonal intimacy and often performed secretarial and administrative

⁴⁸ Ibid., 51-57.

⁴⁹ For instance, Butler observes that James kept up medieval standards of hospitality by offering his servants and attendants the traditional "bouge of court," regular daily meals as a form of compensation for service (Ibid., 51).

⁵⁰ Along these lines, John Adamson and Norbert Elias conceptualize court space as a conglomeration of thresholds and barriers mediating access between the royal bedchamber and the rest of the court. For his part, Adamson conceives of these thresholds as a linear series leading neatly from outer to inner court spaces ("Introduction," in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Regime 1500-1750*, ed. John Adamson [London: Seven Dials, 2000], 13). For Elias, in contrast, court space comprises centripetal clusters of chambers and antichambers radiating around the bedchamber (*The Court Society*, 43). As with Elias, my own argument seeks to emphasize how this centripetal arrangement enabled a constantly simultaneous experience of inclusion and distance, proximity and marginality.

functions as well.⁵¹ In this way, Whitehall organized courtiers in centripetal layers of hierarchy and access in which certain inhabitants were more central or more peripheral than others. This dynamic meant that Whitehall's practical architectural space was always a socio-politically formative ideological space. Moving about in that place, that is, courtiers had to feel oriented within the graded systems of access that governed where and when they could move. Within the palace's broadly open inclusiveness, then, we can imagine hosts of courtiers honoring, chafing against, subverting, feeling enfranchised by, or rejecting the spatial-social codes that directed their actions within the palace and around its human centers. Or to put this formulation back into Malpas's terms, Whitehall encouraged the court to live out a narrative of simultaneous inclusion and stratification, a narrative that courtiers experienced differently depending on their rank, level of favor, and centrality.

In more historical terms, Whitehall's socially shaping power derived from early modern attitudes toward hospitality and domestic spaces. As Felicity Heal details in *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, Renaissance hospitality comprised a system of codes governing the way people conceived of domestic households, their inhabitants, and their relationship with the outside world.⁵² One of this system's hallmarks was that it maintained a sharp and intensely meaningful distinction between the inside of a household and the outside, and thus between household inhabitants and strangers.⁵³ This distinction was conceptually rigid but practically flexible. Hosts and guests negotiated it through acts of hospitality and welcoming. In other words, the difference between insider

⁵¹ On James's and Anna's households, see in particular, Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage" (185-91), and Barroll's chapter on "Anna's English Household," in *Anna of Denmark*, 36-73.

⁵² Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁵³ See especially Heal's first chapter, "The Language and Symbolism of Hospitality," in *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, 1-22.

and outsider was felt to be categorically absolute, but practically porous and passable. Outsiders could become insiders if a household's patriarch or matriarch welcomed them in. Thus, to be welcomed into a home was to cross a powerful but intangible social line, to go from outsider to insider, from stranger to guest. It was to be fully incorporated into the domestic life of a household.

At Whitehall, court society attenuated and dispersed the formative power of hospitality across many different rooms and thresholds. As we have seen, where a courtier could go in Whitehall, when, and why all depended on their socio-political position, their function within the court, and their relationship with their superiors. And this question of where a courtier could move was never a simple matter of being in or out. Rather, there were myriad ins and outs at Whitehall, all of which revolved around different powerful courtiers, and all of which were more central or more peripheral than others. Courtiers might have access to James's Privy Chamber, or even his Withdrawing Chamber, but still not be able to enter his most private domestic space, the Bedchamber.⁵⁴ Thus, even within a monarch's tight sphere of close attendants and friends, there were still gradations of intimacy and access, all mediated through the physical grounds of the monarch's personal domestic spaces.⁵⁵ And in this spatial-social system, movement was powerfully symbolic and formative: it incorporated individuals into the courtly group and into its myriad subgroups, such as the intimate circles surrounding James and his consort. It signified a courtier's socio-political position within the broader court community. And it thus shaped their sense-of-self within that community.

⁵⁴ As Cuddy observes, James innovated Elizabethan tradition, and even his own style of household management from Scotland, by creating the Bedchamber as a rigidly exclusive place open only to appointed Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, as well as lower-ranking functionaries, i.e. Grooms and Pages ("The revival of the entourage," 175).

⁵⁵ Again, see Barroll's "Queen Anna's English Court," in *Anna of Denmark*, 36-73.

Employing Heal's ideas to elucidate the relationship between court space and court identity, I am using a simple formulation to describe a complex and variegated phenomenon. At Whitehall, insiders and outsiders had a range of mechanisms for negotiating transactions through significant thresholds. Acts of hospitable welcoming and reception could be highly public and elaborately formalized, as when James officially welcomed foreign guests to Whitehall. Or they could be relatively informal, as when a member of Anna's household staff allowed Lucy Russell, the sole Lady of the Bedchamber, into the Queen's private bedroom. But the differences between such interactions were of degree, not kind. Regardless of their formality or informality, hospitality and moments of welcoming always had the power to both reify and collapse distinctions between insiders and outsiders, to assert the integrity of the insider space or its group even as it incorporated or rejected would-be entrants. Thus, as Heal observes, early modern commentators tend to conceive of hospitality as a form of theater, one in which domestic spaces become staging grounds for power and magnanimity on one hand while, on the other, allowing outsiders to display conventionalized behavior as a claim for inclusion. In Whitehall, such endeavors occurred in countless, day-to-day ways that were both remarkable and unremarkable. Across myriad thresholds, insiders and outsiders met in transactions that enabled both to sense and make claims to identity and integrity before coming together within the interior space of the insider.

WHITEHALL IN MICROCOSM

During a masque the court resided first and foremost in the Banqueting House at Whitehall. In general terms, of course, the court only ever existed where James or other high-profile courtiers happened to be at a given moment. Accordingly, it is possible to

conceive of multiple courts co-existing in time, or to conceive of multiple courts cropping up and dissolving through time. For instance, James's household comprised one particular court, Anna's comprised another, and Prince Henry's yet another. When they existed—and Henry's was fleeting because of his untimely death—these three entities were especially distinct when James and his family lived in different residences, such as Royston for James, Denmark House for Anna, and Richmond Palace for Henry.⁵⁶ But during the revels season, the king and his family were all at Whitehall, so their respective retinues might be usefully conceived as one large court surrounding a multipart center. During the revels season, moreover, other socio-economic elites gathered at Whitehall and in Westminster and London, too. And in the broadest terms, this large group might be considered “the court” based on what was happening at its center(s) at any given moment. For instance, when James's or the royal families' behavior had no especial or immediate bearing on courtiers' lives or socio-political prospects, then the whole elite group gathered in London might be considered the court, as their shared desires for centrality, access, and favor kept them all within Whitehall's general vicinity.

On the night of the masque, however, it is equally possible to conceive of the court more narrowly, as the group contained within the hall itself. Masques themselves always address this group as though it and it alone constitutes “the court.” For instance, in *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, a Sylvan guard in the stage's fairyland scene refers to the masque as “A night of homage to the British court / And ceremony due to Arthur's chair”

⁵⁶ In his youth, Henry had a retinue of attendants and servants, and he lived in some autonomy from his parents before his investiture as Prince of Wales in 1610, but that event precipitated true independence. Afterward, he took up residence in his own houses, St. James and Richmond, assembled an official household, and became a broker of patronage and favor in his own right. This situation ended abruptly, however, when Henry died in 1612. See James M. Sutton, “Henry Frederick, prince of Wales (1594–1612),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/12961>.

(254).⁵⁷ Here, the Sylvan might simply be referring to the broad and amorphous court gathered in and around Whitehall. But he speaks directly out to the hall when he makes this comment. Thus, his words point most directly to a particular moment in time and a particular arena of space, the “night” that the masque participants currently share around “Arthur’s chair,” which is also to say James’s elevated and conspicuously canopied state. As it is with the Sylvan guard, so too it is throughout the court masque genre: when masques address, refer to, or make meaning out of “the court,” they speak and point directly to the group assembled in the Banqueting House, around the state. As Butler argues, then, excluded courtiers were a sort of social periphery against which participants sensed their own inclusion and centrality within the court establishment. That group, in turn, was a court-of-the-moment, a grand royal retinue that was alive and present as a social entity within the masque’s spatial and temporal confines, around James and whoever else occupied the state with him, such as Queen Anna or Prince Henry.

Within such exclusive social events, the hall localized Whitehall’s shaping power in microcosm. The Banqueting House existed in three different versions during James’s reign, starting with the hall that Elizabeth had originally built to house festivities surrounding her marriage negotiations with the Duc d’Alençon. All three stood on the same spot amidst the central-most spaces in Whitehall, those surrounded and linked by the rhomboid Preaching Place just inside the Whitehall Highway and the Great Court. Their western windows overlooked the Whitehall Highway while the eastern looked inward toward the palace. The hall’s south end linked with James’s Privy Gallery and, by extension, the Privy Lodgings, while to the north stood the Court Yard and Court Gate. In all three versions, the hall had roughly the same dimensions. The hall James inherited

⁵⁷ Ben Jonson, *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*, in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), hereafter cited in text by line number.

from Elizabeth, which housed *The Masque of Blackness*, stood 122 feet by 44 feet and had about 5,300 square feet of floor space.⁵⁸ Its replacement, which went up in 1606 and housed *Oberon* and *Golden Age*, stood about 110 feet by 55 feet and had about 6,000 square feet of floor space, as did the third and final Banqueting House, which still stands in London today.⁵⁹ The first two Banqueting Houses were made of brick, timber, and plaster while the third was brick and stone. And all three were roughly 50 feet tall.⁶⁰ In all its versions, then, the Banqueting House was the largest single structure in the entire palace, exceeding even the Great Hall, which measured only 90 feet by 40 feet.⁶¹

Just as Butler argues that Whitehall was simultaneously public and private, so too did the Banqueting House and the masque event cultivate both public and private social energies. On one hand, the hall's size, position, and admission practices made it a pseudo-public space, at least for the broad courtly group in and around Whitehall during the revels season. Amongst all Whitehall's large gathering spaces, such as the Great Hall and the Guard Chamber, the Banqueting House had a singular capacity to gather substantial numbers of courtiers together in one interior location. For instance, as Butler observes, masques staged in the Great Hall had about 1,500 square feet for audience seating while the Banqueting House's tiered benches occupied roughly 3,000 square feet. Butler speculates that they accommodated roughly 1,200-1,300 spectators, including those who sat in the hall's upper gallery.⁶² Accordingly, the Great Hall accommodated

⁵⁸ Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, 68-69.

⁵⁹ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 39-40.

⁶⁰ As for its height, contemporary reports indicate that the Elizabethan Banqueting House's main hall was forty feet tall. Like its predecessors, it had a short, first-story, brick undercroft. Thus, we can speculate a total height of roughly 50 ft. See von Wedel's description of the Elizabethan Banqueting House and Thurley's discussion of that structure in *Whitehall Place*, 68-69.

⁶¹ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 40.

⁶² See Butler's general discussion of Banqueting House seating in *Stuart Court Masque*, 39-47.

only half as many courtiers as its larger counterpart.⁶³ Similarly, the hall stood in a rather public area of the palace. Its northern wall abutted the Court Yard and Court Gate while its western wall abutted the Whitehall Highway. And while it was not a promiscuously open space, neither did it host intimate gatherings like those James enjoyed with his Gentlemen of the Bedchamber in rustic hunting lodges outside the city. Any titled peer down to the rank of baron and their families could attend, so long as they were sufficiently decked out in fine clothes, which were universally requisite for entry. Other courtiers gained admittance by direct invitation from James and also through connections with the Lord Chamberlain's staff, which oversaw the event.⁶⁴

It is not totally clear who else could have made it into the hall during any given masque. Critics generally observe that the early Jacobean masques were the most raucous and crowded of the Stuart era while later events under James, and then especially under Charles and Henrietta Maria, became increasingly exclusive.⁶⁵ As for the early Jacobean masques in particular, Butler offers an illuminating example about admissions: he reports that one Sir Richard Paulet, MP, opted to mingle with would-be entrants before *Tethy's Festival* in 1610 but chose not to try for entry himself.⁶⁶ This episode suggests that only people from the middling to upper reaches of the aristocracy gained entry, even in the early to middle years of James's reign. However, masques are chock full of fictional dramas about citizens and non-genteel people making it into the Banqueting House as well. Some critics take these dramas as evidence that large and socially variegated

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 45-47. On the spectators' sartorial finery, Butler writes, "To a considerable extent, audiences must have been self-selecting, since spectators were expected to dress in finery of almost equivalent ostentation to the masquers. It would have been difficult" for Whitehall's porters "to turn away ladies who arrived dripping with gems" (*Ibid.*, 47).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

crowds managed to get into some masques, but contemporary reports suggest audiences comprised only aristocrats and other genteel elites.⁶⁷ It is quite possible, of course, that people from the lower fringes of the court or wealthy citizens of London might have gained admission, but only if there were sufficient space and if the entrants in question were sufficiently decked-out to make it past the porters at the Court Gate, who policed entrance to the palace on the night of the masque.

Despite its general aristocratic openness, however, the masque event also had an aura of exclusive privacy, too. For one, the hall's status as a "banqueting house" attached it historically and architecturally to a particular genre of aristocratic space intended for exclusive domestic entertaining. Traditionally, banqueting houses were not large like the one at Whitehall, but extremely small. Aristocrats built them on their houses' rooftops or in their estate grounds. And they took guests there after long meals for courses of sweets.⁶⁸ More concretely, too, as much as the Banqueting House faced and abutted public spaces in Whitehall, it also looked inward toward the palace's royal domestic spaces, and its southern end linked to the most important of those sites, James's Privy Lodgings. As Butler suggests, then, the hall functioned as a kind of outer extension of

⁶⁷ Based on such dramas, Patricia Fumerton claims that the Banqueting House on masque night contained "an increasingly crowded and ill-assorted public" (*Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament*, [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991], 157), but as Butler observes, contemporary observers do not note citizens or other non-courtiers in the Banqueting House (*Stuart Court Masque*, 57). And as Marcus's work in *The Politics of Mirth* and elsewhere implies, masques didn't need hoards of citizens and non-aristocrats trying to gain entry in order to be crowded and exclusionary. The aristocratic and genteel court was, in itself, an overlarge entity that James repeatedly tried to shrink during the revels season by ordering aristocrats out of London to keep hospitality on their country estates. See "The Court Restored to the Country: *The Vision of Delight*, *Christmas His Masque*, and *The Devil is an Ass*," in *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of the Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), 64-105, and "City Metal and Country Mettle: The Occasion of Ben Jonson's *Golden Age Restored*," in *Pageantry in Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. David M. Bergeron (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1985).

⁶⁸ See Patricia Fumerton's chapter on Renaissance banqueting houses, masques, and voids, "Consuming the Void," in *Cultural Aesthetics*.

James's private chambers, with the exclusive Bedchamber being the inner-most.⁶⁹ And as we have seen, while the hall was relatively capacious in its seating capacity, some people still had to be kept out on the night of a masque, which necessarily encouraged a sense of social exclusivity amongst those who made it in. As Butler puts it, courtly inclusion during the masque depended on the inevitable, even "intrinsic," exclusion of other would-be participants.⁷⁰ Thus, the hall accommodated especially large numbers of courtiers, but involved them in a sort of intimate communion with their king by virtue of its traditional architectural associations, its proximity to the Privy Lodgings, and those would-be participants it kept out.

Ultimately, the Banqueting House's mixture of public and private was not the result of incoherent social practice or confused institutional protocol, but a manifestation of the masque's multifaceted purposes. In one way, the masque showcased James's power and wealth while celebrating the court and speaking to urgent, contemporary political issues. Accordingly, and as critics have long observed, it was essentially a spectacle of state that required broad, pseudo-public audiences in order to be effective. In another way, the masque was also an intimate, theatrical dance party featuring James, members of the royal family, and their retinues. Following these dual purposes, masque-goers treated the event differently as it suited their predilections and needs. Courtier and diplomat Dudley Carleton, ever concerned with decorum and propriety, regarded the event as a public display of courtly splendor for an international audience of foreign ambassadors and their retinues.⁷¹ For their part, those same foreigners sometimes treated

⁶⁹ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 54.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷¹ For instance, Carelton wrote to Chamberlain in 1605 about Anna's performance as a black Ethiopian nymph in *The Masque of Blackness*: "theyr apparel [was] rich, but too light and curtisan-like; Theyr black faces, and hands which were painted and bare up to the elbowes, was a very loathsome sight, and I am sorry that strangers should see ovr court so strangely disguised" (quoted in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, ed. C. H.

the event as public and insisted on formal invitations from James so they could attend in an official state capacity and sit near the king on the state, rather than keeping a low-profile and sitting with their attendants in the seating degrees. But if James wished to keep certain ambassadors out of the limelight in order to appease other international figures, he deflected their desires for official invitations by claiming the event was a private festivity intended for himself and his intimate circle.⁷²

Not surprisingly, other contemporary commentators regarded the masque with the same flexible mixture of attitudes. As Marcus observes, advocates of the masque and other state rituals often maligned them as trifling while simultaneously regarding them as necessary for maintaining the state. Marcus sees this paradox neatly encapsulated in the words of John Selden, who remarked, “Ceremony keeps up all things: ‘tis like a penny glass to a rich spirit, or some excellent water; without it the water will be spilt, the spirits lost.”⁷³ Similarly, in “Of Masques and Triumphs,” Francis Bacon writes that masques “are but toys,” but also suggests they are worthy of attention because “princes will have such things.”⁷⁴ Indeed, despite its supposedly trifling status, Bacon took his own court masque for Princess Elizabeth’s wedding seriously enough. When James abruptly rescheduled it because of fatigue, Bacon didn’t see the king discarding a mere toy, but regarded the unforeseen postponement as a humiliating and public loss of royal favor.⁷⁵

Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950], 450). Here, Carleton is concerned about the court’s appearance and reputation in front of foreign ambassadors, or “strangers,” as he puts it. In the presence of such observers, he implicitly identifies as a part of the courtly group—he calls it “owr” court—and he wants that group to be set off to best advantage.

⁷² As Butler reports, “From the beginning James enforced the principle that masques were private and invitations were at his discretion. When the French ambassador threatened to take his non-invitation to *The Masque of Blackness* as an insult, he was told ‘a masque is not a public function, that that His Majesty is quite entitled to invite any ambassador he may choose,’ for they come ‘as private men to a private sport’” (*Stuart Court Masque*, 56).

⁷³ John Selden, quoted in *Politics of Mirth*, 1.

⁷⁴ Francis Bacon, “Of Masques and Triumphs,” in *Essays* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 100.

⁷⁵ According to John Chamberlain, Bacon was highly distressed by the postponement and “adventured to intreat his Majestie, that by this disgrace he wold not as yt bury them quicke.” Chamberlain reports that the

Thus, Selden and Bacon assess the masque in terms of frivolousness and seriousness, and their ideas bear on how we understand the private and public nature of the event, too. On one hand, the masque's allegedly frivolous nature evokes the stuff of ephemeral dalliance and playful partying, which in turn casts the masque as an intimate social event amongst equals. On the other hand, its simultaneous import as an instrument of state and show of royal favor also evokes the stuff of public ceremonial and ritualistic seriousness.

Even masque creators had ambivalent ideas about the nature of the events they developed. For instance, Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and Samuel Daniel all conceived of the masque as a serious form of courtly self-display. Daniel put this formulation in the simplest terms when he remarked that the masque's "purpose" was simply to show the "glory" of the king and the event's principal dancers.⁷⁶ More complexly, Jonson and Jones both formulated the masque as a neo-platonic exercise in allegorical self-representation and courtly self-improvement.⁷⁷ Despite his relentless insistence on the form's seriousness, however, even Jonson admitted that its primary purpose was to "delight" participants through spectacular theatre.⁷⁸ Similarly, William Davenant wrote in his preface to the Caroline masque, *Luminalia*, that the event offered spectators

king invited the masquers to a special supper the next day in order to make amends (Chamberlain, quoted in Philip Edward's "Introduction" to *The Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*, in *A Book of Masques*, ed. Gerald Eades Bentley [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 127).

⁷⁶ Samuel Daniel, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, in *A Book of Masques*, 25.

⁷⁷ For instance, in his preface to the wedding celebration, *Hymenaei*, Jonson writes that the primary participants in the masque, "royal princes and greatest persons," are simultaneously "studious" of the "riches and magnificence" in the form's "outward celebration or show" as well as "curious after the most high and hearty inventions." Those "high and hearty inventions," he goes on, lead observers to "lay hold on more removed mysteries" (*Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 106). As for Jones, Orgel and Strong point to his profound commitment to neo-platonism: Jones believed in the power of images to induce contemplation, reflection, and moral self-improvement (see "Platonic Politics," in *Inigo Jones*). In his preface to *Tempe Restored*, then, he explains the purpose of his costume design for Queen Henrietta Maria thus, "so that corporeal beauty, consisting in symmetry, colour, and certain unexpressable graces, shining in the Queen's majesty, may draw us to the contemplation of the beauty of the soul, unto which it hath analogy" (Jones, quoted in *Ibid.*, 480).

⁷⁸ Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Queens*, in *Ibid.*, 132.

“pleasure” through its “variety of scenes, strange apparitions, songs, music, and dancing of several kinds.”⁷⁹ Similarly, in their preface to *Britannia Triumphans*, Jones and Davenant wrote that masques were a form of “entertainment” that offered the king and his ministers time-off from day-to-day toil in government: “Princes of sweet and human natures have ever,” they remarked, “presented spectacles and personal representations to recreate their spirits wasted in grave affairs of state, and for entertainment of their nobility, ladies and courts.”⁸⁰ As with Selden and Bacon, then, some of the masque’s principal writers and designers regarded the form in terms that suggest a mixture of private dalliance and public ceremonial display, frivolous fun amongst an intimate social group and meaningful political ritual in front of a broad audience.

These variegated energies—social privacy, frivolous dalliance, public openness, and political display—inhere in the masque’s own idiosyncratic spatial set-up within the Banqueting House. And it is this spatial set-up and its myriad socio-political entailments that provide fodder for the masque’s dramatic narratives, which manipulate them in order to engineer court experiences in real-time. For Butler, by contrast when it comes to the masque’s dramatic narratives, the most important spatial reality in the hall is merely its exclusive integrity, the fact of the group’s presence within the hall against excluded courtiers outside. Butler argues that the masque’s rites of exclusion made meaning out of the hall’s architectural and social containment in order to yoke the group’s satisfied sense of inclusion to the king’s authority. Similarly, for Orgel, the hall’s most important spatial characteristic is its hierarchical seating degrees, which masques’ perspectival spectacles reify in visual experience. However, masque narratives were attuned to spatial-social

⁷⁹ William Davenant, *Luminalia*, in *Ibid.*, 706.

⁸⁰ Inigo Jones and William Davenant, *Britannia Triumphans*, in *Ibid.*, 662.

dynamics much finer and more various than the ones that Butler and Orgel highlight in their readings of form's exclusionary and hierarchizing ritual power.

Every masque's spatial apparatus went up especially for the event and was then disassembled afterward. At the north end of the hall, an elevated stage sat framed by a proscenium arch.⁸¹ The stage measured roughly 40 feet by 40 feet, with 1,600 square feet total, a little over one-fourth the hall's 6,000 square feet of floor space.⁸² For most masques, the stage housed elaborate perspectival scenes. Antimasquers and induction figures performed there, and masquers appeared amongst them before descending on one or two sets of steps to the dance floor below. The dance floor was a platform of wooden planks elevated slightly off the hall's floor and carpeted in green felt to muffle the dancers' feet. It occupied roughly 1,400 square feet.⁸³ Around the dance floor, tiered degrees of in-the-round seating benches ran along the hall's eastern, western, and southern walls, and also above the hall floor in elevated galleries. As noted previously, the degrees on the hall floor comprised about 3,000 square feet, the remaining half of the hall's total floor space. Built into their center, in the middle of the southern degrees, sat the king's state, an elevated and canopied platform where the king sat with special guests and members of the royal family flanking him to either side.⁸⁴ All of these spaces were

⁸¹ The following description draws on Butler's description of the second and third Banqueting Houses (*Stuart Court Masque*, 39-42). As that hall was slightly larger than its Elizabethan counterpart, the dimensions indicated in this discussion are, similarly, slightly larger than those in James's first Banqueting House, which housed *Blackness*.

⁸² For instance, contemporary accounts from James's Office of Works indicate that the stage for *Blackness* was "xl foote square" (Andrew Kerwyn, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 89).

⁸³ Here, I conjecture based on Butler's description of the hall's total floor space (6,000 square feet), his dimensions for the seating degrees (3,000 square feet), and the average stage size based on the dimensions from *Blackness* (1,600 square feet). These dimensions suggest roughly 1,400 square feet left over for dancing.

⁸⁴ Contemporary reports indicate that James came into the Banqueting House with important foreign guests and members of his family. They indicate, too, that such guests sat with James on the state. For instance, Orazio Busino reports that before *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* James sat "under the canopy alone, the Queen not being present because of some indisposition" and then "had the ambassadors sit on two stools, and the great officers and magistrates sat on benches" (quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 282-83).

more or less contiguous with another, and with the Banqueting House's southern and northern entrances: vomitorium-style walkways connected those permanent entrances with the specially constructed stage and seating degrees. There were no rails or barriers separating either space from the dance floor, which ran between them.

In one way, this set-up emphasized the private and domestic nature of the Banqueting House and masque event. There were several strong sources of visual and spatial continuity between the hall's constituent spaces, all of which would have suggested the court's social uniformity and collective inclusion. As we have already seen, the masque seating area, dance floor, and scene stage were all spatially contiguous. There were no physical barriers separating them from one another. More subtly, the masque's lighting techniques and seating arrangements unified the hall's spaces in a visual way. As Barbara Ravelhofer shows, candles and chandeliers lit the entire hall on masque night.⁸⁵ Accordingly, the figures on stage could see the audience; the audience could see the figures on stage; and everyone could fully see the containing walls of the Banqueting House. Similarly, the in-the-round seating degrees enabled and encouraged audience members to look at one another and at the walls of the space they inhabited. Those walls, too, were captivating cytosures in their own right. They were gilded in all three iterations of the Banqueting House and typically decorated with festoons or tapestries of cloth of gold and silver.⁸⁶ Similarly, the hall's ceiling sported decorations of its own. The first Banqueting House's ceiling, for instance, was painted to look like a cloudy sky.⁸⁷ By way of contrast, consider how modern proscenium theaters tend to keep their houses dark and

⁸⁵ Ravelhofer reports, for instance, that *The Masque of Blackness* was illuminated "by eighteen candlesticks and sixteen hanging candelabra, eight of which held fifteen large lights. Such chandeliers were often decorated with tassels and fringes of arsedine, a golden metal foil cut to serve as spangles" (*The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, Music* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], 163).

⁸⁶ Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 162-63.

⁸⁷ Andrew Kerwyn, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 89.

face audience members directly toward the stage. These choices make the stage a singular object of focus and signify to the audience that they are not alive to the dramatic word operating therein. In the Banqueting House, by contrast, the court had dazzling things to look at throughout the hall, from the stage, to the state, to their fellow masque-goers, to the very walls that contained them. Stage and hall were thus both fully alive to one another, and the entire participant group was aware of the larger space it shared. In its brilliant illumination, too, that space contrasted against the dark and cold world outside, offering the court an experience of shared vitality and containment in interior space.

Similarly, even when empty, the dance floor functioned as a powerful visual reminder of physical connection between the northern and southern ends of the hall. Unlike the pit in early modern public theatres, which provided standing-room for onlookers, and unlike modern proscenium theatres, where there is usually a cordoned-off orchestra pit or very little space between the front row of the audience and the stage, the dance floor in the middle of the Banqueting House was sizeable and remained empty throughout a masque's induction—unless antimasque dancers descended to dance there. Moreover, it was conspicuous in its emptiness, especially in contrast to the visual and physical abundance that crowded the other areas of the hall. During the masque, both the scene and the seating degrees abounded with bodies, beautiful clothes, and splendid decorations. Specifically, the stage housed lavishly dressed induction figures, principal dancers, musicians, torchbearers, and spectacular scenery. And the seating degrees, where space was always at a premium, housed members of the court crowded together and decked out in elaborate finery. In the midst of these crowded and visually abundant spaces, the dance floor sat bare and empty until the masquers descended to dance. Accordingly, it functioned as more than just a source of spatial contiguity between the stage and the audience. Through the induction, its palpable openness previewed the

inevitable climax of the event, when those two spaces would link together in the social revels, when costumed masquers danced with audience members.

Before masquers and revelers united in dance, there were other visual and material cues linking the spaces they inhabited: clothing, seating arrangements, and the spatial logic of the scene itself. Though not wearing costumes, members of the audience dressed to an equal or greater degree of splendor as the principal dancers on stage. On stage, on the dance floor, and in the audience, costumes and clothing functioned in the same practical way, as lavish displays of wealth and status. In sartorial terms, then, the masque encouraged audience members to see the inhabitants of the stage as fantastical members of their own group. Accordingly, masque costumes tended to utilize the same structures and silhouettes of traditional aristocratic garb while embellishing them with particularly fanciful fabrics and ornaments. Similarly, just as the masque audience sat in symmetrical order around the monarch, so too did masquers generally appear on the stage arrayed in the same sort of order around a principal masquer, such as Anna or Henry. And in the same way the stage mirrored the hall in their respective arrangement of bodies, so too did the stage and the hall employ the same architectural and spatial logics. Masque scenes tended to reflect the balanced regularity of their proscenium frames. Like the Banqueting House and the seating degrees, then, they showcased height, symmetry, and rectangular integrity. Accordingly, the audience seating area and the scene mirrored one another through sartorial lavishness, hierarchical arrangements of bodies, and similar spatial logics.

Collectively, these palpable sources of visual and spatial continuity de-emphasized the public nature of the Banqueting House and, in turn, emphasized the privacy and collective uniformity of the group inhabiting that space. Once inside the hall, courtiers found themselves in a space devoid of the strong physical demarcations of

hierarchical exclusion that they would have encountered elsewhere in Whitehall, such as the galleries, doors, and turnstiles that could, moments ago, have barred them from entering the masque itself. Instead of encountering such material objects, they instead encountered a space partly designed to impress upon them their corporate splendor and homogeneity as members of the court, and thus their shared access to a pseudo-private extension of the monarch's Privy Lodgings. By virtue of the hall's seating arrangements, lighting techniques, decorations, sartorial standards, and structural integrity, courtiers in the seating degrees and on stage would have seen themselves as constituent parts of a larger social whole: two mirrored groups of well-dressed, hierarchically ordered masque participants all visually accessible to one another and contained within the splendid boundaries of the Banqueting House.

In turn, this inclusive and holistic reading of the Banqueting House helps show the equally meaningful ways that space was, in fact, carved up. While the masquers' arrangement on stage and sartorial lavishness linked them conceptually and visually with the audience, their costumes' conspicuous artificiality also set them apart. After all, the principal dancers typically comprised high-profile courtiers, such as Anna and Henry and members of their retinues. Looking at the masquers, then, the audience saw a group of aristocrats dressed in materials as lavish and fine as their own, but the clothes they wore were overt marks of fantastical specialness, as was their presence on stage. Similarly, the stage was better illuminated than the rest of the hall, and in its scenes it had a degree visual and thematic coherence that the audience lacked, despite their fancy clothes.⁸⁸ For these reasons, the stage and its inhabitants were not just visually distinct from the audience by virtue of their spectacular artificiality. More powerfully, they were also

⁸⁸ On the scene's illumination, see Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 157-69.

marked as objects—or, collectively, as one distinct object—of heightened and special attention. Put more simply, the scene’s coherent visual splendor made it and its inhabitants particularly captivating cynosures. Similarly, the monarch’s state was conspicuous by virtue of its canopy and its centrality, and by virtue of the fact that the monarch was the last person to enter the hall, all of which would have made his state an equally powerful object of focus along with the scene on stage. And in these ways, the scene and state functioned as alternate centers in the hall, two compelling focal points organizing the rest of the court in space and attention.

The stage’s elevation and proscenium arch were especially important to that space’s power as focal point. In a practical sense, the proscenium frame set boundaries that the masque’s perspectival illusions needed in order to make visual and spatial sense. More importantly, however, they indicated the scene’s specialness as an object of attention while also visually and physically cordoning it off from the rest of the hall. Earlier, I argued that the stage’s stairs and the dance floor’s conspicuous openness signified the scene’s continuity with the rest of the hall. At the same time, though, the proscenium arch and elevated stage were equally powerful as visual and spatial markers of specialness, containment, and difference. In contrast, the processional masques common in Henry VIII’s and Elizabeth’s courts employed no elevated or framed stages.⁸⁹ Instead, masque creators dispersed scenery, actors, and principal dancers around the hall floor, on the same level where the dancing would take place and from which the audience’s seats rose. Daniel’s first masque for the Stuarts in England, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, employed such dispersed scenery on the floor of Hampton Court’s

⁸⁹ On Henrician and Elizabethan revels, see Anne Day, “Torchbearers in the English Masque,” *Early Music* 26 (1998): 246-62, and Janette Dillon’s chapter on “Court revels,” in *Language of Space*, 103-28.

Great Hall—it was the only Stuart court masque in England to do so.⁹⁰ In the Banqueting House, instead, an elevated and framed stage cordoned scenes off from the audience, rather than displaying them in space that was fully open to and contiguous with onlookers.

In these ways, the masque's idiosyncratic spatial set-up recreated that hall's public-private position in Whitehall. The king sat at the center of the hall's southern end, at a point in the hall closest to his own Privy Lodgings. The masque audience sat alongside him, against the southern wall of the hall, and to either side of him, against the eastern and western walls. And the masque's stage sat at the most public, northern point in the hall, directly in front of the entrance leading out to the Court Gate and, from there, to the public Whitehall Highway. This arrangement tracked with the Banqueting House's alignment in Whitehall, where it ran north to south, from a public access point toward the cluster of increasingly private royal spaces along the Privy Gallery. In between these primary northern and southern spaces in the hall lay the carpeted dance floor with no material barriers or rails cordoning off that floor from the seating degrees or from the stage. Accordingly, the dance floor looked and functioned like a spatial conduit through the Banqueting House. It connected the more public, outward-facing northern end of the hall with the more private, pseudo-domestic southern end. For these reasons, the king's state caused the dance floor, and the Banqueting House more generally, to look and feel partially like a royal audience chamber. In such spaces, the primary and most meaningful object of attention and movement is the monarch in state. And in this spatial configuration, the court in the seating degrees functioned as a framing retinue for

⁹⁰ See Daniel's scene description in *The Vision of Twelve Goddesses*, in *A Book of Masques*, 28-29. Clare McManus offers a sustained reading of this masque's spatial dynamics as they related to gender politics and Queen Anna's place at court in *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 100-11.

transactions between James and the stage, their two most compelling objects of attention.⁹¹

Of course, if the Banqueting House felt or looked like a presence chamber, it was not a straightforward one. Instead, the other spaces in the hall complicated and enriched this simple dynamic. The monarch and his special guests, such as ambassadors and royal family members, were always the last people to enter the Banqueting House, and the moment James sat in the state marked the official start of a masque.⁹² Accordingly, no spectators ever approached the monarch from any point in the hall, as courtiers could in the Presence Chamber. Instead, people only approached James from proscenium stage and dance floor, and these people were not spectators, but principal dancers and the courtiers they took out for the revels. Moreover, the conduit of access toward the state was not a simple hall floor or gallery, with avenues of access and retreat demarcated by rails, carpets, walls, or doorways, but an open floor intended for dancing. As such, it was a complicated route of access to the king because, in addition to leading toward the state, it was also a broad, open space intended for coordinated, multidirectional, social dancing. Similarly, if the masque stage felt or looked like an access point through which the masquers approached the monarch in state, then it was no simple threshold, but an elevated proscenium stage outfitted with a splendid perspectival scene and populated by fantastically dressed figures inhabiting elaborate scenic machines. In its size and elaborateness, and in its profusion of speaking, singing, and moving figures, it could take the entire court as its mirror and object, as well as just James in his state.

⁹¹ Butler describes some of the non-dramatic transactions that occurred between James and masquers, all of which utilized the dance floor in this way, like a presence chamber. These transactions included gift-giving and shows of obeisance through approach and bowing (*Stuart Court Masque*, 63-90).

⁹² For instance, see Trumbull's description of Oberon's opening moments in *Inigo Jones*, 206.

The proscenium stage also complicated the hall's uniformity by making the scene look and feel primarily like a spectacle for James and the people sitting closest to him. Performance theorists have argued that the human visual-cognitive system enables spectators to appreciate scenes and images to which they do not have perfect visual access.⁹³ But regardless, the view would have been best for James and those sitting closest to him. Thus, the masque impressed upon participants their uniform inclusion within the courtly group while also stratifying their visual access to the scene's illusions. In this way, masques managed to offer James a pseudo-exclusive form of entertainment that occurred amidst a pseudo-public court audience. Especially for the onlookers in the far vertical reaches of the hall, that is, the king and the courtiers closest to him would have seemed very much like a human, spectating center, with the scene on stage operating primarily for them. In this way, the masque engages the very same spatial dynamics as the king's Privy Lodgings, only without the strong physical demarcations employed there. Just as some courtiers had stratified access to the chambers in the Privy Lodgings, so too were there stratified layers of centrality, experience, and access in the Banqueting House.⁹⁴

The same can be said for the dance floor and the dances that eventually happened there. Again, the hall would have looked and felt largely contiguous and uniform, but the further away courtiers sat from the dance floor the less likely they were to be invited to dance, both because their distance put them at a physical remove from the dance floor and because it marked lowly socio-political status. In this way, as much as the dance floor's openness and centrality reminded the audience of the eventual unification between

⁹³ Bruce McConachie and Elizabeth F. Hart, *Performance and Cognition: Theatre Studies and the Cognitive Turn* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁹⁴ Here, I follow Orgel's foundational reading of perspectival scenes and hierarchical seating in *Illusion of Power*, 10-11.

the hall's constituent spaces, its centrality and the physical impediments between it and more peripheral onlookers would also have emphasized the fact that unification was a transaction intended primarily for the monarch and the upper echelons of the court. Moreover, the presence of the state would have suggested that any movement onto the floor of the hall was intended as a hierarchical transaction between subjects and monarch, in addition to being a more generally inclusionary or integrative gesture between masquers and audience.

Thus, there were always three overlapping and interpenetrating spatial dynamics active in the Banqueting House at any given moment. In one way, the hall functioned as a containing, private event space in which participants were a uniform collective—they were party-goers united by virtue of their inclusion in the event and reminded in several visual and spatial ways of their coherence. In another way, the hall functioned as a liminal, conduit space between the stage on the north side of the hall and the audience and royal state at the south side of the hall, which abutted the king's Privy Lodgings. In this way, the masque was always set up to stage transactions of approach and incorporation between principal dancers and the audience. As we will see, such transactions could take on many valences: a ceremonial welcoming for foreign visitors; a hierarchizing encounter between two royal retinues; and the approach and supplication of a Presence Chamber. And in all manifestations, such transactions enabled the masque to construct the identity of the two parties involved and to collapse them through the incorporative revels, thereby aggrandizing and affirming the coherence of the group through performance. In still another way, the hall functioned as a two-tiered event space, one in which the interaction between stage and audience could be rendered both private and public: privately taking place between the king (and his immediate intimates) and the masquers, but publically observed by spectating onlookers. It will be the work of my

dissertation to observe the way different masques built narratives in and through these spatial dynamics, and to observe the overall effect those narratives were calculated to have on the court.

CONSPICUOUS EPHEMERALITY

As much as masque narratives make meaning out of the court's arrangement in space, they similarly attend to its position in time. In general, masques circulate through three different relationships with time. On one end of the temporal spectrum, they regularly assert James's transcendent power over death and his ability to sustain the court in immortality and stasis. On the other end, they also call attention to their own inherent ephemerality, usually by urging dancers on to more dancing and previewing the end of the event and the coming day. And somewhere in between these two poles, masques often allude to themselves as recursive events, a genre that punctuates the court's revels season from year to year. Thus, each masque generally cycles through three temporal energies: permanence and stasis, fleeting ephemerality, and perennial repetition.⁹⁵ And in a way, these energies reflect contemporary attitudes toward the form and its relationship with the state and the court. As we saw earlier, early modern commentators and masque creators generally viewed the form as both serious and frivolous, as a form of legitimate socio-political work and as a trivial form of entertainment, pleasure, and recreation. And this complex combination of attitudes bears on the form's relationship with time. When

⁹⁵ For example, at different stages, *Oberon* showcases all three such relationships with time. At one point, Silenus declares that James, "makes it ever day and ever spring / Where he doth shine, and quickens everything" (285-86). Later, the masque urges its principal dancers to take ladies out for more dancing and then spectacularly performs its own impending dissolution: "*Phosphorous, the day star*" replaces the faux moon above the stage and urges the court to bed (350-51). Elsewhere in the masque, too, Silenus observes that the current event is just one in an iterative series of Prince Oberon's "shining rites," an allusion to the masque's own iterative nature (41).

masques assert royal power over death or celebrate courtly stasis, they give dramatic life to their own conservative ceremonial power, their capacity to keep “up all things,” as Selden says, by reifying James’s authority and the court’s integrity. When masques proclaim their own ephemerality, however, they also give dramatic life to their status as fleeting opportunities for dalliance and play. And when masques point to their own yearly repetition, they call attention to the social and generic reality that mediates between these two poles. Put another way, they acknowledge that masques cannot fully sustain their court or their own playful frivolity, but can only recur occasionally from year to year.

For Tom Bishop, these temporal complexities are a source of fracture in the masque, one that the form attempts desperately to deny. Specifically, Bishop argues that all masques evince an underlying fear: that their idealizing socio-political narratives will not actually come to lasting fruition. Accordingly, he asserts, they attempt to deny their own fictiveness and ephemerality by asserting stasis and transcendence instead, but always end up admitting their fleeting nature anyway.⁹⁶ However, masques don’t merely admit their ephemerality. Rather, they assert, celebrate, and glamorize it. For instance, some masques include sportive characters that overtly reflect the event’s status as a momentary instance of seasonal revelry while others make spectacular theater out of their own dissolution, as we will see *Blackness* do when it calls Anna and her ladies back to the scene stage and promises that they will return the following year. And more than just dramatizing their own ephemerality, masques are fundamentally conspicuous in it. After all, no two masques were exactly alike. They always occurred in the same place and follow similar dramatic movements, but within this year-to-year generic sameness,

⁹⁶ Tom Bishop, “The gingerbread host: tradition and novelty in the Jacobean masque,” in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Bishop argues, each masque also tries to function as a “sacrament of novelty.”⁹⁷ Each one acknowledges new socio-political realities at court, employs a unique dramatic conceit, showcases new poetry and music, decks its actors and principal dancers in new costumes, and tries to dazzle onlookers with new scenery and scenic effects. In all of its elements, then, a given masque conspires to announce itself as an spectacular one-off, a singular and fleeting moment of revelry whose precise elements and configurations will never recur again in the life of the court—though, in the mid-Jacobean years, James did start staging the same masque twice in one revels season, as he did with *The Golden Age Restored*.

In its elaborate and conspicuous ephemerality, masques enabled the court to affirm and reconfigure its own socio-political realities.⁹⁸ In the most cynical or practical sense, each masque’s singular nature made it intelligible as a display of conspicuous consumption and also enabled it to respond to immediate and pressing socio-political realities.⁹⁹ By paying for and bringing together music, performers, costumes, scenery, drama, poetry, and choreography for a singular event, James and the court got to proclaim and participate in their own wealth and power precisely by blowing it on an exclusive, one-time-only dance party. And in its of-the-moment ephemerality, the masque could also function as a pointedly topical opportunity for the political and social effects that critics have already attributed to it, such as royal posturing and factional infighting.¹⁰⁰ More subtly, however, the elaborate and fleeting masque also offered the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 96.

⁹⁸ In *Cultural Aesthetics*, Fumerton connects the masque’s ephemera specifically to the Renaissance void tradition, in which exclusive groups of aristocrats both consumed and destroyed elaborate courses of sweets. Fumerton detects in this tradition anxieties about dissolution and mortality as well as social attempts to affirm the vitality of the group through conspicuous consumption and waste (157-65).

⁹⁹ On the masque as a form of conspicuous consumption and waste, see also Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 76-78, and Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 149-56.

¹⁰⁰ Bishop, “The gingerbread host,” 112.

court a heightened opportunity for both group sharing and fun. I say “heightened” here because the Jacobean aristocracy had a lot of money and free time, and thus plenty of opportunities for collective pastimes and elaborate social ceremonies, such as hunts, plays, feasts, investitures, weddings, etc. In this milieu, the masque was not special in kind, but in degree. It brought an especially large and complex set of aesthetic, ceremonial, and playful forms together in singular configurations and organized them around dramatic conceits that the court only got to experience once (or twice). In its coherent and singular elaborateness, then, the masque was especially conspicuous in its own ephemerality. And in a culture suffused with leisure and ceremony, each masque was a particularly precious, fleeting, and elaborate opportunity for group play and group ritual.

The masque’s conspicuous ephemerality gave it the sort of socially incorporative and unifying power that critics such as Ward, Welsford, Butler, and Ravelhofer have attributed to it. These critics either define that power vaguely or see it manifesting in discrete objects and practices. Welsford, recall, simply sees the masque as a collective response to the group’s satisfaction and value in the present moment. Butler, for his part, sees bonding power in the masque’s gift-exchanges and its connection to other forms of courtly ceremony, such as weddings and investitures. And Ravelhofer emphasizes the way music, costume, and dance offer participants opportunities for fellow-feeling and cohesion. Focusing on the form’s relationship with time, however, shows a more holistic view of the masque’s salubrious social efficacy, which derived from the total nature of the event, from its elaborate and singular combination of cultural forms and thus its temporal, formal, and occasional specialness.

To put this in more theoretical terms, the especially elaborate way that the masque attempted to entertain and celebrate the court gave the form a unique kind of social

efficacy. For Richard Schechner entertainment and efficacy are two forms of experience that manifest in different proportions in all performances.¹⁰¹ Entertainment, he suggests, tends to be the dominant energy of theater, which typically draws people in as spectators and seeks to delight them and pass time. Efficacy, in contrast, tends to be the stuff of ritual, which generally draws people in as participants and attempts to shape or effect something in their lives as a collective. Thus, entertainment holds audiences apart from drama and spectacle while efficacy invites them in. For the masque, this distinction is elucidating because it points up different relationships that performances can have with space, time, and groups. Entertainment in its purest form is generally a mechanism for passing time in any given place amongst any given group while efficacy is a mechanism for dwelling in a particular time, in a particular place, and in a particular group. Similarly, entertainment requires audiences of individuals while efficacy creates or sustains collectives. Performances are more entertaining or more efficacious, then, depending both on their own nature and location, and on the way people engage with them. Thus, London's public theaters tried primarily to entertain by performing popular dramas, but could also have ritualistic power inasmuch as they offered audience's shared and special time off from workaday life, insomuch as they spoke to or riled shared feeling, or insomuch as they attracted, satisfied, or affirmed sympathies between different social classes of clientele, as perhaps happened in places as civically and socio-economically disparate as, say, the Red Bull and the Blackfriars.

In its conspicuous ephemerality, the court masque achieved its own particular brand of ritual efficacy. Paradoxically, perhaps, this efficacy derived in part from the special way the masque worked to entertain its participants. In its unique, elaborate, and

¹⁰¹ Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004). See especially Schechner's chapter on "From Ritual to Theater and Back: The Efficacy Entertainment Braid."

fleeting combination of aesthetic forms and social practices, it invited participants to share in discrete experiences and special moments in time. In this way, the masque achieved a modified form of what Victor Turner calls “*communitas*.”¹⁰² For Turner, all social life cycles through periods of “structure” and *communitas*.¹⁰³ Structure, for its part, names mechanisms for controlling resources and sustaining the group through time and in history, namely systems of social, economic, and political hierarchy. Or, more simply, structure names the bonds of mutual dependence that yoke groups together vertically in relationships of power and obligation. *Communitas*, in contrast, names egalitarian fellow-felling and shared purpose that arises when structure is in abeyance or when groups transition between specific stations within social structure. For Turner, *communitas* is strongest when it arises spontaneously or organically. In such moments, a group unites in a shared moment of structural suspension, when the mandates of social obligation, economic production, and political power are absent or attenuated. However, Turner also contends that social structure can in fact encourage or make deliberate space for *communitas*. For one, he writes, *communitas* is most likely to arise amongst people already aligned within the same socio-economic strata of their particular society. Also, he suggests, societies can foster *communitas* through guarded ritual: institutionally sanctioned times that place particular individuals or groups outside social structure. And in all respects, ephemerality is key to *communitas*. It arises and is powerful precisely because it is fleeting. It does not level social structure, but organizes groups in temporary opportunities for shared fellow feeling and action that eventually transition back into and enliven structure.

¹⁰² Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Aldine Publishing Company: Chicago, 1969), 95.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 95. For a discussion of this larger dynamic, see especially Turner’s chapters on “Liminality and Communitas,” and “Communitas: Model and Process.”

The court masque was a yearly context for *communitas* in a social milieu where structure was, paradoxically, always inescapable and always attenuated. On one hand, that is, courtiers always lived relentlessly in structure. Being a courtier meant living around and pursuing favor from the monarch, the royal family, and their high-ranking servants. And in this sort of life experience, royalty, hierarchy, wealth, power, and ambition were defining features of existence, either because courtiers achieved and enjoyed those things, operated within in them, or pursued them. On the other hand, though, courtiers also lived in a social world that was suffused with wealth and largely removed from the workaday toil of economic production. In such a situation, courtiers always lived and acted within social hierarchy but also had myriad opportunities for leisure and play, forms of collective action in which the mandates of social structure are attenuated, if not in abeyance, and in which pleasure and dalliance in the fleeting present are primary goals. In this regard, then, the masque does not foster *communitas* by suspending structure, but by amalgamating pre-existing forms of leisure and play into especially unique and fleeting events. The court remains in structure during the masque, as it always does, but the event encourages an equally powerful sense of shared and ephemeral specialness in time and space. Hence the multifaceted social energies present within the Banqueting House, where exclusiveness, architectural integrity, and brilliant decorations emphasize the group's collectivity while the centralized state and hierarchical seating degrees stratify that collectivity according to rank and favor.

So far, I have suggested that the masque is efficacious and conducive to *communitas* precisely because of its elaborate, multimodal, and formal specialness. However, this notion begs the question of how aesthetic formality can foster social bonding. After all, such formality is conceited, planned, and performative, rather than spontaneous and organic, as Turner suggests *communitas* is in its most powerful form.

Anticipating this complication, I have already introduced the notions of leisure, fun, and play. As noted previously, many of the masque's creators understood it as a form of festivity that offered the king and his courtiers time-off from the political work of day-to-day life.¹⁰⁴ This facet of the masque might suggest some ways in which the form existed slightly outside of social structure, or within a special niche within social structure, one carved out specifically for special play and recreation. And in this way, the masque appears to be an arena of experience in which the group might be configured as such, rather than just reified in its vertical hierarchies. Here, it is useful to compare and contrast the masque against more overtly royalist ceremonies at court, such as investitures and ceremonial audiences between James and important visitors. The masque is itself a ceremony of royal power, but it is also playful in a way that sets it apart from other ceremonial forms.

On its own, of course, this notion of play is rather vague and it does not sufficiently show how the masque's formal elaborateness and conspicuous ephemerality might create shared group experiences and bonding, rather than just especially conceited affirmations of pre-existing structure. In this regard, Janette Dillon's ideas about spatial and temporal framing in the court revels make a useful compliment to Schechner's and Turner's theories of efficacy and *communitas*. Dillon does not discuss the Stuart masque, but focuses on the Henrician seasonal revels instead. For her, performativity is essential to the revels' specialness. Following Erving Goffman, she contends that performance happens whenever a person or group acts in the presence of observers on whom their behavior is intended to have some effect, either entertainment or something more

¹⁰⁴ In this respect, the masque was a rarified version of the sorts of seasonal pastimes that Leah Marus has shown James and Charles promulgating as mechanisms for extending their power out into the countryside and gaining loyalty from their subjects. In *The Politics of Mirth*, Marcus shows extensively how James, Charles, and Jonson used masques to advocate for such pastimes and, more generally, for a model of seasonal festivity in which "freedom was seen as a sign of submission to royal power" (7-8).

ritualistic in nature.¹⁰⁵ In these terms, an event’s performativity—or, as Dillon says, its “rhetorical quotient”—goes up according to the number of people being observed, the number of observers, the event’s length, and the conspicuousness of its spatial and temporal frames, which is also to say the extent to which it is marked off in space and time as a performance.¹⁰⁶ In a court society suffused with ceremony, ritual, and group entertainment, Dillon argues, the seasonal revels had an especially high rhetorical quotient, which framed them apart from both the everyday stuff of court life and the court’s other forms of performance. The revels’ hyper-performativity thus conferred onto them what Eugenio Barba calls an “extra-daily” quality and, as Dillon puts it, gave them a particular “freedom of movement and speech that would be difficult in unframed social action.”¹⁰⁷ This “freedom of movement and speech,” Dillon goes on, made the revels particularly suited to shaping court society. Though Dillon’s focus is Henrician, rather than Stuart, her ideas apply equally well to the Jacobean court masque. The masque had an “extra-daily” quality that derived from a high degree of performativity. And that performativity was essential to the form’s social efficacy. As Dillon would put it, a high “rhetorical quotient” framed the masque apart from everyday life and other ceremonial forms, giving it a particular “freedom” to actively shape court society.¹⁰⁸ As we will see,

¹⁰⁵ Dillon, *Language of Space*, 10. See also, Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 22.

¹⁰⁶ Dillon, *Language of Space*, 105. Dillon takes the term “rhetorical quotient” from Mike Pearson, *In Comes I’: Performance, Memory and Landscape* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁰⁷ Eugenio Barba, *The Paper Canoe: A Treatise on Theatre Anthropology*, trans. Richard Fowler (London: Routledge, 1995), 115-35, Dillon, *Language of Space*, 104-05.

¹⁰⁸ Cognitive performance criticism bolsters this notion of extra-daily performance and social play. In *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theater* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), Bruce McConachie argues that dramatic and social events offer groups opportunities for “play” when they are set apart from mundane, everyday reality—by, say, the special framing mark of a proscenium arch or the contained expanse of a sports stadium (52). McConachie notes that some performance researchers argue that audience play in performance contexts has certain emotional and psychological effects on spectators, giving them the experience of “concentration, of freedom, clarity, control, wholeness and sometimes transcendence of ego boundaries” (52).

this “freedom” manifested both in conservative performances of social stasis and hierarchy and also in dynamic opportunities for collectivism and egalitarian bonding.

Fortunately for me, Dillon’s theoretical conception of the revels anticipates and bolsters my own analytic framework for the Jacobean masque but leaves space wide open for my own interest in the masque as an arena of shared experience and group bonding. Dillon develops her theory of the revel’s framed specialness and ultimately contends that their main purpose was simply to affirm pre-existing power structures, as though the revels cultivated a “freedom of movement and speech” and used it only to conservative and socially calcifying ends. In this regard, and following Erving Goffman once more, Dillon contends that the revels “‘evinced a heightened concern for establishing and reaffirming the place of each individual within a structure of both bonds and boundaries,’” but she does not end up talking much about the “bonds” part of this formulation, only the hierarchy and “boundaries” that inhere in the revels’ spectacles of royal authority.¹⁰⁹

Admittedly, it is difficult to keep both of these dynamics in view when attending to particular events. And in a social milieu suffused with the stuff of structure—power, money, ambition, and hierarchy—any opportunity for bonding and *communitas* must exist in dynamic concert with the sorts of “boundaries” that Dillon rightly sees pervading the court revels. In the Jacobean masque, such “boundaries” manifest hierarchically in stratified seating arrangements, varied levels of access, and different modes of participation. For instance, some courtiers have a better view than others; some people get to participate in the dancing while other would-be dancers have to watch. Accordingly, social structure is never fully in abeyance during the masque, as Turner

¹⁰⁹ Goffman, quoted in Dillon, *Language of Space*, 10.

suggests it must be for pure *communitas*, but that structure gets deployed, asserted, and celebrated in ways that are simultaneously conducive to shared experience and group bonding, thanks mainly to the event's conspicuous ephemerality and framed specialness in courtly life. Thus, we will see masques assert hierarchy, stasis, and permanence even as they revel in ephemera and glamorize their dissolution. In these ways and others, they reify courtly "boundaries" while also inviting the court into shared "bonds" of a singular experience in a fleeting moment of time, one conducive to *communitas* by virtue of framed playfulness and ephemerality.

Chapter 2

What Land is This?: Hospitality, Empire, and Romance in *The Masque of Blackness*

NEW COURTS, NEW COLLABORATIONS

In Jonson and Jones's *Masque of Blackness*, Queen Anna and eleven aristocratic ladies appear on stage painted black and costumed as Ethiopian nymphs. In the masque's fiction, they have traveled by sea to Whitehall with their father, the river deity, Niger. After a stately song welcomes the ladies into the Banqueting House, we learn from Niger that a vision prompted them to seek out a land whose name ends in "-tannia," a mildly cryptic invocation of "Britannia," where they will be able to have their skin bleached white by a god-like sun king (179, 219).¹¹⁰ But they arrive in the Banqueting House ignorant about where they are and about the identity of the court. Most of the induction involves a conversation between Niger and Oceanus, god of the sea that encircles England. Over the course of this conversation, Niger explains the nymphs' identity and narrates their wandering quest to find the land hinted at in their vision. In turn, Oceanus explains the identity of the court and the Banqueting House, but he does not satisfy the vision's riddle: he refers to the Banqueting House as "Albion," not "Britannia" (187).¹¹¹ Finally, the moon goddess Aethiopia appears and informs Niger that he and his daughters are, in fact, in "Britannia," where James will use his powers to turn the nymph's skin white (219). She then welcomes the nymphs into the Banqueting House and prompts

¹¹⁰ Ben Jonson, *The Queen's Masques: the first, of Blackness* in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), hereafter cited in text by line number.

¹¹¹ The location of the masque must be Britannia. Masquers never appear on stage in error, though masque figures do not always know this generic fact and might appear in ignorance of their location, as they do in *Blackness* (185).

them to descend and dance. Songs punctuate their dances, urging them by turns to retreat into the scene or, conversely, to remain on the dance floor. Ultimately, and by the dictates of convention, the ladies do retreat, but with Aethiopia's promise that they will return the following year having successfully undergone a special skin-whitening regimen.

The Masque of Blackness was an inaugural event for James, Anna, their court, and the masque genre. It went up during the revels season of 1604-05, James and Anna's second in England. And the court that participated in it was inchoate. When he became king of England, James brought an influx of Scots aristocrats to London and generally opened up the old Elizabethan establishment, which had shrunk after the Essex rebellion and calcified around the Cecil and Howard families.¹¹² In this regard, Anna was especially important. As consort, she helped expand the court to an extent that had been impossible for Mary and Elizabeth.¹¹³ Mary's consort, Philip, was not a regular presence in England and Elizabeth, of course, never married.¹¹⁴ As head of her own household, then, Anna offered the nation's aristocracy its first alternate, non-regnant source of royal favor in roughly five decades. As for the masque itself, it was the Stuart's fourth in England, the second to feature Anna and her ladies as masquers, the first by Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, and the first to go up in Whitehall's Banqueting House.¹¹⁵ Where

¹¹² See Keith M. Brown, "The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38," *The Historical Journal* 36 (1993): 543-76, 543-557, Neil Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage: the Bedchamber of James I, 1603-1635," in *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey (London: Longman, 1987), 173-76, and Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-25," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 39 (1989): 107-24, 107-12.

¹¹³ Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 36-73.

¹¹⁴ Mary's husband, Philip II, maintained a household in England as Consort but was away during much of their short marriage. See Glyn Redworth, "Philip (1527-1598)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed June 21, 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/22097>.

¹¹⁵ The masques that preceded *Blackness* were *The Masque of India and China Knights*, Samuel Daniel's *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, and *Hymen and the Four Seasons*. *India and China Knights* and *Twelve Goddesses* went up at Hampton Court during the revels season of 1603-04. *Hymen and the Four Seasons* went up in the Great Hall at Whitehall before *Blackness* during the 1604-05 revels season. For an

Elizabeth had only staged court masques sporadically, *Blackness* was the fourth in a trend that recurred every year of James's reign.¹¹⁶ Within that trend, Jonson and Jones became the Stuarts' most prolific masque creators, and the Banqueting House their preferred masquing venue. At particular stake in *Blackness*, then, was the unity of James's new and ethnically hybrid court, that group's orientation around its new king and queen, the masque's burgeoning capacity to engineer both sorts of experience, and, most generally, its newly central place in the court's annual revels season.

Generally, critics see these issues pulling against one another, as though the masque were a zero-sum game between James and Anna, or between the monarchs' agendas and the event's success. In his foundational work, *The Jonsonian Masque*, Stephen Orgel argues that *Blackness* is incoherent because the ladies remain black when they descend to dance. Accordingly, the masque's primary display of royal power, blanching the nymphs white, does not coincide with the moment the masque incorporates the court into its fiction.¹¹⁷ More recently, critics have shown how Anna's performance serves Jacobean patriarchy and geo-politics. For instance, Richmond Barbour and generally all postcolonial critics of *Blackness* argue that the masquers' appearance underwrites Jacobean claims to British imperial unity or England's burgeoning colonial ventures abroad.¹¹⁸ Similarly, Martin Butler and Mary Floyd-Wilson argue that Anna's

overview of masque dates and locations, see Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 358-76.

¹¹⁶ As Barroll points out, it was not assured that court masques would regularly recur during every revels season after James and Anna's first in England. However, in conversation with the Privy Council and also, Barroll speculates, Anna herself, James decided to sponsor a second masque featuring his queen consort, and thus the annual court masque tradition began (*Anna of Denmark*, 99-101).

¹¹⁷ Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 116-28.

¹¹⁸ Richmond Barbour, "Britain and the Great Beyond: *The Masque of Blackness* at Whitehall," in *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama*, eds. John Gilles and Virginia Mason Vaughan (Madison, Wisconsin: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989), Suzy Beemer, "Masks of Blackness, Masks of Whiteness: Coloring the (Sexual) Subject in Jonson, Cary, and Fletcher," *Thamyris* 4 (1997): 223-47, Martin Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 109-16, 131-37, Joyce Green MacDonald, "'The Force of Imagination': The Subject of Blackness in Shakespeare, Jonson, and Ravenscroft," *Renaissance*

blackness obliquely symbolizes Scottish identity and makes a case for Scottish inclusion in James's new aristocratic establishment.¹¹⁹ Conversely, when critics foreground Anna and detect queenly power in the masque, they attribute it to the masquers' faux blackness and exotic femininity, but see those things antagonistically opposing James and the masque's formal conventions.¹²⁰ They thus imply that Anna's assertiveness creates the sort of incoherence that Orgel expounds in his early reading of the masque.

This vision of the masque does not register the form's capaciousness as a vehicle for royal posturing and engineering group experience. In contrast to such a view, Leeds Barroll argues that Anna generally used her masques, not to oppose James, but to advertise herself as an alternate nexus of social organization and cultural production at court.¹²¹ For Barroll, *Blackness* did this work simply by showcasing Anna and her queenly retinue as principal masquers for the second revels season in a row.¹²² That group of aristocratic women placed Anna within the Stuart's larger courtly group and proclaimed her commitments to patronage. Many of them were beneficiaries of Anna's

Papers (1991): 53-74, William Over, "Alterity and Assimilation in Jonson's Masques of *Blackness* and *Beauty*: 'I, with so much strength / Of argument resisted,'" *Culture, Language, and Presentation* 1 (2004): 43-54, William Over, "Familiarizing the Colonized in Ben Jonson's Masques," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 2 (2004): 27-50, and Yumna Siddigi, "Dark Incontinents: The Discourses of Race and Gender in Three Renaissance Masques," *Renaissance Drama* 23 (1992): 139-63.

¹¹⁹ Martin Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 109-16, 131-37, and Mary Floyd-Wilson, "Temperature, Temperance, and Racial Difference in Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness*," *English Literary Renaissance* 28 (1998): 183-209, 208-09.

¹²⁰ Bernadette Andrea, "Black Skin, the Queen's Masques: Africanist Ambivalences and Feminine Author(ity) in the Masques of *Blackness* and *Beauty*," *English Literary Renaissance* 29 (1999): 246-81, Hardin Asand, "'To Blanch an Ethiop, and Revive a Corse': Queen Anne and *The Masque of Blackness*," *Studies in English Literature*, 32 (1992): 271-85, Kim F. Hall, "Sexual Politics and Cultural Identity in *The Masque of Blackness*," in *The Performance of Power*, ed. Janelle G. Reinelt (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1991), Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, "Anne of Denmark and the Subversions of Masquing," *Criticism*, 35 (1993): 341-55, and Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 15-16, 78.

¹²¹ See especially Barroll's chapter on "The Stuart Masque and the Queenly Arts of Ceremony," in *Anna of Denmark*. See also Barroll, "Inventing the Stuart masque," in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹²² For Barroll's discussion of *Blackness* in particular, see *Anna of Denmark*, 99-104.

favor and, in turn, substantial patrons on their own. Thus, Barroll implies, James and Anna manage to coexist as alternate centers within the masque. However, Barroll also suggests that the masque's theatrical trappings—its costumes and scenery, its dramatic conceit—were more or less irrelevant to its power as a mode of queenly self-display.¹²³ For him, the masque centers Anna within the court simply by making her and her retinue “a spectacular presence in a glittering and politically symbolic social season.”¹²⁴ Accordingly, no reading of *Blackness* has been able to show how its royal messages and different forms of courtly experience might co-exist or cohere.

Blackness centers playful experiences of epic and romance around James and Anna respectively. For my purposes, epic and romance are dialectical narrative strategies that complicate and energize one another. Following Thomas M. Green and David Quint, I use “epic” to name linear and goal-driven narrative energies that foster social structure through story-telling, specifically by celebrating particular states or groups and shaping their pasts into teleological narratives.¹²⁵ Alternatively, I follow Patricia Parker and Barbara Fuchs in using “romance” to name narrative strategies that complicate linearity.¹²⁶ For my purposes, romance poses goals or quests, but suspends and dilates them, making narrative out of error and delay. Thus, where epic often celebrates nation-building and martial striving, romance revels in wandering adventure, dalliance, and sensuous pleasure. Consider Odysseus on Calypso's island. His dilated moment of

¹²³ Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 103.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹²⁵ Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1963), and David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993). This political reading of epic as a genre derives mainly from Quint, who argues that epic tends to manifest political power specifically as “the capacity to fashion human history into narrative” (*Epic and Empire*, 8).

¹²⁶ Barbara Fuchs, *Romance* (New York: Routledge, 2004), and Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979).

indulgence there suspends his quest to return home and re-establish himself as patriarch and king. Thus, his pleasurable delay and his ultimate telos require one another in order for either to have appeal or energy as forms of narrative action. Around James and Anna, we will see, *Blackness* offers epic and romance as two mutually enlivening modes of experience. It constructs Banqueting House and the court as a microcosm of British empire and a telos for the masquers' fictive journey, and it showcases the masquers as exotic travelers and wandering figures of difference who sustain the masque's ephemeral forms of dalliance.

Blackness collapses its epic and romantic fictions into court reality by staging them in a dilated moment of hospitable encounter. As Butler points out, when Anna and her ladies approach the court in the Banqueting House, they reprise similar real-life encounters at Whitehall.¹²⁷ During the 1604-05 revels season, James and Anna received visitors at court and offered them opportunities to pay homage.¹²⁸ Accordingly, *Blackness* went up at a moment when their nascent court was hosting outsiders of all types, from average citizens, who were allowed by tradition to call on the new monarchs, to members of the English aristocracy, to high-profile ambassadors and dignitaries. When James entered the Banqueting House before *Blackness*, for instance, he brought such figures with him, including ambassadors from Spain and Venice as well as Anna's brother, the Danish Duke of Holstein.¹²⁹ As in hospitality, such meetings offered court insiders and non-courtly outsiders opportunities for coherent self-display by virtue of their coming

¹²⁷ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 115.

¹²⁸ See Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 78-81, and Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 114-15.

¹²⁹ Contemporary reports from the Venetian ambassador, Nicolo Molin, and Carleton respectively name all these special guests except Henry (*Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950], 446, 448). I speculate that Henry was present because court precedent suggests he would have been. Contemporary reports indicate that Henry attended and danced in *India and China Knights* during the previous revels season, so it is likely he attended *Blackness* as well (Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 87).

together. *Blackness* staged such an encounter through its proscenium arch, thereby giving dramatic life to the process of court formation currently taking place at Whitehall. Accordingly, Butler contends that *Blackness* marked the Banqueting House as a “ceremonial space” where the court’s new relationships and identity were “symbolically enacted.”¹³⁰

Ultimately, however, there is nothing symbolic about the encounter that occurs in *Blackness*. To suggest as much is to imply that action in the masque is meaningful only as it references realities outside its own confines, as though masques simply reprise and theatricalize more meaningful experiences that go on elsewhere in court space and court life. However, as outlined in Chapter 1, the Banqueting House and masque are always already replete with political meaning and cohesive social power regardless of the particular dramas that they stage. Accordingly, *Blackness* is a playful experience, but not a symbolic one. It is, in essence, precisely what it purports to be. Across the proscenium, the masque stages a long moment of hospitality in which the masquers and the court have an opportunity to experience their own social coherence by virtue of their coming together. Strategically, it dilates this moment by verbally recreating the wanderings and error of romance. And in the process, it taps into the hall’s exclusivity, contained integrity, decorative brilliance, and proximity to the royal Privy Lodgings, all those elements that make the hall an arena of courtly inclusion and cohesion. It layers into that cohesion a narrative of Jacobean empire, which conflates the court’s social coherence in space with a geo-political vision of Scots-English unity. The masquers enliven this experience by performing racial difference and hovering within the proscenium through the masque’s induction. Once they descend, however, they play out their own status as

¹³⁰ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 114-15.

figures of exotic romance, and in ways that bear directly on their claims to inclusion within the court and the masque event. More than just being principal dancers and showcasing socio-political centrality through dance, that is, Anna and her ladies augment and sustain the masque in its conspicuous ephemerality. And around their performance, the masque conspires to make them recurring principles of *communitas*.

WELCOME INTO THE WEST

When it first appears, the masque scene proclaims itself as an arena of hospitable encounter and asserts the audience's integral coherence by staging the approach of outsiders. The scene is a shoreline where the masquers appear as though paused in a process of long-distance travel. A perspectival backdrop depicts a "vast sea" and "horizon" while a "cloudy night-piece" covers the upper stage (71-72, 77, Jonson's italics). The lower stage houses faux moving waves on tiered "greces" that extend the backdrop's seascape onto the stage (59).¹³¹ In the center of this scene, Anna and her ladies sit in a brilliantly illuminated concave shell that Jones made to rise and fall as though at sea.¹³² Professional performers flank the shell. To left and right, torch-bearing sea-nymphs sit in groups of six on two sea-monsters. In front of the shell, triton musicians and sea-maid singers sit as though hovering in the sea. And in front of all, Niger and Oceanus ride two giant seahorses. Jonson writes that they "advanced" once revealed (39). Thus, the masquers hover in glittering stasis that suggests paused forward movement and implies the court's coherence by posing the possibility of further approach through the proscenium.

¹³¹ See Jonson's description of the scene in *The Masque of Blackness*, especially lines 23-39 and 71-79.

¹³² Jonson writes that the shell was made "to rise with the billow" (52-53).

In these ways, *Blackness* was scenically innovative while realizing a very old masque conceit: that masquers are foreigners coming to court from without. As noted in Chapter 1, Orgel argues in *The Illusion of Power* that Jones's innovative proscenium arches and perspectival scenes visually enforced absolutism. For Orgel, they made it such that spectators had to experience masque illusions according to their rank and proximity to James.¹³³ Such arguments are true of *Blackness*, but they obscure the way Jones's innovations also render the stage as a spectacular realm of hospitable meeting. Before *Blackness*, masque dramas had long featured such conceits.¹³⁴ In some Tudor masques, for instance, principal dancers appeared as foreigners and approached the court through one of the venue's doorways.¹³⁵ Torchbearers accompanied them and, while illuminating their costumes, contributed to the fiction that they were travelers entering from the dark, cold world outside.¹³⁶ In *Blackness*, the scene and its proscenium take the place of the hall's entrance and perform its function in a grand fashion. They offer the court a romantic, maritime vision of the nighttime world outside, and they frame a host of foreign travelers paused just on the cusp of entry.

Blackness narrates this dynamic by welcoming the masquers into the Banqueting House, a process that calls attention to the masquers' outsider status and the court's contained integrity. Accompanied by the tritons, the sea-maids on stage sing, "Sound, sound aloud / The welcome of the orient flood / Into the west" (83-85). This song performs the Banqueting House's architectural and social integrity by lending it some

¹³³ Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 10-11.

¹³⁴ The very first court masque of James and Anna's English reign, for instance, featured this conceit. See Butler's description of *India and China Knights* in *Stuart Court Masque*, 63-68.

¹³⁵ Anne Daye, "Torchbearers in the English Masque," *Early Music* 26 (1998): 246-62.

¹³⁶ As Daye notes, there was a real-life corollary for this effect, as "Providing escort after dark with torches or links was a routine part of life: a service carried out by household servants or as a matter of honour by a page or a gentleman for his superior" ("Torchbearers in the English Masque," 248-49).

broad geographical specificity against the scene, and by implying that it requires ceremonial acts of hospitality to negotiate the incorporation of outsiders. It is “the west,” a realm into which “the orient flood” must be duly welcomed. At the same time that it constitutes an act of welcoming, though, the song also demands that the masquers and the court dwell on fictive forms of difference that hold them respectively apart. The song identifies the masquers and Niger as denizens of an eastern, or “orient,” global space, and as a “beauteous race” that is “black in face” and also “bright / And full of life and light” (88-91). In contrast, it constructs the hall vaguely as “the west” and, by implication, invites onlookers to sense their own whiteness as something that sets them apart from the masquers’ and Niger’s blackness.

The masque treats this encounter as though it is pleasurable and conspires to dilate it in time. Before moving ahead with this claim, however, there is a lot of critical baggage to unpack about the masquers’ appearance and its effect on the court. On one hand, critics have observed that the masquers’ costumes make a case for their inclusion in the Banqueting House while setting them off as exotic figures of difference.¹³⁷ In space and sartorial lavishness, Anna and her ladies mirror the court. Like James, Anna sits in the center of a spectacular entourage, including her fellow dancers and the sea-nymph torchbearers to the shell’s left and right.¹³⁸ Accordingly, both masquers and court can recognize one another as royal retinues. Like the court, too, the masquers’ clothes are lavish. As Jonson reports, they wear flowing gowns of,

azure and silver; their hair thick and curled upright in tresses, like pyramids, but returned on the top with a scroll and antique dressing of feathers and jewels interlaced with ropes of pearl. And for the front, ear,

¹³⁷ Here, I follow Andrea, “Black Skin, The Queen’s Masques,” 27-31, and Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 115.

¹³⁸ Carleton wrote to Winwood, “At the further end [of the hall] was a great Shell in form of a Skallop, wherein were four seats; on the lowest sat the Queen with my Lady Bedford” (quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 89).

*neck and wrists, the ornament was of the most choice and orient pearl,
best setting off from the black [of their painted skin] (62-67).*

In addition to mirroring the court in space, then, Anna and her ladies also reflect and meet that group's sartorial standards for inclusion in the masque event. As Butler suggests court ladies did, Anna and her fellow dancers appear decked out in precious materials.¹³⁹ Specifically, they sport silver fabrics, feathers, and elaborate adornments of pearl. Much of this material was probably fake, but rendered to look real and to dazzle within the scene's brilliant illumination.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the masquers resemble the court and announce their fictive claim to membership in that group.

However, many critics assume the masquers were disconcerting and alienating. As evidence, such critics always take two comments from Dudley Carleton, who remarked to Ralph Winwood,

Their Apparell was rich, but too light and Curtizan-like for such great ones. Instead of Vizzards [masks], their Faces, and Arms up to the Elbows, were painted black, which was Disguise sufficient, for they were hard to be known; but it became them nothing so well as their red and white, and you cannot imagine a more ugly Sight, then a troop of lean-cheek'd Moors.¹⁴¹

In another letter, Carleton similarly wrote to Chamberlain,

¹³⁹ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 45.

¹⁴⁰ Ravelhofer contends that masque costumes were always a hybrid of precious and imitation materials calculated to balance cost with visual brilliance under the scene's lights (*The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], 157-69.)

¹⁴¹ Carleton, quoted in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 89. For arguments that take Carleton's assessment as representative of general courtly reaction, see Andrea, "Black Skin, the Queen's Masques," 255, Asand, "'To Blanch an Ethiop and Revive a Corse,'" 272-74, Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 114, Lewalski, "Anne of Denmark and the Subversions of Masquing," 344-45, and McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 13. For an alternate view, see Barbour, "Britain and the Great Beyond," 130, and Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 100-01, Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 135, and C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson, *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 450. Oddly, Butler comes down on both sides of this argument depending on his critical lens. The ladies appear disconcertingly other when he reads the masque as an assertion of Scots-English unity and then like "mysteriously ravishing" and "costumed exotics" when he reads the masque as a display of queenly identity (*Stuart Court Masque*, 135).

theyr apparel [was] rich, but too light and curtisan-like; Theyr black faces, and hands which were painted and bare up to the elbowes, was a very loathsome sight, and I am sorry that strangers should see ovr court so strangely disguised.¹⁴²

For Carleton, the ladies' feigned blackness was unattractive and part-and-parcel of their "Curtizan-like" dress. Thus, his comments invoke racist early modern attitudes about blackness as an acute form of ugliness and marker of moral laxity.¹⁴³ But they are not representative of general court reaction. As Mary Floyd-Wilson, William Over, and Joyce Green MacDonald point out, the masque went up at time in English history when notions of blackness—as an ethnic category, as a form of identity, as a race, and as a marker of moral quality—were variegated and in flux. Specifically, Floyd-Wilson observes that *Blackness* invoked an old humoral and climate-based theory of skin color, one in which whiteness and blackness were poles on a spectrum of skin colors, each one associated with a different climate and associated with a unique mix of good and bad traits. In this system, Floyd-Wilson contends, blackness could signify as a marker of nobility and intellectual superiority.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Over points to an *apologia* for blackness that Niger delivers later in the masque. There, Over observes, Jonson draws into *Blackness* classical sources that expound positive and humane notions of blackness, in contrast to the dehumanizing ideas that undergird Carleton's comments.¹⁴⁵

For her part, MacDonald detects in the masque an "experimental" attitude toward blackness, one that partakes of a wider cultural shift initiated by colonialism. Prior to the

¹⁴² Carleton, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 89.

¹⁴³ For discussions of these attitudes toward blackness, see Andrea, "Black Skin, The Queen's Masques," 281; Asand, "'To blanch and Ethiop and Revive a Corse,'" 270-72; Beemer, "Masks of Blackness, Masks of Whiteness," 226-27; Floyd-Wilson, "Temperature, Temperance, and Racial Difference," 208-09; Over, "Alterity and Assimilation," 43-46; and Siddiqi, "Dark Incontinents," 141-44. As Andrea and Hall note, too, Carleton's comments do not just evoke racist attitudes toward blackness itself, but long-standing cultural tropes that held fair skin and blonde hair to be more beautiful than swarthy complexions and brunet hair, which could also be referred to as "black."

¹⁴⁴ Floyd-Wilson, "Temperature, Temperance, and Racial Difference," 183-86.

¹⁴⁵ Over, "Alterity and Assimilation," 45-47.

early 16th century, MacDonald argues, English culture generally conceived of blackness as an exotic form of difference that eluded categorization. Over the course of the century, though, English writers assigned it “a newly thematic status as a historical and moral phenomenon,” which typically meant classifying it as a marker of ugliness, moral laxity, and other negative traits.¹⁴⁶ MacDonald ties this shift to the material, financial, and ideological imperatives of the slave trade and colonialism. As England developed a commercial interest in exploiting “African resources and African bodies,” MacDonald writes, “the impulse to write the moral origins of blackness gained a newly material impetus.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, England came to consider blackness a definable identity category at precisely the time that it came to consider blackness a marker of immorality. But in 1603, this shift was still under way, and while Carleton saw the ladies’ blackness as a scandalous performance of ugliness and sexuality, others may simply have seen it as neutrally exotic or even positive.

Accordingly, it is troubling that many critics take Carleton’s reaction as representative. For instance, Bernadette Andraea argues that the masquers’ costumes were scandalously subversive and cites Anna’s biographer, Ethel Williams, who claims that *Blackness* thoroughly tarnished Anna’s reputation. As primary evidence, however, Andrea cites only Carleton’s comments.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Butler claims that, “Reports written by eye-witnesses amply demonstrate that the spectators were unable to decide whether to admire or be repelled by” the masquers’ appearance.¹⁴⁹ Butler’s claim about the masque is more nuanced than those that take Carleton wholly for granted, but it is similarly

¹⁴⁶ MacDonald, “The Force of Imagination,” 56.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁴⁸ Andrea, “Black Skin, The Queen’s Masques,” 265. The biography Andrea cites is Ethel Williams, *Anne of Denmark: Wife of James VI of Scotland and James I of England* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1970).

¹⁴⁹ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 115.

unfounded in the historical record. As evidence, he cites the contemporary commentary assembled in Herford, Simpson, and Simpson's *Ben Jonson*. But of all that commentary, Carleton's letters are the only ones to indicate shock or disgust. The rest of it notes only the masque's sumptuousness or the ladies' exotic and beautiful attire.¹⁵⁰ For instance, Vincent reports secondhand that the ladies were "strangely attired" and describes their outfits in pithy detail. He is aware that they performed as black Africans, but sees them simply as sumptuously dressed exotics.¹⁵¹

Of course, many critics claim the masquers were alienating for reasons that go beyond race and have to do with conventions for aristocratic performance. After all, Carleton's assessments are comparative and largely concerned with occasion and audience. He critiques Anna and her ladies against seemingly established standards for female dress on the masque stage. For him, the ladies' dresses are "too light... for such great ones." Similarly, their black paint is "Disguise enough" in the absence of "Vizzards" and it suits "them nothing so well as their red and white." Similarly, he regrets that "strangers should see ovr court so strangely disguised." In these comments, Carleton invokes a set of conventions for how "such great ones"—and, specifically, female "great ones"—ought to appear in the masque, on view for the court and its foreign guests. He implies that they should wear masks, traditional "red and white" cosmetics, and costumes comprising the structured silhouettes, voluminous skirts, and opaque fabrics of conventional aristocratic fashion. When he wrote his comments, then, Carleton

¹⁵⁰ See Herford, Simpson, and Simpson's entry on "The Masque of Blackness," in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, 445-55. Leeds Barroll quotes another contemporary report not included in that entry, and it exemplifies the general trend I am observing here: that no other eye-witness report shares Carleton's negative reaction. Ottaviano Lotti, a secretary to the Florentine ambassador, wrote to his government, "Her majesty the Queen's masque was performed on Twelfth Night, in truth with much more magnificence and rarer invention than the other," by which Lotti means *Hymen and the Four Seasons*, the first masque of the court's 1604-05 revels season (Lotti, quoted in Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 103).

¹⁵¹ Vincent, quoted in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, 449.

did not necessarily think the ladies' faux blackness was ugly in and of itself. He probably did, of course, but blackness per se was not his ultimate object of criticism. More immediately, he objected to the ladies' costumes because they flouted conventions for aristocratic female dress and did not show the court off to best advantage in front of foreigners.

Following such attitudes, Orgel argues that Anna's costuming choice was a kind of performative inversion, like the ones staged during festivals of misrule or the Jacobean antimasque. Orgel is not concerned with actual early modern attitudes toward race, but insists that the masquers' defied standards for aristocratic performance. As black Ethiopians, he claims, the ladies' fictive identities did not match or reflect their own lofty social status.¹⁵² Similarly, Hardin Asand argues that Anna and her ladies adopted a transgressive mode of performance in *Blackness*. For Asand, masques were supposed to wrap aristocratic participants in allegorical personas that obfuscated and idealized their real identities. But in *Blackness*, Asand argues, Anna and her ladies adopted a mimetic, rather than allegorical, form of self-presentation and mimed both racial difference and exotic sexuality. In this way, their performance did not just defy court standards for aristocratic self-presentation, but the allegorical underpinnings of the masque form itself. According to Asand, that is, Anna was not just transgressive; she completely exploded the norms governing the masque.¹⁵³

Despite their vast differences in historical vantage point, Carleton, Orgel, and Asand all base their assessments on rules for aristocratic performance that were neither rigid, nor universal, nor consistent. In the Tudor and Stuart courts, aristocratic performance generally manifested in precisely the ways Orgel and Asand say it was

¹⁵² Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, 116-28.

¹⁵³ Asand, "'To Blanch and Ethiop and Revive a Corse,'" 270-76.

supposed to: as elevated, idealizing allegory.¹⁵⁴ But if we take Carleton's attitudes as a standard for what was elevated and idealizing, then there were plenty of exceptions to this rule. Henry VIII and a group of male and female masquers performed as moors in 1510.¹⁵⁵ In one entertainment at the Stuart's Scottish court, Mary went about in a doublet and breaches while handing out daggers to male guests, thereby effacing her gender.¹⁵⁶ And at the Stuart's English court, *Blackness* was probably not the only early Jacobean masque in which ladies appeared as black Africans. The other, Butler speculates, was *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, a lost show from 1606.¹⁵⁷ Throughout James's reign, moreover, aristocrats sometimes performed in antimasques, shows of antic difference intended to set-off the main masque. *Hymenaei* was one example, and *The Irish Masque at Court* another.¹⁵⁸ Accordingly, if Anna's performance in *Blackness* did not fully match her royal status, then it seems nevertheless to have either mirrored accepted precedents from the past or set an acceptable precedent for future masque performances. That we know of, Anna never performed in blackface after 1606. But she and her ladies did

¹⁵⁴ Here, I am talking primarily about court performance, rather than more private forms of performance in the homes of aristocrats, where conventions were more lax and informal. For an example of such performance, see the Duke of Buckingham's comedic performance in Ben Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1969).

¹⁵⁵ In that masque, six ladies appeared as Moors with black cloth covering their heads and arms to simulate black skin (Andrea, "Black Skin, The Queen's Masques," 263). Barbour reports on the same event, but mistakenly identifies Henry VII as the principal masquer ("Britain and the Great Beyond," 130).

¹⁵⁶ McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 84.

¹⁵⁷ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 141.

¹⁵⁸ See *Hymenaei* and *The Irish Masque at Court* in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*. That we know of, aristocratic antimasquers never performed in the sorts of grotesque costumes characteristic of antimasques danced by professionals, such as the hags in Jonson's *The Masque of Queens* (in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*). For instance, in *Hymenaei*, the aristocratic antimasquers performed rather decorously as allegorical representatives of the four humors and the four affections, who ritualistically threaten the masque's faux wedding rites and are relegated to the margins of the stage.

continue to perform in costumes that accentuated their sexuality by showcasing their legs, shoulders, and breasts.¹⁵⁹

In *Blackness*, then, Anna did not subvert any long-ingrained rules about court performance. Nor did she subvert the masque genre. After all, as Barroll shows, Anna valued and innovated the form as an extravagant mode of self-presentation, both for herself as queen consort and for her ladies.¹⁶⁰ Given these facts, it is useful to think of the queen's costuming choices as an early experiment in genre and self-display. And in this regard, Anna may very well have anticipated a range of reactions to her costuming choices. This claim follows various post-colonial and feminist critics who argue that Anna used an antic performance to announce her own courtly centrality and cultural productivity by contrast.¹⁶¹ I agree with these critics but want to walk back their claims that Anna's performance was repelling, alienating, subversive, or shocking. Surely, some onlookers shared Carleton's disgust or felt other adverse reactions to the masquers. But if what came before and after *Blackness* is any indication, some spectators probably saw the masquers as exotic figures participating in established aristocratic tradition, one in which royals and courtiers could acceptably perform difference. In this context, then, and judging from Carleton's and Vincent's polar responses, it is likely the court responded to the masquers with a broad range of feelings. Later, I will continue to examine Anna as a masque-creator and see why she probably desired this range of reactions. But for now, the most important point is that the masquers' appearance held them racially and

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, Jones's costume design for Anna in *Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly* in *Inigo Jones*, 236. In this regard, too, the differences between Anna's and Henrietta Maria's costume styles are illuminating. As Butler observes, Anna and her ladies "frequently and recklessly displayed their legs, shoulders, and décolletage," while "Henrietta Maria exposed her breasts only for *Chloridia*, and thereafter maintained unimpeachably decent coverage of her limbs" (*Stuart Court Masque*, 145).

¹⁶⁰ Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 74-116, and "Inventing the Stuart Masque."

¹⁶¹ See Andrea, "Black Skin, The Queen's Masque," Asand, "'To Blanch an Ethiop and Revive a Corse,'" Hall, "Sexual Politics and Cultural Identity."

sartorially apart from the court without necessarily disgusting or alienating that entire group. In one another, the masquers and the court had a complex and splendid mirror and an equally complex and splendid foil.¹⁶²

Indeed, *Blackness* operates as though the masquers' ambivalent status is pleasurable by dilating their initial encounter with the court. After the opening welcome, onlookers know the masquers will soon descend and dance, but in the event's fiction there are two pieces of information that have to be established beforehand: why the ladies have come and where they currently are. As the court's representative, Oceanus needs to know the former while Niger, eager to help his daughters, needs to know the latter. However, it takes them almost 160 lines of meandering conversation to reveal the reason and end-point for the masquers' travels. In the process, they expand the hospitable encounter currently taking place through the proscenium arch. As it can be in prose romance, then, dilation here is a pleasurable strategy for dwelling in the present moment on the threshold of resolution. It offers the masquers and the court an extended moment in which to dwell visually on one another and feel socially coherent on either side of the proscenium.

As he seeks information from Niger, Oceanus takes 14 lines to ask two simple questions: *How and why have you come?* I will return to parts of these lines later for closer analysis, but for now they are worth quoting in full. A brief skim shows how verbose Oceanus is:

Be silent now the ceremony's done,
And Niger, say, how comes it, lovely son,
That thou, the Ethiop's river, so far east,
Art seen to fall into th'extremest west
Of me, the king of floods, Oceanus,

¹⁶² Here, I follow Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 115.

And in mine empire's heart salute me thus?
My ceaseless current now amazed stands
To see thy labour through so many lands
Mix thy fresh billow with my brackish stream,
And in thy sweetness stretch thy diadem
To these far distant and unequalled skies,
This squared circle of celestial bodies. (95-106)

As Oceanus asks his questions, he verbalizes the masquers' quest by jockeying back and forth between their origin, their travels, and their current location in the hall. In response, Niger explains how he and his daughters managed to travel hence, but Oceanus still wants to know why, so he asks,

But what's the end of thy herculean labours
Extended to these calm and blessed shores? (115-16)

This conversation is romantic in content and form. It narrates the masquers' questing, dilates a simple moment of dramatic action, and delays information key to the masque's resolution. Thus, it expands the encounter occurring through the proscenium, allowing the groups on either side to hear themselves identified as actors in a process of romantic meeting. All the while, each group is a focal point for the other and the masque invites them to dwell on their respective forms of sameness and difference. Thus, romance playfully magnifies their spatial and social coherence by expanding their coming-together in dramatic action and in time.

Niger's second response to Oceanus has a similar effect. When all is said and done, his answer is relatively straightforward—or at least its simple enough to summarize. He explains, *My daughters are especially beautiful because their black skin neither ages nor requires cosmetics. However, they came to revile their appearance when a group of poets disparaged their blackness and praised the beauty of white women abroad. I could not make them see their error or ease their distress. Then, one night, a vision appeared to them and told them to seek out a land where they would be able to*

have their appearance changed. In a riddle, the vision indicated that the land in question is ruled by a god-like sun king and has a name ending in “-tania.” We set off searching and have since visited three different countries with the requisite suffix—“Mauritania,” “Lusitania,” and “Acquitania”—but none of them turned out to be the right one (180-82). Finally, Niger turns to Oceanus and asks, “What land is this that now appears to us?” (185). By convention, the court knows that the land indicated in the riddle has to be the Banqueting House. Masquers never appear in the hall on their way to somewhere else. Accordingly, the court must hear Niger’s final question as a crux in the masque’s progression. He needs an answer so the vision’s riddle can be satisfied, so the induction can proceed, and so the masquers can descend to dance. However, he takes over 80 lines to ask that question and, in the meantime, explains the masquers’ quest in a way that verbally enacts romance.

At first, Niger starts to satisfy Oceanus’s curiosity about the “end” of his “herculean labours,” but immediately veers off track. He says he has come “To do a kind and careful father’s part, / In satisfying every pensive heart / Of these, my daughters” (117-19). But rather than explain what that “part” is, he launches into an *apologia* for blackness. For instance, he claims that “black” hair shows “the perfect’st beauty” because “no age can change, or there display / The fearful tincture of abhorred grey” (129-30).¹⁶³ Then he explains that British poets became envious of their extreme beauty and praised “The painted beauties” of “other empires” instead (138-40). In response, he goes on, the ladies “wept... ceaseless tears” and “charged” the Ethiopian sun “With volleys of

¹⁶³ As Over points out, Jonson glosses these lines with a classical source, Diodorus Siculus’s argument that “Africans were the first humans” and thus longest-blessed with access to the sun’s light. In Niger’s interpretation, the nymphs’ sun-darkened skin grants marks their immortality and enduring beauty (“Alterity and Assimilation,” 47). See also Jonson’s note in the “Appendix” of *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques* (510).

revilings” (152-56).¹⁶⁴ Collectively, these movements in Niger’s speech comprise about 45 lines, more than half of his total response, and it is not immediately clear how they are relevant to Oceanus’s question. Only when he completes them, we will soon see, does he actually answer that query, recount the vision that set the masquers on their quest, and deliver the crux that allows the masque to proceed. Thus, Niger moves the masque toward resolution by first seeming to delay it. Initially, his speech sounds like a series of digressions and they pull the masque’s narrative backward in time.

Like Oceanus’s repetitive questions, too, Niger’s speech magnifies the hospitable encounter between the masquers and the court. In one way, he makes a strong case for the ladies’ inclusion. They are particularly beautiful, he says, and they have internalized a desire for the court’s own whiteness—more on this unsettling racial issue later. In another way, though, he invites onlookers to register with particular force the masquers’ exotic difference. According to Niger, the ladies’ blackness makes them especially beautiful in comparison to the “painted beauties” of other nations. This phrase alludes to the women sitting in the hall, who presumably wore the fashionable “red and white” cosmetics that Dudley Carleton wanted to see on Anna and her ladies in place of their black skin-paint. Similarly, Niger’s backstory gives narrative life to the illusory seascape on stage, playfully encouraging listeners to see it as a conduit separating them from the masquers’ exotic homeland. In general, then, Niger’s speech offers the court a long moment in which to consider the masquers’ fictive difference, and it offers the masquers an equally long moment in which to hear themselves made a cynosure of onlooker attention. Meanwhile, the true moment of hospitable incorporation remains elusive: neither group

¹⁶⁴ Again, as Over observes, Jonson here draws on and revises classical sources that claim Africans revile the sun for making them black and desire white skin instead (“Alterity and Assimilation, 45). In Jonson’s own notes, he cites Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Pliny (*Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, 509-11). In Jonson’s version, however, the ladies do not internalize a desire for whiteness on their own, but only in response to British poets.

has heard precisely how the court will satisfy the riddle and facilitate the masquers' inclusion.

When Niger finally recounts the vision and the masquers' subsequent quest, he brings the masque to the brink of its dénouement and invites both groups on either side of the proscenium to sense their coherence on the cusp of incorporation. First, he repeats the vision's instructions in iambic tetrameter, rather than his normal iambic pentameter. The instructions start, for instance, "That they a land must forthwith seek / Whose termination, of the Greek, / Sounds *-tania*" (130-31). Thus, he articulates the quest's starting point in a way that sets off the final part of his speech from the wandering digressions that came before. Next, his narrative adopts a linear drive. With pithy immediacy, he explains that his daughters have "three pryncedoms passed / That speak out *-tania* in their accents last": "Black Mauretania," "Swarth Lusitania," and "Rich Aquitania" (178-82). Finally, he points into the hall and wonders, "What land is this?" (85). Resolution now hangs on Oceanus's answer, which must be "Britannia" if the masque is to proceed. After a dilated moment of narrative expansion, then, Niger verbally recreates the goal-driven quest that has brought the masquers and the court together. Unbeknownst to him, the court can hear itself as the vision's subject and as the masquers' telos. Meanwhile, the masquers can hear themselves as questers on the cusp of success and as featured dancers about to descend and satisfy the court's expectation for ballets and revels.

Instead of satisfying the vision, however, Oceanus's answer dramatizes the errors of romance and necessitates a final moment of narrative dilation. Speaking into the hall, Oceanus declares, "This land that lifts into the temperate air / His snowy cliffs is Albion the fair" (186-87). Albion is a traditional name for England, so Oceanus's answer is geographically accurate but does not meet the vision's instructions. As he goes on to

praise “Albion,” another masque figure interrupts him. The upper stage reveals Aetheopia, a black moon goddess who is enthroned in a silver pyramid, crowned with a “sphere” of silver light, and framed by a faux night sky (196).¹⁶⁵ At her appearance, Niger begs her assistance: “let thy particular grace / Shine on my zealous daughters: show the place / Which long their longings urged their eyes to see” (206-08). Aethiopia tells Niger, “Thy daughters’ labours have their period here, / And so thy errors” (211-12). She goes on to explain that she sent the masquers’ vision and that the land it alludes to is “This blessed isle” of “Britannia” (224). Aethiopia then speaks to the court, extols Britannia at length, and eventually identifies James as the “sun” whose “beams” can “blanch” the nymphs white (231-33). Finally, she invites the masquers to the dance floor, where “Their beauties” will be refined in James’s “radiance” (237, 241, 243).

As it brings them together, then, *Blackness* uses romantic error as a final opportunity for constructing the court’s and the masquers’ respective claims to integrity. For one, Oceanus’s delivers a resounding compliment to the court. “This land,” he declares, is a “four thousand”-year-old empire ruled by “Neptune’s son,” i.e. James (188-89). Similarly, as she extols the court as the masquers’ telos, Aethiopia constructs it as “A world divided from the world,” a coherent island empire distinct from the rest of the globe (226). Oceanus and Aethiopia thus assert the court’s integral coherence against the masquers, but, at the same time, they assert that coherence precisely so it can incorporate the masquers as welcome outsiders. On stage, moreover, Aethiopia visually augments the masquers’ foreignness while magnifying their claims to courtly inclusion. As their Ethiopian “goddess,” she functions as a splendid corollary to their fictive exoticness (204). But she also contributes to their status as a dazzling mirror for the court’s own

¹⁶⁵ See Jonson’s scene description of this moment (*Inigo Jones*, 193- 201).

splendor. Her costume and scenic trappings are brilliant and luminescent. They install in the masque's upper stage those elements of the masquers' appearance that link them visually and sartorially with the court.

BRITANNIA IN THE BANQUETING HOUSE

Blackness dilates the hospitable encounter between the masquers and the court in part to engineer coherence and unity within the hall itself, which it does by constructing that space and its inhabitants as an epic telos and a microcosm of British empire. Aethiopia affirms this fact when she finally names the Banqueting House as "Britannia." In doing so, she identifies the hall as the masquers' end-goal and names it with a Romanesque moniker for the local empire James wanted to create by unifying England and Scotland. In grand geo-political terms, too, she names the unity James wanted to effect amongst his fractious Scots and English courtiers.¹⁶⁶ However, the masques epic and imperial energies do not just crop up when Aethiopia appears. Rather, her declaration is the final pay-off in a process that builds throughout Oceanus's and Niger's opening conversation. In that process, the singing and speaking figures on stage use the masquers' hovering stasis as a context against which to construct the court's integrity within the Banqueting House, on the opposite side of the proscenium. The masquers and the dramatic conceit that they represent are both fictional and playful, as is the imperial identity that Aethiopia and others layer into the Banqueting House, but they also make good on very real cohesive energies already active in the hall.

¹⁶⁶ On James's plan for union, both broadly and locally, see Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 91-124, and Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-25." Cuddy observes that James saw both forms of union as integrally connected, and he hoped that his balanced Scots-English household would foster Union where Parliament refused to. Though, as Cuddy also observes, James's decision to install only Scots in his private Bedchamber fundamentally hindered this possibility.

As outlined in Chapter 1, all three Jacobean Banqueting Houses wrapped courtiers in narratives of inclusion and intimacy with James. In 1605, however, the current Banqueting House had a set of historical associations and unique features that enhanced its capacity to engineer cohesion amongst James inchoate Scots-English court. Elizabeth had built the Banqueting House as a venue for festivities surrounding her marriage negotiations with the Duc d'Alençon.¹⁶⁷ For older members of James's court, then, the hall would have evoked moments of frivolity and socio-political work when the Tudor dynasty and its courtly retinue were on display to powerful foreign guests. Amidst this experience, the proscenium stage may have struck some courtiers as an innovation, because its combination of robust framing and depth was novel. But some Elizabethan masques had organized scenery on elevated stages at one end of the hall.¹⁶⁸ Accordingly, the stage was new in some ways, but also contiguous with Elizabethan tradition. For its part, too, the stage's curtain also evoked the Tudors. Painted with a woodland hunting scene, it resembled a tapestry, an artistic and decorative form that Henry VIII had especially favored.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, it infused the Banqueting House with the feeling of Tudor royalty. Thus, the hall offered the Stuart's new Scots-English court an aesthetic experience of coherence in space and across time, by enveloping that group in the architectural and decorative trappings of Elizabethan and Henrician festivity.

Simultaneously, Jones calculated the proscenium curtain to impress on the court an attenuated form of domestic intimacy around their new monarch, James. Tapestries

¹⁶⁷ Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments* (New York: Yale University Press, 1999), 67-68

¹⁶⁸ For instance, Orgel describes the Elizabethan *Masque of Proteus and the Adamantine Rock* from the 1595-94 revels season. It utilized "a simple scaffold stage at one end [of the hall], with the adamantine rock of the title as a prominent feature" (*Jonsonian Masque*, 9).

¹⁶⁹ Thomas P. Campbell reports that Henry had an intense penchant for acquiring and displaying tapestries in his various palaces (*Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty* [New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007], ix-xvii). The last years of his reign, Campbell observes, were especially "marked by purchases [of tapestries] of unprecedented scale and magnificence" (251).

had a flexible set of functions in the Renaissance, some of which were religious or ceremonial.¹⁷⁰ In the Banqueting House, for instance, a cloth of state adorned the elevated platform where James sat and emphasized the Banqueting House's status as a ceremonial arena of royal power. Other tapestries, however, were simply expensive forms of interior decoration and insulation. They signified wealth and shielded domestic spaces from cold and damp. Importantly, such tapestries often depicted the very thing Jones painted on the curtain for *Blackness*: wooded hunting scenes.¹⁷¹ Coincidentally, too, hunting was James's favorite pastime, something he pursued with the Gentlemen of his exclusive Bedchamber staff.¹⁷² Thus, where Jones could have created a curtain that functioned like James's ceremonial cloth of state, he opted instead for something both royal and domestic. It was a visual corollary to the hall's enveloping warmth, its containing integrity, and its proximity to the king's Privy Lodgings at the south end of the hall. Working at cross-purposes with the royal state, it emphasized the hall as a space of intimacy and shared experience between James and his court.

When James entered the hall, he enhanced that space's capacity to unify the courtiers gathered there while also energizing its inherently hierarchical set-up. As noted earlier, he came in accompanied by Prince Henry, the Duke of Holstein, brother to Queen

¹⁷⁰ For instance, churches displayed tapestries with Bible scenes during special occasions, and monarchs used them as cloths of state, adornments for the platforms where they sat in presence (Campbell, *Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty*, 3-4). In terms of Jacobean masque curtains, a good contrast here is the one that hung before the stage of *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* on January 1, 1611. See Antonio Correr's report on the masque, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 205-206. Correr describes a curtain depicting the British Isles and motto expressing imperial unity. That curtain's function, then, was overtly political and ceremonial, while the one in *Blackness* seems like a less formal and more domestic form of interior decoration.

¹⁷¹ Campbell, *Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty*, 3.

¹⁷² Importantly, too, hunting was a pastime that allowed extreme privacy and intimacy between James and his male retinue. On hunting sojourns, James typically retired to a lodge far outside London and brought with him only his Bedchamber gentlemen and his Master of Horse—and, of course, the train of servants and attendants required to sustain their comfort while in the country (Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 194).

Anna and the King of Denmark, and ambassadors from Spain and Venice.¹⁷³ By convention, all of these men would have sat with James on the canopied state or somewhere very close by in the seating degrees.¹⁷⁴ Their presence there gave the hall a clear center and a clear periphery, making even more palpable the court hierarchy arrayed therein. At the same time, though, James's presence—and, to a lesser extent, Henry's—also affirmed the hall as a royal space where the court could share varying degrees of intimacy with their new monarch, his son, and his high-profile foreign guests. Those foreign guests, moreover, gave the hall's Scots and English attendees an international audience against which to sense and perform their own social coherence around the new monarch.¹⁷⁵

As they negotiate the masquers' approach and incorporation, then, the figures on stage layer a sense of imperial microcosm into an architectural and social integrity already alive in the Banqueting House. Throughout this experience, the nymphs and their suspended approach are enlivening principles. In their glittering and romantic stasis, they provide the narrative, visual, and spatial context against which the masque constructs the court and the Banqueting House as "Britannia." They are, in short, the figures of romance that make the court intelligible as an epic and imperial telos. In this regard, their blackness is essential both as a performance of non-British otherness and as a performance of Scots identity. As Ethiopian nymphs, critics have observed, Anna and her

¹⁷³ Molin and Carelton, quoted in *Ben Jonson*, 446, 448.

¹⁷⁴ There are no eye-witness accounts for seating arrangements in *Blackness*, but as noted in Chapter 1, contemporary reports on other Jacobean masques always indicate that James came into the Banqueting House with important foreign guests and members of his family. They indicate, too, that such guests always sat with James on the state or nearby.

¹⁷⁵ Busino shows that the court was, indeed, a spectacle in and of itself for foreign visitors. As a member of the Venetian ambassador's retinue he had to wait in the hall before *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* along with the rest of the court. During the "two hours' wait," he and his colleagues entertained themselves by looking around at the English and Scots ladies, assessing and commenting on their clothes (quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 282.)

ladies personate exotic Africans and evoke a legend tracing Scotland's national origins to Scota, the daughter of an Egyptian pharaoh.¹⁷⁶ Thus, they offer the court a vision of racial otherness against which to experience its own white coherence and they also represent the Scots that James recently brought into England. Moreover, their romantic questing reprises in spectacular fashion the process through which that group originally entered the court's formerly Elizabethan establishment. And as the figures on stage variously discuss, narrate, or conclude that questing, they construct the court in imperial terms that build to Aethiopia's "Britannia." Accordingly, *Blackness* engineers meaningful socio-political experience in playful miniature, offering the court a festive opportunity to hear its local coherence in the Banqueting House inflated and affirmed in imperial terms.

This process starts slowly and then builds as Niger, Oceanus, and Aethiopia name the hall with increasing specificity and geo-political import. First, that space is simply "the west" (85), as opposed to the masquers' "orient flood" (84), then "th'extremest west" (98), then the very "heart" of Oceanus's maritime "empire" (100). Next, Oceanus describes it as "these far distant and unequalled skies" (105), "This squared circle of celestial bodies" (106), and "these calm and blessed shores" (116). Later still, it is "Albion," an ancient "empire" that crowns the ocean with "snowy cliffs" amongst Oceanus's "waves" (186-92). Finally, it is not "Albion," but "Britannia," an ancient imperial "style" that James has restored (224-25). It is "The blessed isle" (216), a nation

¹⁷⁶ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 114, and Floyd-Wilson, "Temperature, Temperance, and Racial Difference," 201. Both Butler and Floyd-Wilson point out that the masquers' black skin paint also evoked the practice of body- and face-painting amongst the ancient Britons. In this regard, Butler and Floyd-Wilson point up Jonson's debt to William Camden's *Britannia*, which traces the term Britain to "the ancient origins of the prefix 'Birth,'" which supposedly referred to the practice of body- and face-painting, and thereby earned the ancient Britons their name (Floyd-Wilson, "Temperature, Temperance, and Racial Difference," 194-95). Anna and her ladies may very well have evoked this ancient British association, and the court would have seen an even more obvious reference to ancient British identity in the other figures on stage. Jonson reports that Oceanus was painted blue (30) and that the tritons had blue hair (40). Similarly, Orgel and Strong report from a watercolor of the torch-bearing sea nymphs that their faces were painted blue as well (*Inigo Jones*, 99).

that “the triple world admires” (219), “A world divided from the world” (226), and a “diamond” set within the figurative “ring” of the globe (228-30). Thus, the entire hall partakes of the British Isles’ “skies” and “shores,” their western position vis-à-vis Europe, and their sea-girt island status. The masque constructs those features as markers of a historically pre-established “empire” and also inflates them into a mythical form of global remove, global centrality, and global admiration. Britannia’s constituent isles thus become one miniature and microcosmic Blessed Isle in the Banqueting House, a far-flung western space of transcendence and paradise.

As Richmond Barbour has partly shown, these rhetorical maneuvers underwrite James’s imperial style and desire for Scots-English unity.¹⁷⁷ Specifically, Barbour argues that they work to reverse various sources of cultural anxiety that undermined James’s imperial ambitions. Historically, Barbour observes, Britain was an isolated western backwater of the Roman Empire and, centuries later, came only belatedly to the intellectual, artistic, and mercantile renaissance that spread westward and northward through continental Europe. And in the early 17th century, too, it lagged behind various continental European countries in empire-building projects abroad. These facts, Barbour contends, made Britain’s island status and its western position vis-à-vis Europe into markers of political immaturity and cultural marginality. But *Blackness* reframes and reverses all of them. In the words of Oceanus and Aethiopia, the western edge of Europe is not a periphery, but a space of rarefied global remove and mythic transcendence. For them, Britain’s island status does not isolate it from the world, but offers it a special form of maritime centrality, makes it a global focal point, and lends it imperial, sea-girt integrity. In the masque’s estimation, too, Britain’s ancient history does not contain a

¹⁷⁷ Barbour, “Britain and the Great Beyond,” 137-39.

narrative of cultural marginality, but the precursor of modern day empire. And against the masquers' approach, it also becomes the telos of an exotic quest.

These maneuvers for asserting empire speak immediately to the court's embodied and spatial experiences in the Banqueting House.¹⁷⁸ When Oceanus refers to "these far distant and unequalled skies," he points to the sky painted on the Banqueting House's ceiling.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, monikers such as "Albion" and "Britannia" necessarily comprehend all of England and the British Isles, but Jones has represented the shoreline of those islands on stage. When Oceanus points to "these calm and blessed shores," then, he indicates a fictive space that is immediately present in the hall. Finally, when Aethiopia says "the triple world admires" Britannia, she evokes a strategy that masques use to praise the court: often, they construct the hall and its inhabitants as special objects of global attention.¹⁸⁰ In doing so, they make meaning out of the hall's social exclusivity, its beauty, and its architectural integrity. Thus, Aethiopia conflates the broad geographical coherence of empire with the local architectural coherence of the Banqueting House. Like Britannia, that smaller space is a dazzling container that encourages the court to feel coherent within the fictional glow of outside admiration and, more immediately, within the structure that attracts that admiration. In all these ways, the masque yokes the court's theatrical experience of empire into their local sense of containment and unity within the

¹⁷⁸ National union and harmony within the ethnically hybridized court were not unrelated. As Cuddy observes, James saw union emanating both from his person—he was a Scots born king of England, after all—and from his own household. Accordingly, he took pains to carefully insert his Scots entourage into the existing framework of the Elizabethan establishment and carefully balanced Scots and English appointments in every chamber of his household, except for the intimate Bedchamber. Ultimately, Cuddy argues, James calcified the Bedchamber as an exclusively Scots entity in retribution for Parliament's refusal to ratify union. See Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union," 107-112.

¹⁷⁹ An officer in James's Office of the Works, Andrew Kerwyn, reported that the first Banqueting House's ceiling was painted "with Clowdes and other devices" (quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 89).

¹⁸⁰ For instance, see Ben Jonson's *The Golden Age Restored*, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, 224-32. In that masque Pallas Athena makes hall and court a blazing object of outside attention: "Behold you here," she sings, "What Jove hath built to be your sphere" (187-88). In this place, she declares, you must "Be ready still without your pause / To show the world your fire" (191-92).

Banqueting House. Or, inversely, it uses their sense of containment and unity to involve them in a corporate experience of empire.

Oceanus's and Aethiopia's demonstrative references to the hall are especially important in this regard because they foster community and shared affect. Demonstrative pronouns, such as "this" and "these," point to things. And if speakers and listeners share their referents, then such demonstratives construct community. They imply or require that speakers and audiences see, understand, or otherwise share the referent in question. Of course, if a demonstrative pronoun evokes only some simple physical or temporal relationship—"Hand me that pen," "You can take this seat"—then such community is relatively ephemeral and meaningless. But as Robin Lakoff shows, a demonstrative's community-building power can be compounded if it is emotional. For Lakoff "emotional deixis" is an affective and rhetorical process whereby people communicate feeling through demonstrative pronouns, thus uttering what Mark Lieberman calls "affective demonstratives."¹⁸¹ For instance, if I were to turn to a friend and say, "This is it!" as the lights go down before a long-awaited movie premier, I would point to a moment in time and also evoke a sense of excitement and satisfaction. Lakoff and Lieberman argue that disclosing emotion can, in itself, build camaraderie between speakers and listeners, which means in turn that affective demonstratives build community in both a literal way and an emotional way. They imply a shared referent and invite listeners into a speaker's emotional experience of that referent. Or they presume that such literal and emotional sharing is already taking place and thus build upon it.

¹⁸¹ Robin Lakoff, "Remarks on 'this' and 'that,'" *Proceedings of the Chicago Linguistics Society* 10 (1974): 345-56. Mark Lieberman, "Affective demonstratives," *Language Log* (Institute for Research in Cognitive Science at the University of Pennsylvania, 2008), <http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=674>, accessed May 27, 2015, and "Sarah Palin's distal demonstratives," *Language Log* (Institute for Research in Cognitive Science at the University of Pennsylvania, 2010), <http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=2240>, accessed May 27, 2015.

Of course, this dynamic can operate in reverse. If a demonstrative points to something that speakers and listeners do not share, then it can be alienating: it implies to listeners that their experience is disconnected from that of the speaker. For instance, Lieberman's recent research on emotional deixis focuses on former vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, because she frequently uses affective pronouns to refer to things that cannot be physically or visually present to her and her audiences. For instance, in the 2008 Vice Presidential debate, she remarked of American involvement in the Middle East, "We should be helping them build schools to compete for those hearts and minds of the people in the region."¹⁸² Here, Palin's phrase, "those hearts and minds," is laden with ideological and affective significance. It bespeaks a commitment to American power and pseudo-colonial endeavors abroad as well as a sense of paternalistic care for the "hearts and minds" in question. Lieberman shows that such remarks are intensely galvanizing. For people who support Palin, they seem dip into a shared well of experience, and they build communal identification and good-will between Palin and her audiences. In contrast, however, people who dislike Palin find those same demonstratives alienating. They imply a shared sense of unity that does not in fact exist and they thus foster distrust and resentment.

Importantly, then, the affective demonstratives in *Blackness* all point to referents that the whole court shares: the hall and its constituent spaces. Oceanus, Niger, and Aethiopia deploy their demonstratives to communicate curiosity, wonder, or pride about those spaces, and to identify them as microcosmic elements of British empire. Thus, their emotional deixis conflates intangible ideological constructs with a concrete realm of royal intimacy and courtly inclusion. Strategically, too, that process remains geo-

¹⁸² Palin, quoted in Lieberman, "Sarah Palin's distal demonstratives."

politically non-specific through most of the masque. For the most part, that is, Oceanus points only to generic markers of spatial and national coherence, such as “these calm and blessed shores.” Or, when he identifies the hall as an “empire,” he does not attach to it the controversial Jacobean notion of Scots-English union. For these reasons, Oceanus’s emotional pointing is both appealingly adulatory and ideologically unchallenging. It yokes the court’s local sense of courtly inclusion and royal intimacy to a vague notion of sea-girt national grandeur, one that speaks especially to England’s perennial obsession with itself as an island nation. Thus, it builds a shared well of group- and space-specific experience in which all courtiers have a similar social stake. Aethiopia taps into that well, then, when she finally delivers the masque’s most controversial and ideologically laden moniker for the hall, “Britannia.”

Throughout the masque, the court’s experience of local and imperial coherence in the Banqueting House is not just theatrical, rhetorical, or spatial but intensely physical as well. In modern theoretical terms, the masque refers to Britannia and the Banqueting House in ways that invoke a universal metaphor for individual and group identity: location or containment in bounded space. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, such metaphors derive conceptual power from human experiences of corporeal boundedness within the skin.¹⁸³ Humans master this experience in a pre-linguistic way, which makes it an embodied reference point for the way we conceive of and talk about more complex phenomena, such as social identity.¹⁸⁴ For example, then, when Aethiopia

¹⁸³ Here, I draw on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s theory of embodied realism and primary metaphor in *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

¹⁸⁴ For Lakoff and Johnson, human boundedness in the skin is, in fact, central to two types of primary metaphor: the “Location Event-Structure Metaphor” and the “Physical-Object Self” metaphor. Each of these kinds of metaphor makes physical location in bounded space key to conceiving of the self and changes to the self. They discuss each at length in their chapter on “The Cognitive Science of Basic Philosophical Ideas,” in *Philosophy in the Flesh*. See especially their sections on “Events and Causes” and “The Self.”

constructs Britain as a sea-girt empire, she taps into spatial boundedness as an embodied mechanism for conceiving of the self and the group. Oceanus makes this dynamic explicit when he points to “This squarèd circle of celestial bodies.” Here, he conflates the “squarèd” structure of the hall with the metaphorical “circle” of splendidly dressed bodies that sit in its seating degrees. He assigns the Banqueting House a form of structural integrity that is contingent on its inhabitants’ physical bodies and their proximity to one another. Or, inversely, he encourages courtiers to sense their own corporeal integrity and closeness conflated with the hall’s architectural confines.

I have expressed them in modern theoretical terms, but such ideas about the relations between bodies and architectural space were fundamental to Jonson and Jones’s masque collaborations. They were part of Palladianism, a neo-classical architectural school to which both men subscribed.¹⁸⁵ Following the ancient Roman architect, Vitruvius, Palladio and his early modern contemporaries prized symmetry, proportionality, and hierarchy, and they saw such qualities existing in the human body, classical architecture, and the cosmos. For them, these three things linked to one another in micro- and macrocosmic metonymic correspondence.¹⁸⁶ To inhabit a Palladian structure, then, was theoretically to experience the ordered structure of one’s own body and the cosmos itself. In the Elizabethan Banqueting House, of course, Jonson and Jones did not yet have a Palladian structure in which to fully realize or express such ideas, but Oceanus includes them in his metaphors for the hall nonetheless. When he points to “This squarèd circle of celestial bodies,” he not only links the court’s “bodies” with the “celestial” cosmos, but also invokes the Vitruvian Man, a salient visual metaphor for

¹⁸⁵ A. W. Johnson, *Ben Jonson: Poetry and Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), and Orgel and Strong, “Introduction,” in *Inigo Jones*.

¹⁸⁶ Johnson, *Ben Jonson: Poetry and Architecture*, 19-21.

Vitruvius's and Palladio's principles.¹⁸⁷ It shows a man stretching his limbs at two different angles to meet the outlines of a square and a circle, and it expresses the Palladian idea that the human body showcases the basic proportions from which architectural and cosmic order derive. Oceanus, then, invites the court to hear itself as a corporate Vitruvian Man, one that embodies both the ordered cosmos and, more locally, a unified "Britannia."

When Aethiopia finally names the Banqueting House "Britannia," she turns that space and the court into a retrospective source of narrative linearity and teleological coherence. Suddenly, the masquers' wandering—from Mauretania to Lusitania to Aquitania—does not look like a series of romantic errors, but like a linear, goal-driven quest toward the Banqueting House. Similarly, Aethiopia also casts British history into epic coherence by suggesting that James has not imposed empire on his subjects, but rather restored England and Scotland to their "ancient dignity and style." In this way, she turns the masque's resolution into something that resembles the restorative and rapturous energies that conclude Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Ovid bookends his mythological romance with points of epic correspondence. Famously, he starts with creation and then recounts humanity's decline from the idyllic and pious Golden Age into the corrupt and violent Iron Age.¹⁸⁸ He ends with the ascension of Augustus Caesar, which brings into the world something like humanity's initial age of peace and piety—though Ovid does not connect them explicitly.¹⁸⁹ Ovid's poetic affirmation of Augustan empire, then, imposes teleological order on the dilated and disordered stuff of romance that intervenes between

¹⁸⁷ Da Vinci illustrated the most famous visual depiction of the Vitruvian Man, but the principles underlying the image come from Vitruvius (Johnson, *Poetry and Architecture*, 21).

¹⁸⁸ Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, ed. Robert Squillace (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005), 1-7. Miller's translation is prose, so all citations include page numbers.

¹⁸⁹ Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, 308-11.

it and creation. So too it is in *The Masque of Blackness*, which invites James's court to hear the masquers' errant wanderings and their own long history of Scots-English division recast as a dilated and anomalous period of disunity brought to a close by James.

When the ladies finally descend to dance, they affirm the court's imperial experience in space by breaching it.¹⁹⁰ Suddenly, that group must watch its integral realm incorporate outsiders through the proscenium. This moment throws the court's cohesion into relief even as that cohesion expands to take in new members. It is telling, then, that whiteness proves to be an insufficient principle for the masquers' inclusion. The pure white "Albion" must give way to "Britannia," which can absorb the ladies and, through James's "sciental" powers, blanch them white. As Britannia, the court must experience itself, at least momentarily, as a racial and ethnic hybrid, an entity made coherent by its ability to incorporate, rather than repel others. And in this way, the masque fuses the stuff of epic and empire with the more mundane energies of hospitality. By welcoming the ladies into the Banqueting House, the masque once again asserts the court's integrity by suggesting that it needs hospitality as a mechanism for negotiating the incorporation of outsiders. More powerfully, however, it also performs the court's status as a microcosm of "Britannia," where the ladies have come to find the "sciental" sun-king of Aethiopia's riddle.

LET EARTH LONGER ENTERTAIN YOU

Even as they affirm the masque's imperial energies, however, Anna and her ladies radically expand the court's options for experiencing the masque event. Their presence

¹⁹⁰ As Anne Daye also suggests, the masquers would have descended accompanied by their torchbearers, which would quite literally have enhanced the "radiance" of light around James in state, visually enlivening his fictive status as a sun king ("Torchbearers in the English Masque," 250).

makes ephemerality and dalliance the evening's defining features. Before they descended, the masque used their suspended and dazzling approach as a fictive context against which to construct the court's imperial integrity and transcendence within the Banqueting House, around James. In that way, the masque showcased the hall itself as a source of stasis and permanence, and it encouraged onlookers to conceive of that space as a frame or touchstone for their own supposed coherence. But now that the masquers are inside that space, the hall functions more as a protected realm of fleeting material beauty and physical play. Just as its fictive shoreline status makes it liminal in imagined geographical space, so too do the masquers, their costumes, and their dancing make the hall liminal in mundane, forward-moving time. Thus, the masque showcases Anna and her masquers as organizing principles, not just for the stuff of romance, but also for the stuff of courtly *communitas*: ephemeral and communal play in a liminal and protected locale.

First, when Aethiopia sends the masquers out to dance she drops the event's language of imperial geographic coherence and epic grandeur. In its place, she inserts the language of spatial liminality and romantic dalliance. Specifically, she tells Niger to "Call forth thy daughters," and "Invite them boldly to the shore" (236, 240). This geographical identifier for the dance floor, "the shore," is significant because of where and how it appears in Aethiopia's long panegyric to James and the court. Throughout her speech, Aethiopia refers to the hall repeatedly as "Britannia" and describes it in the language of imperial integrity outlined above. However, as she tells Niger to call his daughters to dance, she points to the hall simply as "the shore." Of course, Oceanus made a similar rhetorical maneuver earlier in the masque, but in the very same breath pointed to the hall's "unequaled skies," its "squarèd circle of celestial bodies," and its ocean-encircled coherence at the heart of his own "empire." Thus, at the same time that he identified the

hall as a shoreline, he also identified it as a comprehensive microcosm of “Albion.” In contrast, at the very moment when the nymphs are descending and affirming the Banqueting House as a miniature of Britannia, Aethiopia insists that onlookers hear their space identified as a liminal shoreline.

Similarly, Aethiopia identifies the hall’s “shore” as an arena for dancing and dalliance, rather than imperial affirmations of royal power. Still speaking to Niger, she says, “let [your daughters], ’fore the Britain men / Indent the land with those pure traces / They flow with in their native graces” (237-39). Here, Aethiopia does not order the nymphs to perform homage, submission, or obeisance to James or the court. Nor does she simply order them to dance. Instead, and more specifically, she orders them to dance in a way that represents, not their internalized desire for British whiteness, but “their native graces.” These are very different directives than, say, the ones we will see *Oberon* level at its initial masque dancers.¹⁹¹ Before they descend, Prince Oberon’s fairy musicians instruct a group of young pages to,

let your nimble feet
Tread subtle circles that may always meet
In point to [James], and figures to express
The grace of him and his great empress;
That all that shall tonight behold the rites
Performed by princely Oberon and these knights,
May without stop point out the proper heir
Designed so long to Arthur’s crowns and chair. (291-98)

In this formulation, masque dancing does not just “express” royal power, but also trains everyone participating and watching to recognize and react to that power. In contrast, Aethiopia urges a kind of dance that is less overtly political than the one *Oberon* demands from its dancers, one that smacks of erotic dalliance and also holds out the

¹⁹¹ Ben Jonson, *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*, in *Inigo Jones*, 204-228. Hereafter cited in text by line number.

possibility that the performers might retain some of their faux, non-British difference.¹⁹² Thus, the masquers' dancing does not sound like the grand stuff of imperial epic, but like a continuation of the masque's romance. Anna and her ladies will retain their fictive marks of exotic difference and their simultaneous insider-outsider status. And they will engage the men of the court in communal dalliance.

Of course, as *Aethiopia* indicates, the ladies' descent will perform James's authority by giving him objects on which to work his supposedly "sciential" powers, but those two actions do not coincide. As *Aethiopia* implies, the ladies will at first "indent" the hall's "shore" with signs of their "native" Ethiopian "graces" before James will, in turn, blanch them white. For Orgel, of course, the masquers' descent is supposed to be the moment when the event fully incorporates the court into the life of its dramatic fiction. Accordingly, he claims, it ought to coincide with the resolution and show of royal power that *Aethiopia* promises. At stake for Orgel is the masque's power as an assertion of absolutism, its capacity to involve the court in an affirmation of Jacobean authority.¹⁹³ Such coherence is Orgel's test for the masque's formal success, but Jonson, Jones, and Anna had a different standard in mind. They could have chosen costumes to make the nymphs' transformation possible right there on stage or on the dance floor. For instance, Anna and her ladies could have worn black face masques and long gloves over their arms to simulate black skin.¹⁹⁴ Or they could've worn long cloaks, as the gentlemen masquers

¹⁹² In comparison, then, these two different directives point up two ways that critics have tended to read dancing in the masque: either as an oppressive and constraining act of royalist obeisance, or as a fun, liberating opportunity for *jouissance*. For an overview of this debate and an excellent intervention, see Ravelhofer's chapter on "Discipline, or Pleasure," in *Early Stuart Masque*.

¹⁹³ Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, 127-28.

¹⁹⁴ Barbour argues that there was a well-established tradition for representing blackness on the courtly stage, which involved black cloth coverings for the head and arms as a way to simulate black skin. Such cloth could have been easily and quickly removed to effect the transformation *Aethiopia* promises. For evidence and precedence, he sites the 1510 masque in which Henry VIII, the earl of Essex, and a group of ladies danced as Moors ("Britain and the Great Beyond," 141).

did in *The Irish Masque at Court*.¹⁹⁵ In order to effect a sudden transformation of appearance, those gentlemen simply discarded their cloaks to reveal masque costumes underneath. Had Anna and the masque creators wanted to achieve a similar effect in *Blackness*, they could have done so easily. That they chose not to suggests that they were interested in maintaining romance and liminality as the event's key features.

Accordingly, Anna and her ladies enact the hall's status as a romantic and liminal arena for dalliance. In this regard, the ladies' torchbearers are particularly important. As Anne Daye observes, torchbearers on the masque stage had real-life corollaries: servants accompanying employers on outdoor, nighttime journeys.¹⁹⁶ In *Blackness*, these figures appear as splendidly dressed sea-nymphs. Jonson writes of their appearance, "*For the light-bearers, sea-green, waved about the skirts with gold and silver; their hair loose and flowing, garlanded with sea-grass, and that stuck with branches of coral*" (68-70). Based on Jones's designs, too, Orgel and Strong speculate that their faces were painted blue.¹⁹⁷ Accordingly, when they accompany the masquers to the dance floor, they perform those ladies' outsider status and present themselves as romantic figures of difference. In a more practical sense, too, their torches help show off the masquers' sartorial ambivalence. As the ladies dance their initial ballet in torchlight, they make another striking visual claim to inclusion within the hall.¹⁹⁸ But at the same time, the torchlight also continues to show off their faux black bodies, which have just come closer to onlookers than before. Here, more than ever, the masquers are dazzlingly in-between figures, neither fully outside nor

¹⁹⁵ Ben Jonson, *The Irish Masque at Court*, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, lines 167-68.

¹⁹⁶ Daye, "Torchbearers in the English Masque," 247.

¹⁹⁷ Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, 99.

¹⁹⁸ As Ravelhofer observes, masque costumes were designed for precisely this effect, to be particularly dazzling and captivating while moving under torch- and candlelight (*Early Stuart Masque*, 157-84).

inside the courtly group. And their presence on the dance floor energizes its very real status as a protected site for communal play.

The torchbearers also infuse into the hall a palpable sense of temporal and material ephemerality, which is to say liminality in time rather than space. As fictional servants accompanying the ladies on their travels, they telegraph the fact that the ladies will eventually have to retreat into the scene and leave the hall. By their very presence, they showcase the masquers as impermanent figures and remind onlookers that their dancing is necessarily a fleeting activity.¹⁹⁹ In this context of temporal ephemerality, it is doubly significant that the torchbearers should enable onlookers to dwell on the masquers' splendid costumes. In addition to making hybridized claims to the ladies' insider and outsider status, those costumes are meaningful because their appearance is a one-time phenomenon. By convention, Anna and her ladies may have repurposed their gowns, cannibalized them for material, tailored them for everyday wear, kept them as memorial keepsakes, or used them as costumes for portraits.²⁰⁰ But according to historical evidence, the masque itself was to be the only time the costumes would be deployed in their original form.²⁰¹ Accordingly, when the torchbearers help the masquers show off

¹⁹⁹ The same claim might be made of any masque that employed torchbearers, which means that this particular dynamic between light, bodily presence, and time would have been unique to the early Jacobean masques. Later masques did not use torchbearers as lighting techniques advanced (Daye, "Torchbearers in the English Masque").

²⁰⁰ On the uses for masque costumes after a particular performance, see Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 156, and Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 49.

²⁰¹ Ravelhofer implies that a masque costume's ephemerality—specifically, its ephemerality as a stand-alone and publically displayed garment—was essential to its power as a vestige of courtly memory and an agent of court community: "Instead of being released into the public, better costumes were retained within courtly circles as if to avoid a contamination with the professional stage. Fabrics in their various manifestations in print, painting, and performance provided a long-lasting souvenir of a unique event. Garments embodied memories. Selective recycling in closed circuits kept those memories exclusive" (*Early Stuart Masque*, 156).

their splendid costumes, they also invite spectators into a visual experience of the event's material and temporal impermanence.

In the midst of the revels, Jonson and Jones build these romantic strains of courtly *communitas* into the masque's dramatic narrative by reactivating the outsider-insider tension that was so fruitful earlier in the event. After their initial ballet, the ladies are supposed to take out gentlemen for the first round of the revels. Just as the ladies are about to select their partners, however, a sudden song from the stage interrupts them:

Come away, come away,
We grow jealous of your stay;
If you do not stop your ear,
We shall have more cause to fear
Sirens of the land, than they
To doubt the sirens of the sea. (277-82)

This song reverses the hospitable energies that have suffused the masque up until this point, and it asserts the court's coherence in a negative fashion, by trying to draw figures away from it. Such maneuvers are common throughout the form, but this example is somewhat unique because it interrupts the masquers as they enact the event's most important incorporative social gesture. When the ladies go on to select their partners, then, their movements are conventionalized, but the "*charm*" from the stage frames those movements as volitional and thereby implies something meaningful about the Banqueting House and its inhabitants (244). As the nymphs seem to move in defiance of the "*charm*," they show an active preference for the hall and for its "Sirens." Thus, the masque signals to the court that it is a source of romantic delay, an anti-telos. In this moment, the Banqueting House comes fully alive in its status as an arena for ephemeral play: it is Calypso's island to the masquers' Ithaca, a removed space of pleasure and dalliance cordoned off from the workaday world of mundane time.

For Carleton, the masquers' skin paint seems to have marred any salubrious fellow-feeling that this incorporative gesture may have generated. To Winwood, he writes that at some point in the revels, Juan de Tassis, the Spanish ambassador "took out the queen for a dance."²⁰² As Carleton saw it, the ambassador pointedly "forgot not to kiss her Hand, though there was Danger it would have left a Mark on his Lips."²⁰³ Here, Carleton implies that de Tassis took a risk by kissing Anna's hand because her black skin paint might have stained his lips. By extension, then, he implies that the masque's very first taking-out involved the masquers' male partners in the same risk, which surely would have been uncomfortable for a group of well-dressed courtiers about to perform in front of a crowd. If Carleton's assessment were true, then the racist discomfort that some modern day critics read into the masque would have come to a head in a very practical way and at precisely the moment when the event ought to have enacted its most salubrious gesture of incorporation and collectivity.²⁰⁴ As a result the revels would have manifested as an awkward and uncomfortable social process full of unwelcome contact and smearing black paint.

Ultimately, however, the masque's revels were likely a font of shared experience and communal bonding. In the end, de Tassis did not smear his lips with paint. Nor, it seems, did anyone else run into that problem. If the risk had been a real one, then there could not have been a single dancer who avoided it, as the court's social dances involved plenty of physical touch. And if this had happened, Carleton would certainly have crowed about it to Winwood, as it would have further validated his chagrin. But he did not, which

²⁰² Carleton, quoted in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, 448.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 448.

²⁰⁴ For instance, Asand argues that Carleton's fears about the masquers' body paint bespeak more profound fears about miscegenation and the court's reputation abroad ("To Blanch an Ethiop and Revive a Corse," 275-76).

indicates that the risk he describes was not real. Similarly, Carleton gives the lie to his own comments when he describes de Tassis's dancing. He not only says that the old ambassador willingly sought Anna's hand for a revels dance, but also observes that de Tassis "footed it like a lusty old Gallant with his Country Woman."²⁰⁵ Carleton's comments are irreverent and patronizing, but they suggest nevertheless that the two dancers had fun and showed off on the dance floor. More importantly, his comments about de Tassis do not seem to describe a man trying to be fastidious with his own person or careful to avoid contact with his masquing partner. Instead, they suggest a revels dance of considerable verve and physicality. And as Ravelhofer shows, such dancing involved its participants in "muscular bonding" and offered onlookers opportunities to feel embodied sympathy with the dancing group, two physical mechanisms for *communitas*.²⁰⁶

After the long revels dances, the masque musicians reprise their earlier message by calling once more to the masquers. Jonson writes, the ladies "*were again accited to sea with a song of two trebles, whose cadences were iterated by a double echo from several parts of the land*" (284-85). In content, this song is similar to the one that preceded it. It reiterates the masquers' fictive identities and constructs the dance floor as an alluring space of romantic dalliance. More importantly, however, it offers the court a rich aural experience of tension between the scene and hall, tension that energizes the latter space's status as a playful and protected arena of ephemeral *communitas*. Jonson indicates that the song comes from two distinct locations: from two trebles at "sea," i.e. on the stage, and from two other echoes from "several parts of the land," i.e. somewhere on the dance floor. As they sing, then, the musicians bounce vocally back and forth

²⁰⁵ Carleton, quoted in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, 448.

²⁰⁶ Again, Ravelhofer refers to such embodied sympathy as "prosthetic self-enlargement" (*Early Stuart Masque*, 70-71).

between the two main spaces in the Banqueting House, and in doing so they aurally augment the distinction that lends the court its own fictive coherence in the seating degrees and on the dance floor, outside of the stage and its proscenium threshold.

Textually, too, the song energizes the court's romantic liminality in space and time. As they bounce back and forth, the singers "at sea" work at cross-purposes with the singers on "the land." The denizens of the sea, who sing the song's main verses, want the masquers to retreat back into the scene, while the singers on the dance floor sing echoes that subtly encourage the ladies to stay. For instance, the first two verses go,

Daughters of the subtle flood,
Do not let earth longer entertain you
1st Echo Let earth longer entertain you.
2nd Echo Longer entertain you.
 'Tis to them enough of good
 That you give this little hope to gain you.
1st Echo Give this little hope to gain you.
2nd Echo Little hope to gain you. (288-95)

Thus, at the end of its incorporative revels, when courtiers and masquers have been dancing together for hours, the masque offers up its most articulate and elegant expression of their ephemeral and romantic relationship, both with one another, with the masque event, and with the Banqueting House. The song's main verses verbalize the event's fleeting nature and the inevitable fact of the masquers' retreat. As the court knows, the dance floor cannot "entertain" the masquers indefinitely. But the echoes express value for the current moment and the group that inhabits it by subtly encouraging the ladies to remain in a place of romantic delay and shared community.

REMAIN BRITANNIA'S GUESTS

Ultimately, some critics might observe that the masquers' faux blackness continues as a corollary to the masque's imperial Jacobean projects. This is certainly true, but a spectacular transformation turning the ladies white would, in the end, have been an even stronger display of James's power. And instead of effecting such a transformation, Jonson opted to delay it for the following revels season, when Anna and her ladies were supposed to reprise their roles in a sequel, Jonson's own *Masque of Beauty*. The next two revels seasons required wedding masques, however, and *Beauty* had to be delayed until 1608.²⁰⁷ Regardless, Jonson planned for it as he was creating *Blackness*. At the end of the masque, Aethiopia explains how the ladies will blanch themselves white. She says, "yourselves, with feasts, / Must here remain the Ocean's guests," and then instructs the nymphs to undergo a year-long bathing regimen that will turn their skin white (314-15). Afterward, Aethiopia concludes, the nymphs will return to the Banqueting House and dance once more before the court. She declares,

So that, this night, the year gone round,
You do again salute this ground,
And in the beams of 'yond bright sun
Your faces dry, and all is done. (331-34)

Thus, the miraculous skin-blanching that Aethiopia promised earlier gets dilated into a year-long process that the ladies will undergo as the "guests" of Britannia. And in this way, Jonson embeds his and Anna's plans for *The Masque of Beauty* into *Blackness*'s text and action.

This fact offers an important corrective against those critics who see subversion or scandal in Anna's performance. Such critics often regard *The Masque of Beauty* not as a

²⁰⁷ Jonson, who originally intended *Blackness* and *Beauty* to occur in consecutive revels seasons, printed the two masques together in his *Works*. See Orgel and Strong's gloss on these issues in *The Masque of Beauty*, in *Inigo Jones*, 93.

planned sequel but as a belated act of recuperation in which Jonson and Anna make up for their supposed missteps in *Blackness* by offering the narrative coherence that the earlier masque withholds, and by assuming a much more decorous form of queenly self-presentation—there is no blackface in that masque, and the masquers appear in more conventional costumes.²⁰⁸ This view, though, is wholly untenable given the plans for *Beauty* that Jonson embeds into *Blackness*. It also obscures the extent to which *Blackness* and *Beauty* showcase Jonson and Anna as savvy artistic producers and emergent principles of masquing culture within the new Stuart court. By withholding resolution until the following revels season, Jonson and Anna respectively make a case for their continued centrality within the court’s festive culture. This maneuver was riskier for Jonson than it was for Anna. As queen consort, Anna could continue dancing in masques regardless of *Blackness*’s success, and she could do so with or without a sequel to *Blackness*. But Jonson’s status as a masque creator was not yet assured. Accordingly, he makes a concerted gamble at the end of his first masque by subtly announcing himself—and perhaps Jones along with him—as a masque creator for the following year’s festivities.

Jonson and Anna had different kinds of stake in this self-advertising process, but it reveals nonetheless that they were sensitive to romance and courtly *communitas* as key forms of experience within the masque event. It also suggests that they comprehended those experiences as a special province for Anna herself, rather than for James. Here, many critics might contest that the masque is less about constructing Anna as a principle for group experience and more about asserting kingly or queenly power. In this regard, if

²⁰⁸ For instance, Andrea calls *The Masque of Beauty* a “retrospective companion piece” (“Black Skin, the Queen’s Masques,” 255). More powerfully, McManus argues that *Beauty* had to make “restitution” for *Blackness*, for its “formal flaws,” and for the “unsettling” nature of “Anna’s presence and the demands she placed upon the masque’s content” (*Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 13).

Blackness and *Beauty* are not celebrations of Jacobean imperialism, then they enable Anna to center herself within the court community by first subverting the masque form and displaying herself as a kind of self-made antimasque.²⁰⁹ As a source of retrospective contrast, this argument suggests, *Blackness* points up Anna's claims to inclusion in *Beauty*, during which she appeared as a white woman at the center of a much more decorous and conventional masque performance. Anna's performances in *Blackness* and *Beauty* do indeed contrast one another, but not in the extreme ways that this argument requires. And as much as they showcase Anna cultivating contrast as a means of self-display, they also show her working to sustain herself and her ladies as the nexus of a particular kind of courtly experience.

Against and within its participatory assertions of Jacobean structure and empire, we have seen, *Blackness* organizes around Anna a host of exotic Ethiopian nymphs, dazzling costumes and visual ephemera, a wandering narrative of maritime travel, a beautiful and illusory seascape and shoreline, and, finally, hours and hours of social dancing. Such is the stuff of romance, of courtly *communitas*, and of the masque itself. The masque, after all, is an ephemeral opportunity for dalliance that takes place within the more permanent structure of court hierarchy and royal power, all things that, in turn, inhere in the Banqueting House, its stratified seating degrees, and the palace of Whitehall. At the very end of the masque, then, as the ladies are dancing their retreat into the scene, the masque offers one final assertion of Jacobean structure while previewing the Anna-centered romance that will bring the masquers back the following year:

Back seas, back nymphs, but with a forward grace
Keep, still, your reverence to the place;
And shout with joy the favour you have won

²⁰⁹ For versions of this argument, see Andrea, "Black Skin, the Queen's Masques," 255, and Hall, "Sexual Political and Cultural Identity," 10-11.

In sight of Albion, Neptune's son. (346-49)

On one hand, this song expresses the realities of masque funding and royal power. James quite literally maintained “the place” of the Banqueting House by paying for it, and his presence there made that space a realm of courtly “reverence.” Similarly, because James funded the masque it was a very real act of “favour” between James, Anna, and the rest of the court. But as the “nymphs” leave the scene, they retain their marks of exotic difference and thus continue to hold out the promise of delayed resolution and return. As it concludes with a celebration of Jacobean power, then, the masque also opts to further dilate Anna's exotic romance across the coming year into the following revels season.

Chapter 3

Pretty Toys and Shining Rites: Royalist Community in *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*

THE NEW PRINCE

At the beginning of Jonson and Jones's *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, a group of rustic satyrs and fauns appear on stage accompanied by their leader, the aged Silenus. Their scene is a wild outcropping of rock overtopped by a night sky and faux moon, and the satyrs are eager to find something fun to do. However, Silenus reminds them that the night is a time for solemnity and gravity, rather than play, and he tells them to anticipate Prince Oberon and his annual "rites" (42).²¹⁰ "Oberon" is a romantic pseudonym for Prince Henry, who will soon emerge with a retinue of gentlemen dancers. The satyrs decide to leave their current master, Bacchus, and serve Oberon instead, and then speculate on all the rewards they will receive from him. As though in response to their eagerness, the rocky scene opens to reveal a splendid palace, through which Prince Henry and his fellow masquers are visible. Once in view of the palace, the satyrs become impatient for Oberon's arrival and playfully threaten violence against the guards they find sleeping outside. After they wake, the guards join Silenus in chiding the satyrs for their impertinence and assure them that the palace will open only at the pre-appointed moment. To pass the time before Oberon's appearance, the satyrs fall into a rollicking antimasque performance. Eventually, the palace opens to reveal Henry, his retinue, and a host of fairy musicians. Along with the palace guards and Silenus, these musicians inaugurate the

²¹⁰ Ben Jonson, *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), hereafter cited in text by line number.

masque dances by performing a round of panegyrics to Henry and James. Henry and his masquers perform two solo ballets and then, at the musicians urging, take ladies out for the social revels. The revels proceed apace, interrupted periodically by songs that urge Oberon and his retinue to retreat back into their palace. Eventually, the masquers oblige, genuflect to James and Anna in the state, and return to the scene.

Oberon went up in January, 1611, when Henry was roughly one month shy of 17.²¹¹ The masque was the latest in a year-long string of court festivities celebrating his investiture as Prince of Wales, which had taken place roughly seven months prior, in May, 1610.²¹² Historically, the investiture was a landmark moment for the British court, as England had not officially invested a Prince of Wales in over 100 years. The last had been Henry Tudor (the future Henry VIII), who went through the process in 1504, when he was 13.²¹³ In a more immediate and practical sense, too, the investiture was important because it established Henry as a new source of courtly social organization and patronage. By 1611, James's and Anna's respective households had long since taken shape around their respective monarchs.²¹⁴ They continued to take on new clients and

²¹¹ Henry's birthday was the following month, on February 19.

²¹² See David M. Bergeron, "Creating Entertainments for Prince Henry's Creation," *Comparative Drama* 42 (2008): 433-49. As Bergeron reports, London and the court celebrated the investiture both publically and privately. On May 1, there was a public water pageant that bore Henry from Richmond to Whitehall. That same day, London presented Henry with Anthony Munday's *London's Love to the Royal Prince Henry*. On May 3, James created a host of new Knights of the Bath as a chivalric corollary to Henry's own creation. The next day, Henry went through the actual investiture ceremony in the presence of Parliament, London's assembled aristocracy, and the royal family. The following month, on June 5, Anna and a group of ladies celebrated Henry in Samuel Daniel and Inigo Jones's *Tethys' Festival*. And finally, the court enjoyed a tilt on the afternoon of June 6 followed by fireworks and a mock sea battle on the Thames (435-36).

²¹³ Bergeron, "Creating Entertainments," 433.

²¹⁴ On James's household, see Keith M. Brown, "The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38," *The Historical Journal* 36 (1993): 543-76, 543-557, Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-25," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 39 (1989): 107-24, 107-12, Neil Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage: the Bedchamber of James I, 1603-1635," in *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey (London: Longman, 1987), 173-76. On Anna's household, see Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 36-73.

servants, of course, but both were more or less settled in the scope of their favor.²¹⁵ Within his parents' courtly establishment, Henry had already cultivated some independence, but his investiture finally equipped him with the physical spaces, the financial resources, and the political clout that he needed in order to function as an autonomous power-broker and robust nexus of royal favor.²¹⁶ After being invested, he established his seats at the palaces of St. James and Richmond. He took on an array of courtly clients and servants, staffed his household, built an aristocratic retinue, and developed rules and regulations for both those groups. Thus, the new Prince of Wales expanded his parents' court and offered that entity a new center for group-formation.²¹⁷ At stake in *Oberon*, then, was how the court oriented itself around the new Prince of Wales and how the masque itself was to function as a vehicle for such experience.

As various critics have shown, the ceremonial festivities surrounding Henry's investiture celebrated the new prince while also trying to manage differences between him and his father.²¹⁸ Henry was not just a new center at court, after all, but a different kind of center as well. He diverged significantly from James in his attitudes toward social

²¹⁵ Neither the king nor the consort, that is, continued to function as radically new and expansive sources of patronage in the way they had in 1603. For instance, between 1603 and 1611, James continued to take gentlemen into his Privy Lodgings staff and to move gentlemen up through its ranks. However, much to the ongoing frustration of his English courtiers, James's innermost domestic space, the Bedchamber, continued to remain almost exclusively Scottish.

²¹⁶ On Henry's household, see Jean MacIntyre, "Prince Henry's Satyrs: Topicality in Jonson's *Oberon*," in *A Search for Meaning: Critical Essays on Early Modern Literature*, ed. Paula Harms Payne (New York: Peter Lange Publishing, 2004), 95-100, and Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 25-57.

²¹⁷ MacIntyre, "Prince Henry's Satyrs," 95.

²¹⁸ Richard Badenhausen, "Disarming the Invant Warrior: Prince Henry, King James, and the Chivalric Revival," *Papers on Language and Literature*, 31 (1995): 20-37, 23-30, Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 178-94, and J. R. Mulryne, "'Here's Unfortunate Revels': War and Chivalry in the Plays and Shows at the Time of Prince Henry Stuart," in *War, Literature, and the Arts in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, eds. J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shrewing (New York: St. Martin's, 1989), 170-81.

ethics, religion, and international politics.²¹⁹ Where James avidly pursued pleasurable pastimes and presided over a court famous for its indulgence, Henry built a household around his own reform-minded spirit, encouraged more rigid behavioral ethics than his father, and committed himself and his entourage to physically edifying and martial pastimes. Where James was a confirmed Anglican and heavily invested in international peace and local empire-building—his aim was still to create a unified Great Britain—Henry was a Protestant reformer, staunchly anti-Catholic, and militant in his political posturing. Accordingly, the court festivities of 1610 and 1611 generally showcased and negotiated these fault-lines. For instance, Ben Jonson’s *Prince Henry’s Barriers* for Twelfth Night, 1610, presented Henry as a virile and martial Arthurian hero while also deploying the aged figure of Merlin to lecture him on the importance of reason and pacifism, rather than military action.²²⁰ In production, too, *Oberon* itself was a staging ground for James and Henry’s alternative political postures. Henry seems to have wanted the event to be a knightly equestrian ballet, but James reportedly denied his request. Presumably, he wanted a standard court masque, where dancing, and not faux martial pursuits, would be Henry’s primary mechanism for self-display.²²¹

James’s and Henry’s different ideas about *Oberon* feature prominently in critical accounts of the masque, which tend to see it either as part of an antagonistic conflict between the two men or as an attempt to reconcile them and accommodate their

²¹⁹ On the differences between Henry, James, and their respective courts see Martin Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 173-204, and Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, esp. 71-96. Butler and Strong disagree on the level of tension and antagonism between father and son. As Butler summarizes, “Roy Strong argues that James’s and Henry’s courts were in open tension with one another, that St. James’s Palace was a gathering-ground for courtiers who set themselves against royal Whitehall” (176). And yet, Butler contends, “it is too simple to posit, as Strong does, a direct antagonism between the Jacobean and Henrician courts. They are better seen as two followings of affinities in ongoing dialogue” (177).

²²⁰ Ben Jonson, *Prince Henry’s Barriers*, in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*.

²²¹ Antonio Correr reported that Henry “would have liked to present this Masque on horseback could he have obtained the king’s consent” (Antonio Correr, quoted in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 518).

respective agendas.²²² For some critics, the masque is entirely about James's authority. Patricia Fumerton argues that Prince Oberon is a surrogate for James. By slowly revealing him within a palatial scene, Fumerton contends, the masque proclaims the king's integral privacy and coherent selfhood.²²³ For Richard Badenhausen and J. R. Mulryne, *Oberon* asserts James's authority and works to counteract Henry's militarism. They claim that the masque quite literally "disarmed" Henry by requiring him to perform as a dancer, rather than a warrior, and that it dressed up his martial prowess in the fanciful trappings of fairy romance.²²⁴ In contrast these readings, Tom Bishop, Martin Butler, Jean MacIntyre, Stephen Orgel, and Helen Wilcox generally take a more balanced approach to James's and Henry's agendas in *Oberon*, as I do with James, Anna, and *The Masque of Blackness* in Chapter 2. These critics show how *Oberon* manages to accommodate both James's and Henry's representational needs.²²⁵ For the most part, they

²²² For instance, Badenhausen argues that "James asserted himself" against Henry's chivalric militarism "in 1611, when he insisted that *Oberon*, Jonson's masque for Henry, conclude with dances instead of the prince's desired final combat, in effect disarming his son literally" ("Disarming the Infant Warrior," 25). Similarly, Mulryne speculates that "Henry wished for a chivalric martial *fete*, but that James would not consent, presumably for reasons connected not merely with taste, but with the" militant "image of Henry growing in the public mind" ("Here's Unfortunate Revels," 178). Stephen Orgel, too, speculates that "the martial side of the prince's nature apparently disturbed King James, who vetoed" his son's plans to stage *Oberon* as a chivalric fete, like *Prince Henry's Barriers* of the previous year (*The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* [Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975], 66-67). Ultimately, however, we cannot be sure why James resisted Henry's wishes for *Oberon*. After all, James's decision might be explained by financial and practical concerns about staging a show on horseback in the Banqueting House.

²²³ Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 143-55. Similarly, Jonathan Goldberg argues that the masque announces Jacobean power as a set of contradictions, allegorizing James's kingly persona in both the randy satyrs of the antimasque and in the superlative monarch praised during the pre-ballet panegyrics (*James I and the Politics of Literature* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983], 123-6).

²²⁴ Badenhausen, "Disarming the Infant Warrior," 25, and Mulryne, "Here's Unfortunate Revels," 178.

²²⁵ Amongst these critics, some are specifically concerned with the masque as a balancing act between king and prince. Specifically, see Tom Bishop, "The gingerbread host: tradition and novelty in the Jacobean masque," in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 104-12, Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 188-94, and Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power*, 66-70. For her part, Jean MacIntyre is less concerned with the way the masque balances between Henry and James, and simply shows how the masque uses the satyrs to allegorize Henry's majority and new princely household ("Prince Henry's Satyrs," 95-100). Finally, Wilcox observes that

claim, the masque asserts Jacobean authority, but also showcases Henry's maturation as a prince and celebrates his burgeoning power. As Butler succinctly puts it, the masque affirmed "Jacobean sovereignty" while also affirming "the place Henry would take within it." It "modeled" Henry's rise "as gradualism, rather than cataclysm."²²⁶

As with Butler, most critics see *Oberon* as allegorizing or trying to shape socio-political realities that existed outside of and independently from the masque, but Tom Bishop has also shown how the event tries to make Henry a new coordinate for masquing culture itself. For Bishop, that is, the masque does not merely celebrate Henry and James, but instantiates the new prince as an organizing principle for future masques, and as a font of charisma, a quality central to the genre's socio-political efficacy. Bishop argues that courtly charisma derived from physical attractiveness, performative prowess, and personal charm. In his central and canopied state, James displayed a rarified and institutionally guarded form of charisma granted by kingship itself, while other courtiers, such as Henry, had to pursue and showcase theirs on the masque stage and on the dance floor. For Bishop, charismatic performance was the primary mechanism through which courtiers and courtly sub-groups centered themselves or made claims to inclusion within the larger Jacobean establishment. And in all masques, Bishop contends, the "politics of charisma" played out in a dialectics of "tradition" and "novelty," terms that respectively name established and emergent court power structures and modes of social organization.²²⁷ As Bishop asserts, then, *Oberon* associates James's established royal

Oberon is an allegory of general court unity between James and Henry's Scots and English courtiers ("Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms," in *Airy Nothings: Imagining the Otherworld of Faerie from the Middle Ages to the Age of Reason: Essays in Honour of Alasdair A. MacDonald*, eds. Karin Olsen and Jan R. Veenstra [Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013]).

²²⁶ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 193.

²²⁷ Bishop, "The gingerbread host," 88.

charisma with tradition, history, and stasis while it displays Henry's as a burgeoning principle of change, newness, and the future.

For Bishop, charisma, tradition, and novelty are signifying strategies that individuals and small groups use for self-promotion, but when framed in the anthropological lens of my current study, they also align with broader mechanisms for organizing group experience and communal identity in the masque, namely court structure and court *communitas*. More than simply telegraphing Henry's new place within masquing culture and showing off his emergent claims to courtly centrality, *Oberon* also works to engineer group experience around Henry in real-time, and it capitalizes on its own generic realities in order to offer onlookers a sense of stake and involvement in that experience. Initially, Jonson uses the satyrs to formulate a particular brand of courtly social organization that I will term "royalist community." In royalist community, structure and *communitas* are entailments of favor and patronage, and they derive from singular royal figures, such as James and Henry. As it formulates this brand of experience, the masque signals to onlookers that they are currently engaged in it themselves, within the Banqueting House. The masque event thus becomes a dynamic reference point for how the court understands and reacts to *Oberon*'s dramatic action. That action showcases both Henry and James—and, to a lesser extent, Anna and Princess Elizabeth—as organizing principles for royalist community, but ultimately holds Henry and James out as polar fulcrums within such experience, attaching to Henry the dynamic stuff of masquing *communitas* and to James the static, historical stuff of court hierarchy and structure. As with *The Masque of Blackness*, then, the masque is not so much a symbolic enactment of princely and royal identity, but a real-time experience of it, one in which romantic and ceremonial theatrics dress up a dynamic process of communion

whereby courtiers engage in different sorts of social organization around their royal centers.

ROYALIST COMMUNITY

At first, the masque's opening moments seem to hold *communitas* and structure apart as two distinct sorts of experience. For its part, the romantic scene and the satyrs point up the masque's communal energies, and they encourage onlookers to appreciate the masque as an opportunity for ephemeral dalliance and group play. Simultaneously, though, the scene and the satyrs also act as foils for the court: they signal to that group that their own involvement in the masque is an affirmation of court structure. Once the satyrs learn to anticipate Oberon, however, their relationship with the masque event and with the court grows more complex. Rather than embodying *communitas* or serving as objects of contrast for court structure, they model a nascent and inchoate form of royalist community, which they focus on Oberon. And in this regard, they come to serve either as ritual proxies for the court's anticipation of Henry or as ritual objects of contrast for the royalist community that the court experiences around Jaames—and, to a lesser extent, Anna and Elizabeth. These dynamics play out quickly, in the masque's opening minutes, but they are foundational for the rest of the masque event. Specifically, they reify key components of the court's royalist community through scenic representation and dramatic action, thereby establishing the theatrical terms through which the masque will go on to engineer more complex forms of experience around Henry on one hand, and around James and the royal family on the other.

In one way, *Oberon's* opening scene romanticizes the Banqueting House and constructs it as a special realm of courtly *communitas*. When the proscenium curtain

drops, it reveals a three-dimensional Arcadian space: a wooded and rocky outcropping overtopped by a night sky where a faux moon crosses slowly through the upper stage.²²⁸ The scene is a *scena ductilis*. Jones painted the central part of the rock in perspective on retractable shutters. The shutters are nestled amongst scenery that suggests spatial depth: faux rocks to the bottom, left, and right, with entryways disguised as caves and a clearing in the middle. Masque scenes typically spring to life once revealed, but *Oberon* opens in stillness and quite. At first, Jonson writes, the scene appears “dark” and empty until the moon begins to rise “at one corner of the cliff” (2-4). In this way, the masque enacts what A. W. Johnson describes as “imaginative compression.”²²⁹ It involves onlookers in an event that would require physical movement in the real world. In particular, it recreates a stock trope of fairy romance: adventurers in fairyland emerging into some bowered outdoor space. In romance, such spaces often serve as sheltered locales for moments of spectacle, repose, or dalliance. For instance, Calidore stumbles into such a place in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*. Amidst a sheltered glen, he inadvertently interrupts Colin Clout’s masque-like vision of Gloriana and the Graces.²³⁰ Thus, the scene in *Oberon* may have struck its courtly audience as a pastoral extension of their own space, a protected arena conducive to *communitas*.

Similarly, the inhabitants of *Oberon*’s fairyland embody courtly *communitas*. The satyrs comprise an egalitarian collective, they operate in the ephemeral present without regard to history or the future, and they pursue desires that place them outside the bounds of social structure. For instance, when 1st Satyr appears on the scene, he calls aloud for his friends and points to the rising moon above the stage, which moves to simulate time

²²⁸ In addition to Jonson’s in-text scene descriptions, see Jones’s scene designs in *Inigo Jones* (210-11).

²²⁹ A. W. Johnson, *Ben Jonson: Poetry and Architecture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 60.

²³⁰ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (New York: Longman, 2007), VI.x.5-10.

passing: “Times be short, are made for play,” he exclaims, “The hum’rous moon will not stay” (13-14). When his friends show up, they come “*running from diverse parts of the rock, leaping and making antic action and gestures*” (29-31, Jonson’s italics). As Silenus watches on, the satyrs move energetically around the stage, speculating on how best to enjoy themselves and use the fleeting night. In a rich verbal corollary to their “*antic action and gestures*,” they speak in rollicking trochaic rhythm, completing one another’s pentameter lines, sustaining a regular scheme of rhyming couplets and quatrains. For instance, as the satyrs greet one another and wonder how to entertain themselves, they say,

2nd *Satyr* Thank us, and you shall do so
3rd *Satyr* Aye, our number soon will grow.
2nd *Satyr* See Silenus!
3rd *Satyr* Cercops too!
4th *Satyr* Yes. What is there now to do?
5th *Satyr* Are there any nymphs to woo?
4th *Satyr* If there be let me have two. (34-40)

Here, the satyrs not only sustain unified poetic energy, but also hit on a particularly salacious idea for group activity: wooing “two” nymphs, instead of one. In both content and form, then, the their entrance and subsequent conversation is a lively and pastoral expression of courtly *communitas*. And like the Banqueting House and the masque, their rocky space and nighttime present offer them a conspicuous frame for a fleeting moment of dalliance.

The satyrs invite ritualistic identification from the court by playfully romanticizing the masque’s key communal features. They look and act alike, with horns and shaggy goats’ legs, and they speak together as a poetic unit.²³¹ They urgently want to use their fleeting nighttime as an opportunity for fun and play. And in their collective

²³¹ See Jones’s costume design for the satyrs in *Inigo Jones*, 221.

immediacy, they imply a shared sense of value for their group, their location, and their place in time. As they cavort around the stage, then, they do not just represent court *communitas*, but perform a romantic version of the masque's own collectivist energies. Like the court, they are a group organized in a fleeting moment and their desires converge in art and joy. And if their mildly indecorous behavior seems to place them beyond the bounds of audience identification, it is important to observe that masques often functioned as opportunities for raucousness. In voids that followed some masques, for instance, courtiers destroyed painted cardboard decorations and elaborate courses of sweets by smashing them to the ground. Venetian observer, Orazio Busino, saw the void merely as a wanton display of reckless waste, but Patricia Fumerton argues that it was a traditional mechanism for collective consumption and group involvement in the masque.²³² Whether or not this analysis is correct, it is clear that voids were contained and socially sanctioned moments of antic group behavior.

In contrast to such behavior, Silenus advocates structure as the night's appropriate mode of social organization. For one, he explains, "These... nights" are "solemn to the shining rites / Of the Fairy Prince and knights / While the moon their orgies lights" (41-43). Here, Silenus anticipates Prince Henry, who is about to emerge as the titular "Fairy Prince" of the masque, and he points up the prince's emerging role in the ceremonial history of the court. He alludes to this history when he suggests that the current night is just one in an iterative series of "nights" to host Henry's "shining rites." He encourages the satyrs to anticipate the prince's arrival, and to behave with appropriate decorum. For instance, after they wonder about wooing multiple nymphs, he enjoins them to use "Chaster language" (41). Accordingly, where the satyrs want to organize themselves as

²³² See Busino, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 284, and Patricia Fumerton's extended description of the void tradition in *Cultural Aesthetics*, 128-36.

an energetic collective and see the night as a frame for fleeting dalliance, Silenus enjoins them to organize themselves relative to a figure of hierarchy and to comport themselves with solemn gravity. Similarly, he encourages the satyrs to pay attention to more than just their present moment in time and, instead, to sense themselves embedded in history. In contrast to the satyrs, then, Silenus advocates a mode of social organization that comprises behavioral decorum, socio-political differentiation, and active engagement in historical process.

Through contrast, the masque scene projects these values onto the court and reifies the structural aspects of their experience in the Banqueting House. In medieval and early modern romance, fairyland is not always a place of dalliance, but also a wild realm that exists apart from or on the periphery of the known world.²³³ In Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, especially, it is also a semi-anarchic place where normal social and physical rules are altered or suspended, and where characters allegorically mirror, foil, and critique the stuff of real life. As Michael J. Murrin observes, romance writers typically render fairyland as a realm far distant from their own, or as a place where action occurs on the margins of civilized society.²³⁴ For instance, Spenser's fairyland exists almost entirely without reference to England or Europe, and its inhabitants act largely outside ordered civic spaces, such as Cleopolis and Gloriana's Court. Those spaces are ordered centers that make fairyland's semi-anarchy intelligible by contrast. In *Oberon*, Jonson and Jones map these romantic spatial dynamics into the Banqueting House: the scene romanticizes the Banqueting House as a communal party space but does not partake of its architectural order, glittering interior decorations, or hierarchical arrangement of bodies.

²³³ See Michael J. Murrin, "fairyland," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London: Routledge, 1991): 774-79.

²³⁴ Murrin, "fairyland," 778.

It is a fairyland periphery in miniature and, through contrast, it invites onlookers to register their own space as one of centrality, order, and structure.

Similarly, as much as they perform the masque's collectivist energies, the satyrs are also playful foils for the court. Most basically, they are subhuman creatures that move about in a wild Arcadian realm. In contrast, the audience is resplendently clothed and it sits in hierarchical order inside a gilded event space. Silenus lends these distinctions intense ideological force when he chides the satyrs for indecorum. In doing so, he indicates that their current moment is valuable, not as a fleeting period of collective dalliance, but as an affirmation of hierarchy and history. And if, as Silenus says, the satyrs are behaving inappropriately for such a context, then by implication the audience behaves perfectly as it sits still, ordered, and beautifully clothed amongst the seating degrees. This subtle dynamic makes meaning out of the embodied audience experiences outlined in Chapter 1: audience members had to be extremely well dressed to get into the masque and had to willingly insert themselves into the hall's hierarchical seating degrees. Through contrast, the satyrs signal to onlookers that their sartorial splendor and spatial order are the constitutive stuff of the masque event, which in turn links them into court structure.

After showcasing *communitas* and structure, both on stage and in the hall, the masque yokes the two together in a vision of royalist community. In response to Silenus's scolding, the satyrs re-focus their energy and attention onto Prince Oberon and his retinue. In quick succession, three Satyrs ask Silenus,

2nd Satyr Will they come abroad anon?

3rd Satyr Shall we see young Oberon?

4th Satyr Is he such a princely one

As you spake him long ago? (41-44)

In answer, Silenus delivers the first sustained panegyric in the masque. For instance, he claims Oberon “doth fill with grace / Every season, every place,” and says, “He is lovelier than in May / Is in the spring, and there can stay / As little as he can decay” (45-46, 54-55). Here, Silenus celebrates Oberon as a transcendent figure of power while also anticipating the collectivist energies of the masque’s revels, when the prince and his masquers will “fill” the dance floor and incorporate the court in social dances. Thus, at the same time that Oberon will display his princely identity, Silenus suggests he will also organize the court in communal endeavor. When he concludes his speech, the satyrs cry out as a group, “O that he would come away!” and 3rd Satyr asks, “Grandsire, we shall leave to play / With Lyaeus now, and serve / Only Ob’ron?” (61-64). As they anticipate Oberon as their new master, then, the satyrs feel a sense of hierarchy and community at the same time. They continue to perform energetic group-hood through poetic expressions of collective desire, but now their energies focus on and derive from a figure of power and history. This shift happens organically, without Silenus needing to forcefully impose order, and the satyrs willingly organize themselves in anticipation of their new prince. Accordingly, this moment showcases Henry as a fulcrum of royalist community. For his prospective servants, *communitas* and structure are inextricable and mutually constitutive.

This vision of courtly service is idealizing, but not facile. The satyrs derive shared pleasure from the prospect of patronage, the very thing that drew courtiers to patrons at court. Once they decide to serve the fairy prince, they wonder about the favor Oberon will dole out. For instance, at one point their speculations run thus,

4th Satyr Will he build us larger caves?
Silenus Yes, and give you ivory staves
When you hunt, and better wine—
1st Satyr Than the master of the vine?

2nd Satyr And rich prizes to be won
When we leap or when we run? (72-77)

As Jean MacIntyre has partly shown, these rewards allegorize the process through which Henry formed a household and aristocratic retinue as the new Prince of Wales. The satyrs' "larger caves" correspond with the palaces Henry refurbished as seats for himself and his nascent household. Their "ivory staves" allude to the prince's new Lord Chamberlain and his crew of aristocratic servants, who managed that household—like James's, they carried white rods as symbols of their authority.²³⁵ Their talk of hunting refers to one of the primary leisure activities Henry pursued with his entourage.²³⁶ The wine they anticipate mirrors the foodstuffs that royals provided some of their servants. And when they wonder about "rich prizes" for athletic feats they allude to the martial pastimes and chivalric training that Henry pursued with his aristocratic entourage.²³⁷ Thus, the satyrs continue to perform the stuff of court *communitas*, but rather than organizing themselves within the fleeting present and questing indiscriminately for dalliance, they feel liminal anticipation because of Oberon's impending appearance and, as MacIntyre shows, they focus their communal energies on romantic versions of actual royal favor.

²³⁵ On the specific allegorical correspondence between the satyrs' "larger caves" and "ivory staves," see MacIntyre, "Prince Henry's Satyrs," 95-100. The link between the satyrs' "ivory staves" and the Lord Chamberlain would have been immediately available to the masque's audience, as James's own Lord Chamberlain and his staff members oversaw the masque event and carried white staves as symbols of their authority.

²³⁶ On hunting as a royal and princely pastime, see Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 194, and James M. Sutton, "Henry Frederick, prince of Wales (1594–1612)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed May 10, 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/12961>.

²³⁷ MacIntyre does not specifically notice the topical significance of the satyrs' talk of hunting, wine, and athletic feats. On foodstuffs and wine, or "diet," as royal favor for attendants and servants, see Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 18, 51. On Henry as a purveyor of martial pastimes and training, see Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, 63-70.

As critics often do, MacIntyre sees the satyrs allegorizing a reality outside of the masque, but the satyrs also eagerly anticipate the very sort of service and favor that manifested within the masque's own spatial and temporal confines. At the end of their energetic speculations, they wonder if Oberon will,

Trap our shaggy thighs with bells,
That as we do strike a time
In our dance shall make a chime
3rd Satyr Louder than the rattling pipes
Of the wood-gods—
1st Satyr Or the stripes
Of the tabor when we carry
Bacchus up, his pomp to vary. (91-98)

Here, the satyrs want to receive Oberon's favor and serve him in precisely the way masques enacted royal favor and service between the James, Henry, and their courts. Just as the satyrs want Oberon to provide instruments and opportunities for music-making and dancing, so too did James and Henry fund *Oberon* and thereby offer the court an extended opportunity for communal entertainment, play, and dancing.²³⁸ Also, just as the satyrs want to show off their performative prowess, so too did court masques allow individuals and groups to display their fine clothes and wealth, their socio-political status, their factional allegiances, and their dancing skills. And just as the satyrs want to perform louder for Oberon than for "Bacchus," so too did *Oberon* reflect James's and Henry's

²³⁸ Royals and courtiers generally funded their own masques when celebrating family events, such as weddings, or when hosting events itself outside Whitehall, in their own homes. For the seasonal court masques at Whitehall, however, the crown was the principal source of funding. Leeds Barroll shows that James himself developed this policy in conversation with his Privy Council when deciding how to fund Anna's early court masques. See Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 99-101. In contrast to Anna, who did not have to foot any bills for her own early masques, Henry paid for costumes and a designer in *Oberon*. See Orgel and Strong's discussion of the masque's cost in *Inigo Jones*, 205. While this reality diminished the masque as a show of royal generosity, it was practically necessary because masquer costumes were by far the most expensive element of any masque, and decorum stipulated that the crown could not recycle them for other masques. See Barbara Ravelhofer's discussion of masque costumes in *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 123-5.

power back to them and display it in front other courtly power-brokers and foreign guests. In the masque, then, the stuff of courtly *communitas* and courtly hierarchy existed in a dynamic feedback loop that derived from James and Henry. Their favor manifested in an opportunity for ephemeral group dalliance and individuating self-display that, in turn, rendered service back to them by showcasing their authority and generosity.

This argument builds on Butler's and Ravelhofer's respective assessments of masques, early modern gift culture, and dancing. Butler shows how masques and other court festivals offered ceremonial opportunities for royals and their servants to exchange gifts, material objects that were laden with affect and symbolic of either favor or loyalty. For Butler, gifts fostered group cohesion because they bound givers and receivers together in communities of shared feeling, value, obligation, and reciprocity.²³⁹ Butler argues that all masques involved a form of gift exchange between James and the court because they involved banquets and feasting, "which drew the audiences materially into the event."²⁴⁰ Similarly, Ravelhofer shows how masque ballets functioned as circular acts of royal favor and service.²⁴¹ James, Anna, Henry, Charles, and Henrietta Maria typically selected who would get to perform for or alongside them during the masques' choreographed dances, which made inclusion as principal dancer a kind of favor or gift. In turn, dancers rendered service to their royal patrons by displaying their bodies in virtuosic and coordinated forms of tribute.²⁴²

²³⁹ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 78.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁴¹ Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 105-108.

²⁴² As noted in Chapter 2, Ravelhofer here is intervening in a long-running debate about early modern courtly dancing, which sees it either as an oppressive and constraining act of royalist obeisance, or as a fun, liberating opportunity for *jouissance*. For an overview of this debate see again Ravelhofer's chapter on "Discipline, or Pleasure," in *Early Stuart Masque*.

However, the masque was not just an opportunity for discrete acts of gift giving, and nor was dance the only real-time performance of favor and service that masques facilitated. In broader terms, the masque event was itself a large-scale process of reciprocity between royals and the court. And it functioned in precisely the terms the satyrs suggest. In this process, the monarch and other members of the royal family gifted to the court a participatory form of group entertainment and communal play, which comprised a gorgeous performance venue, an elaborate, illusionistic scene, professional performers and musicians, choreographers, poetry and a dramatic text, sources of dazzling illumination, and lavish costumes. And the masque offered the receivers of these gifts an opportunity to pay them back in real time. After all, the masque's aristocratic dancers and spectators were not supposed to merely enjoy the event as a form of entertainment. In addition, they rendered service back to their royal patrons through sartorial splendor, actual material gifts, ordered seating emblematic of court hierarchy, skilled dancing, and physical displays of obeisance. To reuse Schechner's terms from Chapter 1, then, these dynamics made the masques efficacious rather than merely entertaining: the court received the masque from and with their royal patrons and, in turn, entertained them, reflected their power and splendor back at them, and showed those things off in front of foreign guests—mainly ambassadors and their retinues.

As they anticipate royalist community around Oberon, then, the satyrs anticipate something the court is currently experiencing around James, Anna, and Elizabeth in the Banqueting House. As outlined in Chapter 1, all court masques were dynamic experiences of inclusion and hierarchy, community and structure. In its early moments, *Oberon* manifested these dynamics with particular grandeur. According to William Trumbull, the scene's proscenium curtain depicted "the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland, with the legend above *Separata locis pace figantur*," which means, "May

what is separated in place be joined by harmonious peace.”²⁴³ The curtain emblemized James’s local imperialism, his desire to join England and Scotland into a conglomerate Great Britain. More subtly, too, it offered the court a visual, textual, and distinctly royal corollary to their crowded physical proximity, their sartorial coherence within the gilded hall (Banqueting House 2), and their Anglo-Scottish ethnic diversity. As an image of British unity, the curtain was a visual emblem for the sort corporate imperial unity that *Blackness* tried to sustain in its induction. It reified the court’s ethnic heterogeneity as a form of imperial collectivity.²⁴⁴ And as a socio-political reality, the curtain’s image was not only a particular ambition of James’s, but also a reality that inhered in his own person, as he was a Scottish king of England and a Stuart heir to the Tudors.²⁴⁵ Thus, the curtain encouraged the court to experience masquing community as something organized around James and within his kingly political imaginings.

James attended *Oberon* with both his consort and his daughter, Elizabeth. When they entered the hall with ambassadors from Spain and Venice, they enhanced that space’s power as a realm of royalist community.²⁴⁶ Specifically, and as all masques did, they transformed the hall into a locale where the court could enjoy varying degrees of intimacy and shared experience with their royal superiors. This same dynamic occurred in every masque, but sometimes James was the only royal in attendance. In *Oberon*, then, the royal family compounded and dispersed James’s socially organizing power. In addition to James and Henry, after all, Anna and Elizabeth were the court’s other royal

²⁴³ William Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206. For the translation, see Wilcox, “Shaggie Thighs and Aery Formes,” 27.

²⁴⁴ See Jonson’s description of the seascape in *Blackness* in *Inigo Jones*, 90.

²⁴⁵ James believed wholeheartedly in both the necessity and naturalness of Union precisely because he believed that it inhered in and derived from his own royal person, which fused Scots and English identity. See Cuddy, “Anglo-Scottish Union,” 108.

²⁴⁶ Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206.

centers, though Elizabeth's capacity to organize networks of social connection and patronage was not as robust as her mother's, as she didn't maintain an independent household.²⁴⁷ On the state with James, the royal family thus offered the court a capacious and multi-part center around which to experience the masque as an arena of royal favor, intimacy, and communal coherence. And the ambassadors gave the court a foreign audience against which to experience its corporate self.²⁴⁸

At the same time, however, the royal family also enhanced the court's hierarchical arrangement. The masque orchestrated their entrance as a spectacle unto itself: Trumbull writes, "flageolets played" when "their Majesties entered accompanied by the princess and the ambassadors of Spain and Venice."²⁴⁹ And unlike many of the masque participants, who entered through the more public northern entrance to the Banqueting House, the royal family and their ambassadorial guests entered from the private, southern end of the hall, which abutted James's Privy Gallery.²⁵⁰ From that point, they crossed the dance floor on their way to the raised dais at the center of the seating degrees. In their conspicuous progress through the hall and in their presence on the dais, the royal group completed the court's ongoing experience of hierarchy in the seating degrees. Specifically, they infused the hall with an aura of power simply by virtue of being the royal family. More importantly, they affirmed the court's stratified arrangement by giving it a palpable center and a palpable periphery. And in this way, they made the masque's seating arrangements effective as a bodily and spatial experience of court

²⁴⁷ On Anna's establishment, see Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 36-73.

²⁴⁸ In a negative fashion, Carleton points up the power of foreign guests to make the court aware of itself as a unified community. In racist and conservative fashion, he lamented after *The Masque of Blackness* that Anna's performance in blackface and loose clothes showed the court in a bad light in front of the ambassadors from Venice and Spain. See Carleton's letter to Winwood in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, 449.

²⁴⁹ Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206.

²⁵⁰ Again, see Butler's discussion of the Banqueting House's position in Whitehall and various options for entry in *Stuart Court Masque*, 51-56.

structure.²⁵¹ Thus, as always, the masque maintained without ambiguity the communal structure of a ritualistic event and the hierarchical power that undergirded and authorized that event.

The satyrs emerge into a similar dual experience as they anticipate Henry. They mirror the court's ongoing experience around the state and also link into the court's anticipation for the prince. By convention, the court knows to expect him and his retinue through the rocky outcropping on stage. Tellingly, both of these dynamics crystalize around thresholds in the hall. When the satyrs grow eager for Oberon to "come abroad," that is, they reprise the period of waiting the court had to go through before James, Anna, Elizabeth, and the ambassadors entered the Banqueting House, an extended moment of anticipation focused on the southern entrance to the hall. With the satyrs, then, the court gets to look on as a young group of romantic, would-be courtiers wait to be incorporated into an experience of favor and service like the one they currently enjoy. In this way, the satyrs function as ritualistic objects of contrast. As they foiled the court's structure moments ago, now they foil that group's royalist community around the state. Simultaneously, however, when the satyrs anticipate Oberon, they look forward to an event the court knows to expect through the rocky outcropping on stage. And, as Silenus and the satyrs have signaled, when that event occurs, Henry will appear as an alternate principle of royalist community in the hall. Accordingly, the rocky outcropping functions like a threshold in Whitehall, like the southern entrance to the Banqueting House. It organizes courtiers in networks of desire around powerful courtly centers. And outside that romantic threshold, the masque positions its satyrs as ritual proxies for audience

²⁵¹ Again, this reading follows Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 10-11.

experience. In addition to contrasting that group, the satyrs also showcase a romantic version of the anticipation that the court necessarily feels toward Henry and his retinue.

PRETTY TOYS

In their complex position as ritual foil and ritual proxy, the satyrs build meaning into the court's ongoing experiences around the state and anticipation of Henry. As prospective members of Henry's household, they engineer a real-time process of princely emergence, one in which Henry appears as a burgeoning center of royalist community. At the same time, they also cast that community as nascent and inchoate by looking forward to indecorous and insubstantial forms of patronage. In this way, they signal the court that its pre-established royalist community is a more robust and mature version of the one that they, the satyrs, develop while looking forward to Oberon. Subtly, however, the very things that make Henry's burgeoning community seem immature also resonate with those things that make the masque especially conducive to court *communitas*, namely dazzling ornament and ephemera. Accordingly, *Oberon* does for Henry what *Blackness* does for Anna. Generally, it seems to prioritize James's authority, but holds out for the prince an alternate form of courtly centrality, one that inheres more in the masques communal energies than in its structural ones.

When they first speculate on Oberon's favor, the satyrs are downright puerile. Silenus tells them gravely that Oberon "will deserve all you can, and more" (65-66). Here, the satyrs' aged patriarch constructs a serious and asymmetrical relationship between Oberon and his would-be servants. Like God, Oberon will merit "more" from the satyrs than they will be able to offer in return. In response to this sobering formulation, however, the satyrs start their speculations by wondering,

4th *Satyr* Will he give us pretty toys
To beguile the girls withal?
3rd *Satyr* And to make them quickly fall? (67-69)

Thus, the satyrs initial ideas about princely favor go to trival “toys” that they can use to get “girls” to “quickly fall” into sexual dalliance. Once Silenus reminds the satyrs that Oberon will “do / More than you can aim unto,” they set their sights a little higher, on those “larger caves” and “ivory staves” that allude to substantial and mature forms of royal favor (70-74). But at first, their ambitions are impudent and inappropriate, especially in light of Silenus’s admonitions about Oberon’s potency. Of course, as I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 4, James and Anna often rewarded their own aristocratic servants by sanctioning, encouraging, or arranging advantageous marriages, but marriage is not what the satyrs have in mind.²⁵² They do not want to “beguile the girls” into partnerships, but into sex. Thus, the satyrs display an underdeveloped attitude toward the possibilities of royalist community, one that contrasts Henry’s real-life household, which was famously godly and ethical, and the court’s royalist community around the state.

Indeed, as they continue to speculate on Oberon’s patronage, the satyrs anticipate rewards that both reflect and contrast forms of favor available to the court within the masque’s own spatial and temporal confines. These rewards mirror the stuff of the masque in kind, but differ to an extreme and meaningful degree. Specifically, the satyrs expect a litany of perishable foodstuffs and beautiful physical ornaments, much of which is worth quoting in full, as its sheer profusion suggests something like the masque’s decorative, sartorial, scenic, and aesthetic lavishness. The satyrs muse that Oberon will

²⁵² Linda Levy Peck notes that James was famously “uxorious” and deeply interested in pairing off his favorites with other courtiers (“Monopolizing Favour: Structures of Power in the Early Seventeenth-Century English Court,” in *The World of the Favourite*, eds. J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss [New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press], 64).

give them “better wine,” “powders sweet,” “Bracelets of the fairy twists,” and “Garlands, ribands and fine posies” (74, 79, 83, 86). They wonder, too, if he will “gild our cloven feet,” and “Bind our crooked legs in hoops / Made of shells with silver loops,” and “stick our pricking ears / With the pearl that Tethys wears” (78, 80-81, 88-89). As with the satyrs’ “larger caves” and “ivory staves,” such materials allude to the food, drink, and clothes that were essential and sustaining rewards for royal service.²⁵³ They are also romantic and pastoral versions of the masque’s own festive trappings, including splendid costumes, the festoons that adorn the Banqueting House, and the wine and other foodstuffs that will later be on offer during the void.

Alongside arguments such as Badenhausen’s and Mulryne’s, however, the satyrs’ ambitions make Oberon’s royalist community sound like a diminished version of the one arrayed around the state. Both critics argue that the masque attenuates Henry’s chivalric and martial princely posturing by dressing it up in the frivolous trappings of pastoral romance.²⁵⁴ Alongside such arguments, the satyrs’ ideas about Henry’s patronage generally undercut his emergent claims to political maturity by imagining his favor as

²⁵³ On the edible, domestic, and material stuff of royal favor, see again MacIntyre, “Prince Henry’s Satyrs,” 95-100, and Martin Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 18, 51. MacIntyre does not make much of the clothes, ornaments, and jewelry that the satyrs anticipate, but these things correspond with the clothes and precious materials that James and other court patrons doled out to servants and other courtiers as rewards and gifts. On such forms of favor, see Butler’s discussion of courtly gift-giving (*Stuart Court Masque*, 73-79) and, more importantly, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), especially their chapter on “The currency of clothing.” There, Jones and Stallybrass observe that livery and gifts of cloth and clothing were powerful mechanisms for bonding servants, both low-ranking and high-ranking, to their royal or aristocratic patrons. Specifically, Jones and Stallybrass argue, “gifts of apparel were a constitutive gesture of social organization. Clothing was more binding than money, both symbolically, since it incorporated the body, and economically, since a further transaction had to take place if you wanted to transform it into cash via the fripper or pawnbroker.” They go on to say, “The ‘value’ of livery, though, cannot be fully calculated in monetary terms. Livery was a form of incorporation, a material mnemonic that inscribed obligations and indebtedness on the body. As cloth changed hands, it bound people in networks of obligation” (*Renaissance Clothing*, 21-23).

²⁵⁴ Badenhausen, “Disarming the Infant Warrior,” 20, and Mulryne, “‘Here’s Unfortunate Revels,’” 180-81.

fanciful and flimsy ephemera. The satyrs anticipate benefits that allegorize actual patronage, of course, but expressed in pastoral terms amidst an outdoor fairy realm, those benefits sound playful or insubstantial in comparison to those represented in the larger masque occasion. After all, “larger caves” are as nothing compared to the bodily warmth, illuminated brilliance, decorative beauty, architectural solidity, contained integrity, and royal centrality of the Banqueting House itself, which currently wraps the court in royalist community around the state. Similarly, “powders sweet,” “Bracelets of the fairy twists,” “Garlands, ribands and fine poisies,” sound a lot like the masque’s scenic, material, and sartorial components, but do not correspond with or replicate their expensiveness, complexity, or lasting tangibility. Through playful contrast, then, the satyrs invite onlookers to understand their own privilege: they are a royal and aristocratic group enjoying an experience of royalist community more substantial than the one the satyrs anticipate around Henry.

Here, my own reading generally follows critical accounts that stress the satyrs’ wild and puerile nature.²⁵⁵ Most of these accounts, however, contend that the satyrs are symbolic figures of wantonness and wildness that Oberon tames. In contrast to such critics, I want to stress the how the satyrs’ behavior and attitudes have an immediate reference point in the masque event, amongst the audience in the seating degrees and their relationship with James. The satyrs are not symbolic of some abstraction, and nor do they simply allegorize the formation of Henry’s household in general. Instead, they are actively involved in a brand of service and a kind of courtly experience that both reflects and contrasts the experience of service, favor, and royalist community the court is currently undergoing in the Banqueting House.

²⁵⁵ See again Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 191, MacIntyre, “Prince Henry’s Satyrs,” 102, Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 70, Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, 82, and Wilcox, “Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms,” 198-99.

In this regard, the ephemerality that the satyrs prize in their prospective rewards is also a quality that makes Oberon's patronage sound like a vital source of masquing culture. In some ways, ephemerality was antithetical to the masque. Many of its material trappings were designed to be both lasting and substantial, and to thus involve courtiers in physical experiences of Jacobean stasis and power. The Banqueting House is the best example of this phenomenon. Elizabeth built the first Banqueting House to be impermanent, but James inherited the hall and went on to build two new versions of it, each one more durable than the one it replaced.²⁵⁶ In different iterations, then, the Banqueting House lasted through James's reign and functioned as both a material venue for the masque and as an architectural touchstone for recurring moments of seasonal festivity. Yet, as outlined in Chapter 1, ephemerality was built into the nature of the masque form. And as the satyrs demonstrate early in *Oberon*, the masque's status as a fleeting opportunity for communal play is part of what makes it especially conducive to court *communitas*. Thus, as much as the satyrs make Oberon sound like an underdeveloped font of royal patronage they also attach to him qualities vital to the masque itself, an experience of *communitas* that the court is currently enjoying.

At this point in *Oberon*, then, the court has two possibilities for responding to the satyrs, and evidence suggests that, in the moment of performance, both manifested in positive group affect. Either the satyrs energize the masque as a nascent experience of royalist community focused on Henry, or they act as a foil for a more robust form of royalist community settled around the royal family in state. In either case, William Trumbull reports that the court responded with energetic laughter. He describes "a dozen satyrs and fauns who had much to say about the coming of a great prince to be followed

²⁵⁶ See Simon Thurley's descriptions of the three Banqueting Houses in *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments* (New York: Yale University Press, 1999), 67-68, 77-79.

by a thousand benefits, in the hope of which the fauns danced about joyfully, exciting great laughter.”²⁵⁷ To follow Schechner once more, if the satyrs were excited about something besides Oberon, then this moment would be one of theatrical delight and entertainment, and the audience would be laughing at the satyrs, rather than with them. However, the satyrs are performing an efficacious, playful, romantic allegory of royalist community. Accordingly, the audience’s laughter was probably as much a response to the satyrs’ goofy antics as it was a manifestation of happy sympathy with the satyrs’ anticipation for Henry. Alternatively, onlookers might have laughed at the satyrs’ adolescent brand of courtiership, but such a response still bespeaks ritual involvement in the masque, as it requires onlookers to register the satyrs as ante-courtiers, inchoate versions of their own identity vis-à-vis the royal family, the Banqueting House, and the masque event.

Deftly, Jonson and Jones crystalize these two possible experiences with another spectacular scenic revelation. As the satyrs finish their speculations about Oberon, they cry as a group, “O that he so long doth tarry!” and as though in response, the scene suddenly begins to open. Silenus narrates this change for his satyrs: “See, the rock begins to ope! / Now you shall enjoy your hope” (100-01). As the scene’s faux rocky outcropping pulls away it reveals “*the frontispiece of a bright and glorious palace whose gates and walls were transparent*” (103-05). Jonson’s word, “*transparent*,” indicates that Henry and his retinue were partly visible through the scene.²⁵⁸ Per masque precedent,

²⁵⁷ Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206.

²⁵⁸ This is the second of the three scenic transformations that Jonson describes. Trumbull’s account of the masque only records two scenic transformations in *Oberon*, rather than three. He says that after the satyrs finished their antic dancing, “the rock opened discovering a great throne with countless lights and colours all shifting, a lovely thing to see. In the midst stood the prince with thirteen other gentlemen” (Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206). Thus, in Trumbull’s account, there is only the rocky outcropping and then a brilliantly illuminated “throne.” Similarly, and as Roy Strong observes, the surviving designs for *Oberon* include plans for two different scenic set-ups, and both are incomplete (*Henry, Prince of Wales*, 170-71). Ultimately, then, we cannot be totally sure if Jonson’s scene descriptions are accurate. But criticism has

Henry must have had central pride of place while his retinue flanked him. On the palace itself, Orgel describes it as an eclectic melding of medieval, Tudor, and neo-classical elements:

A rusticated basement seems to grow out of the rocks. The parterre has a Palladian balustrade. A splendid pedimented archway fills the central façade, supported by grotesque Italian terms, and accented by Doric pilasters and Serlian windows. Crenellated English medieval turrets are topped with tiny baroque minarets; two pure Elizabethan chimneys frame an elegant dome in the style of Bramante.²⁵⁹

Following Orgel, critics typically read this scene-change as a symbolic expression of Jacobean power or Henry's maturation as a prince.²⁶⁰ In such readings, the palace melds Henry's and James's respective styles while also subordinating the prince to his father: its rustic and Tudor architectural elements evoke Henry's chivalric posturing but get shaped by Palladian neo-classicism, which expressed James's imperial kingly style.²⁶¹ For other critics, the palace imposes order on the satyrs' wild, antic realm. Accordingly, it symbolizes Henry's princely maturity and anticipates the solemnity he will create when he emerges to dance.²⁶²

As a display of royal power and princely maturation, however, the scene does not just allegorize pre-existing court realities, but enhances the masque as a real-time experience of emergent and established royalist community. In another moment of "imaginative compression," the scene moves the satyrs and the court closer to a palace

always assumed that they are and read *Oberon's* scene as a three-part *scena ductilis*. I do the same. In this, I follow both Orgel, in *Jonsonian Masque*, 84-88, and *Illusion of Power*, 66-70, as well as Strong, in *Henry, Prince of Wales*, 170.

²⁵⁹ Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 67.

²⁶⁰ See Orgel's sustained reading of *Oberon* in *Illusion of Power*, 66-70. Butler does not talk much about *Oberon's* scenes, but he nevertheless makes an expanded and more politically nuanced version of Orgel's argument in *Stuart Court Masque*. Specifically, he notes that the masque's progression symbolically stages Prince Henry's "maturation" as a political figure, and that the satyrs represent a disordered courtly constituency that must be silenced and reformed to make way for Henry and his homage to James (*Stuart Court Masque*, 191). See also Wilcox, "Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms," 199-206.

²⁶¹ Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 70.

²⁶² Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 193, Wilcox, "Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms," 199.

threshold that contains and withholds Henry and his retinue.²⁶³ The scene invites the court to dwell on Henry as the satyrs do, as a unifying and emerging center of group organization and communal action. More importantly, it also makes the satyrs' own brand of princely community more available to onlooker experience than it has been up until this point. The palace tableau showcases Henry both as a figure of power and as a fulcrum of dazzling ephemera. It also suspends the court on the brink of Henry's descent, the masque ballets, and the social revels. In these ways, the masque does not merely reflect Henry's burgeoning claim to royalist community; it also announces him as an emergent principle for the sorts of community that the masque fosters within its own boundaries.

At the same time, the scene can only organize such experience around Henry while simultaneously reflecting the royalist community already active in the Banqueting House, around James, Anna, and Elizabeth. The scene and the hall mirror one another in several ways. The palace's neo-classical trappings echo the Banqueting House's hierarchized orders of Doric and Ionic pillars. Its rusticated basement resembles the hall's lower-story brick undercroft. Its elaborate architectural ornaments resonate with the hall's gilded interior. And its glittering illumination adds to the chandeliers and sconces that hang from the hall's ceiling and walls.²⁶⁴ Within the palace itself, Henry and his retinue reflect the court's symmetrical arrangement around the royal state. More abstractly, too, the palace mirrors the aura of ordered centrality that has characterized the seating degrees since the stage first revealed its wild fairyland scene. Oberon's palace now constitutes an alternate center in contrast to the satyrs' rocky outdoor space, just as the seating degrees

²⁶³ Johnson, *Ben Jonson: Poetry and Architecture*, 60.

²⁶⁴ On the second Banqueting House's design and structure, see Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, 78-81. On its interior décor, see Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 162-63.

have since the masque began. Thus, Henry appears as the center of an experience that the court is already having around the state. The palace invites onlookers to anticipate Henry as a burgeoning principle of royalist community, but showcases him within a frame that magnifies the their own pre-established royalist community in the hall.

Characteristically, Silenus verbalizes these non-textual elements of the masque in ways that lend them clear ideological force. First, he directs the satyrs to “Look!” at the new scene and then goes on to ask, “does not his palace show / Like another sky of lights?” (108-09). Struck dumb, the satyrs stand “*wondering*” at the scene (106). In place of a response, Silenus explains that Oberon and his “knights” were “Once the noblest of the earth,” and that they have since been blest with “everlasting youth” and “Quickened by a second birth” (111-13). Here, Silenus constructs Henry and his retinue as Arthurian and Christian figures. Like Arthur and Christ, they have been long awaiting a moment of heroic, prophesied return.²⁶⁵ Thus, Silenus’s description and the satyrs’ rapt attention dramatize the fact that Henry and the palace are dazzling cynosures and new principles for audience experience. Simultaneously, onlookers must experience Henry’s impending emergence from within the seating-degrees, a fact out of which Silenus derives meaning

²⁶⁵ On the masque’s Arthurian undertones, see Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 190-94, and Orgel, *The Illusion of Power*, 66-67. The masque’s Arthurian conceit fits nicely with both Henry’s and James’s respective forms of royal self-presentation. For his part, Henry cultivated a backward-looking, Elizabethan, and chivalric style for which King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table made a natural referent. On Henry’s knightly self-presentation and his so-called “revival of chivalry,” see Badenhausen, “Disarming the Infant Warrior,” 20-23, Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 166-204, Mulryne, “‘Here’s Unfortunate Revels,’” 168-74, and Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, 138-83. As for James, Arthur and his court were a long-running analogy that the king cultivated for himself and his own aristocratic establishment, first in Edinburgh and then in London. In 1588, for instance, the 22-year-old James created a masque that compared his court to Arthur’s, and *Oberon* makes a similar comparison. In *Oberon*, we will see later, the analogy gets used in service of James’s local British imperialism. The masque imagines him as the destined “heir” of “Arthur’s crowns and chair” (297-98). As in other masques, *Oberon* here uses the idea of prophetic restoration and storied historical precedent to legitimate James’s hybrid Scottish-English kingship. Masques sometimes cultivate this strategy to make James’s desire for a local British empire look like the restoration of an old reality, rather than a revolutionary change. *Blackness* does this work explicitly, for instance, when it declares that James has restored Britannia, or Great Britain, to her “ancient dignity and style” (Jonson, *The Masque of Blackness*, in *Inigo Jones*, 225, hereafter cited in text by line number).

when he calls Oberon's palace "another sky of lights" (109). Here, Silenus suggests that the palace replicates some other "sky of lights," rather than appearing as a "sky of lights" in its own right. As in *The Masque of Blackness*, references to glittering cosmological spaces point to the Banqueting House, rather than the actual sky.²⁶⁶ And it is possible that the second Banqueting House had a ceiling painted to resemble the sky, as its predecessor did.²⁶⁷ Accordingly, when Silenus refers to Oberon's palace as "another sky of lights," he implies that it mirrors the court's beauty within the hall. Silenus's praise, then, encourages onlookers to dwell visually on an image of nascent royalist community whose splendor, beauty, and order must necessarily remind them of their own glittering community around the royal state.

SHINING RITES

Like the masque's opening moment of scenic revelation and pause, the palace's revelation is a tipping point for the event's larger trajectory. Up until this point, the masque has attempted to engineer a liminal experience of anticipation and, within that experience, a pleasurable sense of royalist community around both Oberon-Henry and the royal family in state. In both regards, the masque generally balances between the ephemeral and collectivist elements of royalist community on one hand and its hierarchical and structural elements and the other. By using the satyrs and scene as ritual proxies and objects of contrast, that is, *Oberon* repeatedly invites onlookers to experience the masque as an event during which hierarchical court structure coexists with and facilitates gleeful preparation for royal favor and communal play. However, once Henry

²⁶⁶ For instance, in *The Masque of Blackness*, Oceanus points out to the hall and its audience and describes both as a "squared circle of celestial bodies" (106).

²⁶⁷ An officer in James's Office of the Works, Andrew Kerwyn, reported that the first Banqueting House's ceiling was painted "with Clowdes and other devices" (quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 89).

and his retinue are in full view, the masque must reconcile the image of princely splendor displayed on stage with the royal authority that inheres in the hall's centralized state. Accordingly, the event engineers an experience of royalist community dominated by hierarchical structure. Within structure, we will see, the masque can more clearly articulate both Henry's emergent claims to courtly centrality while also subordinating him to James.

First, the masque explodes the satyrs' capacity to invite ritual identification for their energetic collectivism. Critics typically argue that the satyrs undergo a seamless transition from disorder to order as Oberon and his palace emerge, but their trajectory is far more complicated than that.²⁶⁸ Under the palace walls, their eagerness takes on a particularly wild and derisive quality. After noticing a pair of sylvan guards asleep at the base of the palace, the satyrs speculate on myriad violent ways to wake them. They want to "cramp 'em," "strip 'em," "whip 'em," "stick a wasp or two" up "their nostrils," "drive a nail / Through their temples," "stick an eel" in "their guts," "steal away their beards," use one's "club" on the other's "head," roll them "Down a hill," "cast" them "from a bridge," "Break their ridge- / Bones," and "plump" them in a "river." (129-151). This profuse litany of violent acts contrasts the list of pleasant pastimes, foodstuffs, and delicate ephemera the satyrs generated moments earlier. In pastoral terms, recall, that list reflected the court's embodied experience in the masque itself, a fact that makes the satyrs' new litany all the more jarring. It proposes violence against bodies, rather than athletic movement, beautiful sartorial adornment, and tasty libations. Similarly, the satyrs undercut the reverent praise that Silenus just delivered about Oberon. Mocking the guards, one satyr asks, "Hear you, friends, who keeps the keepers?" and another

²⁶⁸ MacIntyre, "Prince Henry's Satyrs," 97-98, Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, 84, Wilcox, "Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms," 199-200.

responds, “They are the eighth and ninth sleepers!” (127-28). This response alludes to the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, figures of Christian legend who were miraculously preserved in a cave for 180 years after hiding from Roman persecution. Deployed as it is, the allusion takes Silenus’s praise—and, specifically, its undertones of Arthurian and Christian resurrection—and turns it into a source of impertinent comedy. As their communal energy shifts from Oberon to physical violence and irreverence, then, the satyrs’ collective energies are no longer commensurate with the masque’s ethos. They now fully inhabit the role of antimasque.²⁶⁹

By shifting the satyrs’ in this way, Jonson invalidates their communal mode of social organization and, in contrast, focuses on structure as the constitutive stuff of the masque. Once they wake, the guards tell the satyrs, “leave your petulance, / And go frisk about and dance, / Or else rail upon the moon,” and then, “Your expectance is too soon” (182-85). In response, one of the satyrs excitedly remarks, “Say you so? then let us fall / To a song or to a brawl” (190-91). He then turns to Silenus and asks, “Shall we, grandsire? Let us sport, / And make expectation short” (192-93). Next, the satyrs launch into a raunchy song about their “cunning lady, moon” and then perform an antic ballet (199). Throughout this part of the masque the satyrs sustain the coordinated poetic performance and the commitment to communal play that made them figures of *communitas* earlier in the masque, but now their poetry and their playfulness do not express collective value for either the group or its shared moment in time. Instead, both activities merely exercise the satyrs’ “petulance” and are as meaningless as “rail[ing] at

²⁶⁹ As Orgel notes, *Oberon* is unique inasmuch as its antimasque is alive to and contained within the fictive world of the larger event (*Jonsonian Masque*, 82). In contrast, and as we will see in Chapter 4, most antimasques get banished before the appearance of the masquers, and their presence is entirely antithetical to the events that follow their performance. In *Oberon*, the satyrs come close to this level of antimasque indecorum, but the fact that Jonson keeps them on stage rather than banishing them points up the extent to which he wants them to continue organizing court experience, which they do now as a source of contrast.

the moon.” The satyrs compound this shift by accepting the sylvan guard’s directive to “frisk about and dance” while waiting on Oberon. When they do, they eschew the ritual and temporal stuff of *communitas*. They are still a coherent unit, of course, but their aesthetic endeavors and group dalliance smack of entertainment and theater. They are indiscriminate strategies for passing time, rather than dwelling with and affirming the group in time.

With the satyrs no longer pursuing *communitas*, the masque signals to onlookers that hierarchical structure is the event’s organizing feature. The masque reflects that structure back at the court when it interrupts the satyrs’ antic ballet and reveals the interior of Oberon’s palace. As the palace frontispiece pulls apart, Silenus cries, “See, the gates already spread! / Every satyr bow his head” (224-25). In response, the satyrs stop dancing, bow their heads, and presumably split up to flank the newly opened scene. And in this way, they suddenly snap back into their previous function as ritual proxies for court experience. Only this time, they do not work to excite feelings of *communitas* around Henry or the state. Instead, they treat the palace as a frame for solemn, dynastic ritual. In the process, they mirror the court’s hierarchical seating arrangement and mimic that group’s decorous bearing around the royal family. Throughout the masque, we have seen, the court’s ordered stillness has been requisite for their inclusion in the Banqueting House and also visually expressive of royal power.²⁷⁰ By suddenly dropping their disordered behavior and responding to the palace with hierarchical decorum, then, the satyrs perform the court’s embodied experience of stratified social structure. By proxy,

²⁷⁰ Ironically, Ben Jonson himself features in an anecdote that proves this rule. He and his friend, Sir John Roe, were thrown out of a masque at Hampton Court during the revels season of 1603-04, probably Samuel Daniel’s *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*. Jonson’s biographer, Ian Donaldson, speculates that the two men probably revealed “too openly their opinions of its qualities,” (Ian Donaldson, “Jonson, Benjamin (1572–1637),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], accessed May 11, 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/15116>). See Butler’s discussion of the fracas in *Stuart Court Masque*, 34-39.

they affirm that experience as the mechanism through which the court can access the masque's royalist community.

In keeping with this dynamic, *Oberon* goes on to construct its audience as a framing retinue and corporate witness for a ceremony of princely power and royalist homage. This process derives first from the scene itself, which proclaims Henry as a new nexus of court structure. The palace interior is an ornate, neo-classical space that showcases Henry as the head of a romantic household. His fellow masquers stand closest to him, and like their prince they are decked out in imperial Roman costumes.²⁷¹ Young pages in Tudor garb and professional musicians dressed as fairies stand further out. And outside the proscenium, the lowly satyrs watch on from the scene's thrust stage. As several critics suggest, this crew of masque figures comprises a fanciful princely entourage, and it showcases Henry's emergent capacity to organize a household and networks of patronage.²⁷² At the same time, Henry's entourage is also a function of his obeisance to James, as the masque makes clear when Oberon's fairy musicians sing paeans to both prince and king. As masques always do, then, *Oberon* invites the court to sense its coherence by mirroring and approaching that group. Such transactions always turn the court into James's retinue, as though its primary purpose is to frame and observe transactions between the king and figures on stage.

Oberon engages this dynamic with a richness and energy that go beyond the mandates of generic convention. For instance, *The Masque of Blackness* and *The Masque*

²⁷¹ See Trubull's description of the masquers' costumes, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206, and Jones's costume designs in *Inigo Jones*, 221-27.

²⁷² See Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 191. MacIntyre draws a helpful parallel between the knightly dancers around Henry on stage and the gentlemen who got created Knights of the Bath as part of the prince's investiture the previous year. As attendants on Henry in the masque and representatives of those real-life knights, the gentlemen dancers showcase Henry's capacity to facilitate social elevation ("Prince Henry's Satyrs," 145-46). For Wilcox, Henry's retinue of fairies and satyrs allegorizes the Jacobean court in general, specifically by representing its Scots-English ethnic diversity in romantic form ("Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms," 202-05).

of *Queens* respectively construct Anna and her ladies as hospitable entrants into the hall and objects of wonder.²⁷³ In those masques, the ladies are subordinate to James, but their approach is not framed as a formal act of submission and reverence. Accordingly, *Blackness* and *Queens* privilege the court as a group sharing theatrical and spatial experience while downplaying its status as a hierarchized retinue around the state. In contrast, *Oberon* not only constructs Henry's approach as an act of royalist obeisance, but also uses robust and spectacular spatial mirroring to make James the constitutive principle around which the court must experience that obeisance. Henry's attendants flank him in a way that replicates the court's socio-political hierarchy around the state: like the stratified court, Henry's fellow masquers stand closest to him, while the pages and fairy musicians stand further out, and the lowly satyrs further still.²⁷⁴ In spectacular fashion, then, *Oberon* recreates the hierarchized court for its own visual consumption. But unlike the palace frontispiece, which had a similar effect, the palace interior is a conduit of movement through which the court must watch and hear James receive paean after paean from Oberon's own retinue. Thus, the masque demands that onlookers experience themselves as a still and silent version of the masque's pages, fairies, and satyrs. They are a corporate and hierarchized human frame whose purpose is not to share

²⁷³ For instance, as we saw in *Blackness*, the ladies enter the hall so they can be blanched white by James's god-like powers, which makes that dramatic movement an act of compliment and subordination, but the rhetoric that surrounds their entry emphasizes hospitality, as Aethiopia makes clear when she tells the masque figures on stage to "Invite them boldly to the shore" (Jonson, *The Masque of Blackness*, in *Inigo Jones*, 240). Similarly, in *Queens*, Jonson constructs Anna and her ladies as a retinue of heroic and historical queens, so it cultivated something like the dynamic I am observing in *Oberon*, but the overall emphasis during their appearance and entry is not subordination and obeisance to James, but visual and spectacular wonder, as one of the entry songs makes clear when it proclaims, "Help, help all tongues to celebrate this wonder" (Jonson, *The Masque of Queens*, in *Inigo Jones*, 682). In *Oberon*, similar rhetoric makes James the object of wonder, but in *Queens*, the object is Anna and her ladies.

²⁷⁴ As Wilcox shows, there is a subtle hierarchy of classical and romantic literary figures arrayed on stage, with the satyrs at the bottom, elves and fays higher up, then the human pages above them, and finally Oberon and his fellow masquers. Wilcox, "Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms," 202-05).

experience with Henry and James, but to witness and passively facilitate a spectacular transaction of princely and royal power.

This structured experience around Henry and James seems to fracture the event's socio-political coherence, but it paradoxically opens onto an experience of royalist community that will transition into the revels. In one way, we have seen, the scene boldly proclaims Henry's integrity and power. In another way, the songs and speeches that praise James make an equally bold claim for the king's supremacy, especially by turning Henry's splendor into a function of his obeisance. And in still another way, then, the masque showcases tension between James and Henry, which recreates real-life differences between father and son. And yet, in its fracture, the masque engineers a group-focused process of collective aggrandizement. As the sylvan guard observes, Oberon-Henry's homage is not merely a transaction between prince and king, but also a court-focused process of group celebration. After the fairy musicians sing their first paeon to James, the guard says, "This is a night of greatnes and of state, / Not to be mixed with light and skipping sport: / A night of homage to the British court" (252-54) Thus, Henry's and James's respective claims to power and centrality ultimately magnify the splendor of the entire court.

It is easy to read this rhetorical maneuver disingenuously, as though Jonson is simply using the language of unity to paper over James's and Henry's divisive political relationship. But unity is not the same thing as homogeneity. When focused on the right symbols, fracture can in fact be conducive to group coherence. As Andrew Cohen contends in *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, groups need symbols of collective identity that are singular in their appearance, but flexible and capacious in their interpretation. Jonson and Jones offer up just such a symbol in the process of homage

between Henry and James.²⁷⁵ They invite pro-Henry spectators to focus on the prince's splendor on stage. They invite pro-James spectators to hear the masque's Jacobean panegyrics. And by making the scene and hall mirror one another so thoroughly, they invite the entire participant group to experience princely homage as an assertion of collective integrity, one that requires both prince and king as alternate centers, and the entire court as a framing retinue and corporate witness. Thus, structure is not just a key feature of the masque's royalist community, but ultimately conducive to a more egalitarian or shared form of group cohesion.

PRINCELY OBERON, GO ON

Even as it establishes royalist community around Henry and James, then, the masque gives way to the energies of ephemeral *communitas*. This transition is necessarily complex, as it must maintain the pretense that Henry is doing homage to his father and also the prince's burgeoning claims to courtly centrality. Jonson does this work in a meta-generic way, by dramatizing some of the masque's key practical realities, deriving meaning from them, and using them to focus the poles of courtly *communitas* and structure around Henry and the state respectively. First, in royalist paeans that precede Henry's dancing, Jonson constructs James as a transcendent figure who sustains the court across time. This strategy satisfies the generic mandates for Jacobean celebration while fictively realizing the fact that James funded the masque. Simultaneously, it undercuts the stand-alone social value of the masque's primary group activity, dancing, and thereby holds out that key form of masque experience as Henry's special purview.²⁷⁶ In this way,

²⁷⁵ Andrew P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 20-21.

²⁷⁶ This conflict represents a larger paradox at the heart of the masque form, which works to celebrate permanent court structure in discrete periods of ephemeral frivolity. Bishop sees this paradox as a source of fracture and failure when he writes, "The secret anxiety of the masque, which its ritual character attempts

the masque taps into another generic reality: James always left other important courtiers to star as principal dancers and thereby serve as organizing principles for the social levels. In *Oberon*, Henry realizes both these facts. And by the end of the masque, then, James and Henry are not just alternate centers of royalist community, but two polar fulcrums of experience within that community: James is a principle of sustaining historical structure, Henry a principle of ephemeral *communitas*.

The songs and speeches that comprise the masque's "solemn rites" celebrate James's supposed capacity to generate and sustain the court and its royalist ceremonies. For instance, the fairies sing that James is "the wonder... of tongues, of ears, of eyes," and then ask,

Who hath not heard, who hath not seen,
Who hath not sung his name?
The soul that hath not, hat not been
But is the very same;
With buried sloth, and knows not fame. (241-43)

Similarly, the sylvan guard declares that Henry and the masquers have come to "give / The honour of their being" to James, who sustains them "in form, fame and felicity," and shields them from the "fear to die" (263-66). Silenus confirms these messages in a pedantic fashion, by teaching the satyrs to regard James as a god-like figure who "stays the time from turning old, / And keeps the age up in a head of gold" (281-82). The king, he explains, "makes it ever day and ever spring / Where he doth shine, and quickens everything" (285-86). These royalist paeans make James into the alpha and the omega of the court and the masque. He is creator and receiver, source and recipient. Specifically,

solemnly, fervently to deny, is that its magical gestures will turn out in reality every bit as ephemeral as the endings of many masques admit they themselves are" ("The gingerbread host," 95). However, the masque's paradoxical yoking together of permanence and ephemera was not, in the end, paradoxical, but dialectic. Stasis and newness, structure and *communitas*, tradition and novelty are two qualities of experience that enliven one another, rather than conflict.

he prompts the court's "wonder" and receives the musical fruits of that wonder in turn. Through this process, he creates the very "soul" of his courtiers and gives them "The honour of their being," which they tender back to him as Henry is, by performing obeisance. And according to the masque, James sustains this cycle indefinitely, keeping the court and its present in a "head of gold."

These paeans dramatize James's ability to sustain the court's current experience through time, but in doing so they make him antithetical to masquing *communitas*. As the figures on stage announce James's power they point to prominent parts of the masque itself. They refer to the "form[s]" of Henry and his fellow masquers on stage. They refer meta-dramatically to their own singing, which proclaims James's "name." They allude to James's physical presence and centrality as an alternate cynosure in state. In their reference to "day" and "spring," they point to the hall's brilliance and warmth. And, most complexly, their "age of gold" hyperbolically asserts Jacobean transcendence while also referencing the glittering "gold" light of the hall and the "gold" James used to fund the event. Thus, the masque panegyrics are impossibly idealizing, but they nonetheless attach to James actual facets of the court's experience in the Banqueting House. And by extension, they assert his capacity to sustain the court's current experience through time, by funding masques.²⁷⁷

Yet, if James is a singular figure of sustaining power and a source of transcendence, however, he can only organize the masque's hierarchizing elements, rather than its communal elements. Hence, when the Sylvan guard sends the pages out to dance, he tells them and the fairy musicians,

Stand forth, bright fays and elves, and tune your lays

²⁷⁷ On court masque funding practices, see again Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 99-101, and Orgel and Strong's discussion of the masque's cost in *Inigo Jones*, 205.

Unto his name; then let your nimble feet
Tread subtle circles that may always meet
In point to him, and figures to express
The grace of him and his great empress. (290-94)

Similarly, the guard wants the masque figures to sing, play, and dance so that everyone participating and watching will be able to “without stop point out” James as “the proper heir / Designed so long to Arthur’s crowns and chair” (297-98). As before, James is both the source and the referent for the masque’s aesthetic practices: the fay’s “lays” and the “subtle circles” formed by the page’s “nimble feet.” Now, however, those practices do not just derive from and celebrate James and Anna, but also entrain the court in a relentless, unending experience of royal power: “always meet / In point to him,” the fays sing, so that the entire court can “without stop” observe his authority.

These panegyrics are generically conventional, but they stand in direct contrast to the model of royalist community that the masque propagates through the satyrs. In that model, recall, music, dancing, and play are acts of service and praise for a royal figure—in the satyrs’ case, Oberon. But they are also valuable as forms of communal dalliance in an ephemeral moment. Accordingly, they are mechanisms for social organization in their own right and behaviors conducive to *communitas*. In James’s solemn presence, however, the masque now signals that group dancing is both inappropriate and irrelevant as a mode of communal bonding. As a vehicle for *communitas*, after all, dancing and group play require discrete moments in mundane time in order to be meaningful and effective, but in the masque’s fiction, James has transformed time and the court into an eternal spring day of immortality and transcendence. Accordingly, there are no special opportunities for dalliance at court. And as the masque panegyrics assert, group action can only be an exercise in royal structure.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ This moment in *Oberon*, then, exemplifies the New Historicist claim that the Jacobean court was a veritable “prison-house” that wrapped courtiers in unending cycles of subversion and containment.

The masque's own iterative and fleeting nature and James's perennial preference to watch other courtiers both provide a way out of this paradox. Specifically, they enable the masque to construct Henry as a recurring font of *communitas* that James sustains across time. When they encourage Henry to dance, the fairies look backward at the page's ballet and then observe the nighttime as a context for the masquers' performance. They sing,

The solemn rites are well begun,
And though but lighted by the moon,
They show as rich as if the sun
Had made the night his noon
But may none wonder that they are so bright;
The moon now borrows from a greater light.
Then, princely Oberon,
Go on,
This is not every night. (315-23)

Here, the masque advances and complicates Silenus's message from the beginning of the masque. Recall, Silenus implies the masque's "shining rites" are just one instance in a string of princely ceremonies, and he makes the fleeting night a context for Henry's impending appearance. Thus, the nighttime is special both as a ceremonial touchstone in court history and as an ephemeral moment in time, which the satyrs realize in their urgency for group play around Oberon. In this way, Silenus constructs Henry as a burgeoning principle for royalist community, one capable of organizing the court in both historical structure and ephemeral *communitas*. When the fairies invite Oberon to dance, then, they preserve Silenus's message, but subordinate Henry to Jacobean power. Oberon's "solemn rites" are "lighted by the moon," they sing, and "This" particular night

Specifically, it suggests that any self-expression in the masque must necessarily happen—indeed, can only happen—as a proclamation of royal authority. This gloss on New Historicist masque criticism comes from David Bevington and Peter Holbrook's "Introduction" in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8.

is special because it is “not every night,” but it also derives its specialness and its historical mandate from James’s transcendent “sun.” Henry can organize royalist community in discrete moments of festivity, but only under the ongoing, historical imprimatur of his father.

However, the order in which *Oberon* deploys its dancers ensures that Henry appears as more than just a representative of Jacobean stasis dancing under his father’s aegis. Henry and his fellow dancers move onto the floor only after the pages have finished their initial ballet, which means that they do not appear to dance in response to the fairies’ final song about Jacobean power. As they are younger than Henry and his fellows, the pages make a fitting object for the pedantic absolutism that dominates the latter end of the masque’s panegyrics and they buffer Henry from those subordinating paeans. Critics typically argue that the satyrs allegorize Henry’s maturation as a prince, but the masque provides a more meaningful allegory of princely growth in the transition from pages to masquers.²⁷⁹ In that transition, Henry moves in response to a different sort of directive than the one that prompted the pages. Where those younger men danced solely to showcase James and Anna as transcendent forces, Henry and his fellows dance both in response to James’s supposedly ever-lasting “sun,” and in response to a special, fleeting moment in time. Accordingly, the masque celebrates Henry as the court’s most potent source for group action in the ephemeral present, a special night that “is not every night.”

This reading follows Butler’s own assessment of the masque, which emphasizes how *Oberon* shows Henry’s new place within, rather than outside of or against, his

²⁷⁹ On the satyrs as symbols or agents in Henry’s maturation, see again MacIntyre, “Prince Henry’s Satyrs,” 97-98, Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, 84, Wilcox, “Shaggie Thighs and Aery Forms,” 199-200.

father's courtly establishment.²⁸⁰ However, Butler sees *Oberon* trying to reflect and shape socio-political realities outside of itself. In addition, the masque was equally interested in shaping a particular sort of reality within its own spatial and temporal confines, by establishing Henry, not just as a new center within the Jacobean court, but also as the organizing principle of a special and important brand of courtly group experience. This reading resonates strongly with Bishop's suggestion that the masque celebrates Henry as a source of novelty and change while celebrating James as a source of tradition and stasis.²⁸¹ For Bishop, however, novelty and tradition are not types of experience within the masque, but strategies for representation that courtiers, including James and Henry, used to posture and center themselves within the court community. In contrast, structure and *communitas* name two interpenetrating forms of social organization, rather than symbolic signification, at work in real time within the masque. Hence the care with which Jonson frames Henry's initial ballet, that moment when he both gets to showcase personal charisma and power while also initiating the event's most incorporative and communal movement.

On the dance floor, Henry and his fellows offer the court a virtuoso performance of unified action that reconciles the prince's claims to centrality with his status as a font of ephemeral *communitas*. According to Antonio Correr, a representative of Venice, the masque "was very beautiful throughout, very decorative," but "most remarkable for the grace of the Prince's every movement."²⁸² Similarly, Trumbull reports that Henry chose his fellows because they were "famous dancers of the Court," and that they danced "two ballets intermingled with varied figures and many leaps, which were extremely well done

²⁸⁰ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 193-94

²⁸¹ Bishop, "The gingerbread host," 92-96.

²⁸² Antonio Correr, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 205.

by most of them.”²⁸³ The historical record thus indicates that Henry performed spectacularly while most of his accompanying gentlemen, though not all of them, danced equally well. The relatively high quality of this performance likely derived from the intense rehearsals that the gentlemen underwent before performing. Barbara Ravelhofer reports that masquers typically spent several weeks preparing for their ballets.²⁸⁴ On the dance floor, then, Henry and most of his fellow dancers exuded the “charisma” that, according to Tom Bishop, royals and other courtiers used to assert social and political centrality within the Jacobean aristocratic establishment.

At the same time, onlookers had several avenues for identifying with the ballets as burgeoning experiences of collectivity, rather than just princely power. As noted in Chapter 1, Ravelhofer suggests the dancers would have encouraged their audience to feel a kind of unbounded group sympathy, an embodied sense of unity with the dancers’ corporate body.²⁸⁵ A controversial strain of neuroscience might suggest that, if it occurred, such a phenomenon derived from “embodied simulation,” an automatic mental mechanism through which individuals register other people’s actions by unconscious neuronal mirroring.²⁸⁶ Whether or not the masque’s audience possessed such a mental capacity, however, they certainly would have had strong social incentives to feel something like Ravelhofer’s dancer-focused group sympathy. The masquers, after all, were a moving symbol of court unity and shared purpose, and they offered English and Scottish onlookers an opportunity to see their own group performing in front of

²⁸³ Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206.

²⁸⁴ Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 70-71.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁸⁶ The scientific literature on embodied simulation and neuronal mirroring is vast. See, for instance, David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese, “Motion, emotion and empathy in esthetic experience,” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11 (2007): 197-203, and Vittorio Gallese, “Mirror Neurons, Embodied Simulation, and the Neural Basis of Social Identification,” *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 19 (2009): 519-536.

foreigners. The ambassadors in the hall and their respective retinues may have encouraged onlookers to feel involved in the dancers' movements, if only because their performative success had implications for how outsiders viewed the court as a whole. And though the ballets were exclusive, they also initiated the most communal and inclusive part of the masque: the revels. Looking on, then, courtiers saw in Henry's star performance an activity that that would soon expand outward to involve many of them in fun, coordinated action.

The masque tries to magnify these sources of fellow-feeling by building them into a dramatic narrative. First, the masque rearticulates the hall's fictive status as a romantic space of fairyland dalliance. For instance, when the masquers pause after their first ballet, the fays sing, "This's no time to cast away / Or for fays so to forget / The virtue of their feet" (330-32). And later, they insist that the masquers take ladies out for the revels so that they do not appear neglectful and as "coarse" as the "country fairy" that "doth haunt the hearth or dairy" (348-49). Here, the masque singers remind listeners that, despite the grandeur of their costumes and the solemnity of the recently completed panegyrics, Henry and company are still playful figures of fairyland. As before, this strategy might seem to diminish Henry's burgeoning claims to royalist community, but it is also a dramatic corollary to his immediate centrality within the masque event. In the present moment, after all, the masquers' dazzling performance is one of the event's highlights, and their continued dancing will sustain the event in time and involve other courtiers as well. Their fictive fairy identity, then, affirms the masque as ephemeral and playful group dalliance, as an opportunity for *communitas*.

Similarly, the fays also construct masque dancing as both a driver of and a response to collective courtly desire. After the first ballet, the fays sing out to the masquers, "Nay, nay, / You must not stay, / Nor be weary yet" (27-29). Similarly, after

the second ballet, another song enjoins the masquers to continue dancing and to take out ladies for the revels,

Nor yet, nor yet, O you in this night blessed,
Must you have will or hope to rest
If you use the smallest stay
You'll be overta'an by the day
And these beauties will suspect
That their forms you do neglect
If you do not call them forth. (340-46)

Here, the fays fear things that onlookers know will not happen. The masquers will not stop dancing. A pause in dancing will not precipitate the coming “day,” which is still hours away. And the masquers will not “neglect” the ladies of the court and fail to initiate the revels. By issuing the directives that they do, then, the fays offer onlookers a playful opportunity to hear their own generic training translated into the stuff of courtly *communitas*. By proxy, they indicate that the court desires further group dalliance, which will in turn suspend their group in time, ward off the coming “day,” and expand to include members of the court itself, i.e. the “beauties” sitting in the seating degrees. To expect or anticipate the masque’s conventional movements, then, is to implicitly participate in a collective sense of communal value for group action and the shared present moment.

Henry and his fellow dancers act on these communal energies when they initiate the revels and take ladies out for social dances. Jonson describes the revels as a “*measures, corantos, galliards, etc.*,” but this brief list of dance forms does not do justice to their length and expansiveness (350). As noted in Chapter 1, the revels took up the lion’s share of the total masque event, and as Leeds Barroll shows, they functioned as a slowly dilating process of social inclusion and group involvement.²⁸⁷ In *Oberon*, the

²⁸⁷ Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*, 85-87.

revels followed the general pattern that Barroll describes, with some important exceptions. For the measures, Henry took out his mother, Queen Anna, while another masquer, the earl of Southampton, took out Princess Elizabeth.²⁸⁸ According to Trumbull, they danced a “pavane,” a slow, processional dance involving graceful sweeping movements.²⁸⁹ After the pavane, Trumbull notes, Henry took Anna out again “for a coranta which was continued by others, and then the gallarda began, which was something to see and admire.”²⁹⁰ And finally, he concludes, “The prince took the queen a third time for *los branles de Poitou*, followed by eleven others of the masque.”²⁹¹ In the branle, couples dance together in lines or circles, which means that the “eleven others of the masque” similarly took out partners of their own. Thus, Henry did not take out a new partner for every revels dance, but paired frequently with his mother. If other masquers acted in the same way, then the number of dancers on the floor would not have increased in quite the exponential way that Barroll describes. Similarly, the branle made the revels group shrink to its original number: the twelve masquers and their twelve partners. Combined, Barroll’s revels description and Trumbull’s account implies that the revelers slowly expanded in number, but probably not with the rapidity Barroll implies, and then contracted toward the end.

Nonetheless, in this moment Henry is a fulcrum for a gradual process of social aggregation on the dance floor and an expanding opportunity for *communitas*. The initial contact between him, the other masquers, and their original partners, sets off a chain-reaction of takings-out that slowly draws more and more courtiers into the center of the hall’s fictive fairyland space, and into the dancing group’s corporate body. As Ravelhofer

²⁸⁸ Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 206.

suggests, too, the revels dancing may have induced “muscular bonding” between participants.²⁹² And for onlookers not included in the dancing, the revels nevertheless offered an increasingly robust and accessible object for their own sense of embodied or social sympathy vis-à-vis the dancing group, one in which they would have been more and more likely to see courtiers connected to themselves, their families, and their factions.

Importantly, too, the transition from the pavane to the corantos to the galliards to the branle all occur without faux direction from the fairy singers on stage, who remain silent throughout the revels. In their silence, the fairy singers lend a fictive air of naturalness and shared desire to conventionalized movements that were bound to happen. Specifically, they offer the court an opportunity to feel that the masque’s fiction has translated into organic, self-directed group action. Without the singers fictively urging them on, the dancers appear to have willingly internalized a sense of shared vitality and communal desire for group action. And just as the satyrs did earlier, they orient that action around Henry. Even in their absence, then, the songs’ messages linger as a dramatic frame for non-dramatic activity. They continue to infuse ephemeral collectivity and communal value into a real-time experience that is, in itself, conducive to group bonding and affirming of courtly vitality.

IF YOU LONGER HERE SHOULD TARRY

In its final moments, the masque affirms these communal energies by once more performing the court’s liminality in space and time. After the revels, the faux moon that has been tracking across the upper stage gets replaced by “*Phosphorous, the day star*”

²⁹² Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 64. See also, William H. McNeil, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), 3.

(350-51). At his appearance, the fays call the masquers back to the scene. They sing, “Tell the high-graced Oberon / It is time that we were gone,” and, pointing into the Banqueting House,

Here be forms so bright and airy,
And their motions so they vary
As they will enchant the fairy,
If you longer here should tarry. (356-361)

Here, the singing figures on stage assert the court’s coherence and beauty by trying to draw figures out of the hall, through the proscenium. In the process, they also construct the hall as a realm of romantic distraction and delay. Its inhabitants, they claim, exude the sort of allure that often diverts questing travelers in romance narratives. In romance, spaces of delay are often enticing because they offer sensual pleasure, but in keeping with masque decorum, the dancers’ allure is sensuous and also neo-platonic. It comprises the “forms so bright and airy” and the varied “motions” of dancers in beautiful clothes. The masque juxtaposes this source of diverting dalliance with daytime, which it represents in the day star, who goes on to herald the coming day and command the court to bed: “To rest, to rest!” he sings, “The Moon is pale and spent, and winged night / Makes headlong haste to fly the morning’s light” (362-63). Thus, the masque asserts its own protected specialness as a time of romantic dalliance, an arena of experience that might “enchant the fairy.” But it does so in a negative way, by enjoining the masquers to retreat, heralding the coming day, and ordering the court out of the hall. On the brink of its own conclusion, then, *Oberon* asserts the ephemeral energies of courtly *communitas* precisely by precipitating its own spatial and temporal dissolution.

Importantly, the masque did not necessarily have to end this way. Instead, the fays could simply have declared the annual “rites” complete. Instead, Jonson and Jones chose to dramatize the end of night and the coming morning. In doing so, they create an

opportunity for the masque to articulate and to engineer one last experience of community in immediate, liminal time. And they make good on this opportunity by having the masquers remain on the dance floor, rather than retreating into the scene. Poised as they are, on the fictional cusp of the coming day, the masquers defy Phosphorous and dance one more time. According to William Trumbull, the satyrs and fauns join them in a “ballet of the sortie,” a dance featuring high-flying leaps.²⁹³ Thus, not only did the masquers opt to remain on the dance floor, in defiance of the coming day, but they also performed what was likely one of the most physically demanding and visually rousing performances of the entire masque. Staged as it is, in spite of Phosphorus’s warning, this final virtuoso performance involves both dancers and onlookers alike in a final experience of shared value for the group, the immediate present, the event, and the Banqueting House itself, all of which have been organizing principles for collective experience since the masque began.

²⁹³ Trumbull, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 206.

Chapter 4

Genii of the Gladder Grounds: Bedchamber, King, and Court in *The Golden Age Restored*

TROUBLE IN THE BEDCHAMBER

The Golden Age Restored stages an Ovidian and Virgilian drama of cosmological reconnection between the court and “Jove,” a mythological surrogate for James.²⁹⁴ In the opening antimasque, the audience occupies an Iron Age of violence and corruption, while James’s divine proxy speaks to the court through the figure of Pallas. After a crew of Iron Age antimasquers appear and dance, Pallas banishes them to make way for two more goddesses, Astraea and Golden Age, who help her call down a train of British poets from the scene’s upper stage. In turn, this group calls forth the masque’s principal dancers, a group of twelve “semigods” who fictionally restore the Golden Age to court and bring Jove’s presence into the Banqueting House (126). As they dance their ballets and the social revels, the masque celebrates them as agents of Jove’s “bounty” who have reconnected him with the earth (190). They are, as Pallas says, the “genii” of the Banqueting House, which transforms into the “gladder grounds” of James’s royal munificence once the masquers begin the revels (146). At the end of the masque, Pallas ascends to the scene’s upper stage, leaving Astraea and Golden Age behind to preside over a final round of dancing.

²⁹⁴ Ben Jonson, *The Golden Age Restored*, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1969), hereafter cited in text by line number. The masque inverts Ovid’s description of humanity’s descent from the idyllic Golden Age to the debased Iron Age in *The Metamorphoses*, ed. Robert Squillace, trans. Frank Justus Miller (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005), 5-7. Miller’s translation is prose, so all citations refer to page numbers. The masque also follows the prophesied return of the Golden Age in Virgil’s “Eclogue IV” (Virgil, “Eclogue IV,” in *The Eclogues* (Internet Classics Archive, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1994), <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/eclogue.html>, accessed June 3, 2015).

Golden Age's principal dancers were all members of James's private Bedchamber staff, including the king's rising new favorite, George Villiers.²⁹⁵ As an architectural and socio-political entity, the Bedchamber served as a buffer and conduit between the king and the court.²⁹⁶ Its gentlemen staffers performed or oversaw the domestic services most necessary to the king's private life, such as bathing and dressing. Within the contained privacy of the Bedchamber, they offered James social and, in some cases, romantic intimacy. And perhaps most importantly they also served James as an informal but powerful administrative office. They controlled access to his signature on official warrants, and to his person when supplicants and governmental ministers called on him. They managed his vast networks of patronage, which meant both accruing to themselves and also disbursing the benefits of James's favor. And in all these capacities, they were supposed to insulate James from the vagaries of courtly and Parliamentary factionalism, either by remaining above such factionalism themselves or by showcasing James's balanced commitments to different courtly interests and agendas.²⁹⁷ At stake in *Golden*

²⁹⁵ There is no proof that Villiers danced in *Golden Age*, but he almost certainly did. In January 1616, he was rising rapidly in James's favor and almost definitely at court. After being named a Gentleman of the Bedchamber in April, 1615, he was named James's new Master of Horse in January, 1616, the same month as the masque. See Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham 1592-1628* (New York: Longman, 1981). Jean MacIntyre writes that Villiers was the "de facto" principal masque in the middle years of James's reign ("Buckingham the Masquer," *Renaissance and Reformation*, 22 [1998]: 59-81). As for the rest of masquers, James Knowles, "Jonson in Scotland: Jonson's Mid-Jacobean Crisis," in *Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson: New Directions in Biography*, eds. Takashi Kozuka and J.R. Mulryne (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2007), and Douglas Lanier, "Fertile Visions: Jacobean Revels and the Erotics of Occasion," in *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 39 (1999), both assert that they were Gentlemen and Grooms of the Bedchamber.

²⁹⁶ The following on the Bedchamber's role at court draws generally on Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-25," in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 39 (1989), and "The revival of the entourage: the Bedchamber of James I," in *The English Court from the War of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey (New York: Longman, 1987), Linda Levy Peck, "Monopolizing Favour: Structures of Power in the Early Seventeenth Century English Court," in *The World of the Favourite* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), I.A.A. Thompson, "The Institutional Background to the Rise of the Minister-Favourite," in *The World of the Favourite*, and Michael B. Young, *James VI and I and the History of Homosexuality* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

²⁹⁷ See especially Cuddy's section on "Politics: from bureaucrat-minister to Bedchamber favourite" in "The revival of the entourage."

Age's allegory of royal and courtly reconnection, then, was the Bedchamber's functionality within the Jacobean court, and the masque's capacity to engineer that functionality in real time.

The masque itself went up in January 1616, when the Bedchamber's relationship with king and court was a pressing issue indeed.²⁹⁸ Since coming to London in 1603, James had staffed his Bedchamber almost exclusively with Scots gentlemen.²⁹⁹ And as that entity was the court's most robust channel of royal favor, this staffing decision frustrated English courtiers.³⁰⁰ It also contributed to ongoing tension between James and his English Parliament, especially when it came to matters of finance and the Union of the Scottish and English crowns.³⁰¹ In the years leading up to *Golden Age*, too, one particular gentleman represented the Scots staffing problem in microcosm, and also posed related challenges to the Bedchamber's functionality: Robert Carr, earl of Somerset. Somerset was a Scots Gentleman of the Bedchamber who over-monopolized James's favor in the early 1610s and then, in 1615, became embroiled in the infamous Overbury scandal along with his wife, Frances Howard.³⁰² The couple was accused of murdering Sir Thomas Overbury, a Gentleman of the Privy Lodgings and Carr's own erstwhile

²⁹⁸ Some critics and historians have dated *The Golden Age Restored* to the 1614-15 revels season and others to the 1615-16 season. See Martin Butler and David Lindley's gloss on his issue and its place in the masque's critical history in "Restoring Astraea: Jonson's Masque for the Fall of Somerset," *English Literary History* 61 (1994): 808-09. As Butler and Lindley note, John Orrell published an eye-witness account of the 1615-16 masques that definitively dates *Golden Age* in that revels season ("The London Court Stage in the Savoy Correspondence, 1613-1675," in *Theatre Research International* 4 [1979]: 83-84).

²⁹⁹ Before 1615, the only English member of the Bedchamber was Philip Herbert, earl of Montgomery.

³⁰⁰ Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 212-13.

³⁰¹ Cuddy, *Ibid.*, 201-02, and "Anglo-Scottish Union," 113-18.

³⁰² On Carr's career as royal favorite, see Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 32-36, and "Carr, Robert, earl of Somerset (1585/6?-1645)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed June 21, 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/4754>, and Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 212-13.

favorite. And in January 1616, they were in the Tower of London awaiting trial.³⁰³ Meanwhile, the rising Villiers was poised to ameliorate the Bedchamber's numerous problems. As an Englishman with powerful English backers, he not only replaced Somerset, but also made that entity accessible to a broader swath of the court's English population.

Critics have already noticed that *Golden Age* intervened in the Overbury affair and worked to influence relations between the mid-Jacobean Bedchamber and court. Martin Butler and David Lindley argue that Jonson created the masque to assuage trauma over Overbury's murder and the Somersets' disgrace.³⁰⁴ For them, the masque gave the court a ritualistic opportunity to eschew the offending earl and countess and to witness some of the scandal's main beneficiaries, such as William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, who replaced Somerset as James's Lord Chamberlain.³⁰⁵ Other analyses of the mid-Jacobean masques are not concerned with the Somersets, but with the Bedchamber and George Villiers. Jean MacIntyre shows how the new favorite used dance in those masques, including *Golden Age*, to curry James's favor.³⁰⁶ Douglas Lanier argues that James used those same masques to display his male intimates as objects of heterosexual desire and thereby enhance his own kingly "mystique" as a source of generative power.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ On the Overbury affair, see Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal*, and Martin Butler and David Lindley, "Restoring Astraea."

³⁰⁴ Butler and Lindley, "Restoring Astraea," 810.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 819.

³⁰⁶ Jean MacIntyre, "Buckingham the Masquer."

³⁰⁷ Lanier, "Fertile Visions," 328. For Lanier, there was tension between James's same-sex intimacies and his "authority" as "a national source of fertility" (328). In the midst of this tension, he argues, masques coercively "enlisted" the desires of female courtiers in a "campaign of erotic disambiguation" (349). Specifically, he says, masques celebrated female courtiers' "desires in the revels songs" as a way to "heterosexualize" the male masquers and stabilize James's self-posturing as a font of virility and generative power (349). Lanier's argument relies on anachronistic notions of sexuality and accordingly lacks explanatory power. As various theorists and historians have argued, homosexuality and heterosexuality did not exist in early modern England as terms or as stable categories of desire or identity. See Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Gay Men's Press, 1982), and Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978). In its anachronism, then,

And James Knowles shows how Bedchamber staffers used the mid-Jacobean masques to purvey an informal culture of entertainment at court, one that especially pleased James and showcased intimacy between the king and his closest male servants.³⁰⁸

In an earlier critical reading of *Golden Age*, Leah Marcus elucidates a related historical context for the masque.³⁰⁹ In the middle years of his reign, Marcus observes, James dealt with regular money shortages while also trying to improve English currency and to send members of his court back out to their country estates. James hoped a smaller court would help reduce expenditure, and he wanted aristocrats to re-establish good governance and traditional hospitality in the countryside.³¹⁰ In the midst of these problems and efforts, Marcus writes, James met resistance from Parliament and the City of London. Those entities resented James using unilateral proclamations to govern, his repeated demands for loans, and his lavish spending at court. In response, they rejected his legislative agenda, withheld money, and used civic pageantry to celebrate an alternative set of commercial values, which operated in contrast to the generosity and hospitality that James propounded at court. Marcus argues that *Golden Age* looks back at one City of London pageant in particular and reuses some of its themes and material in order to vindicate James's efforts to send aristocrats out into the country and his vision of royal magnanimity.

Though it has gone unnoticed, the three issues that critics foreground as context for the masque—Overbury, the Bedchamber and Villiers, and James's financial

Lanier's sees a conflict between James's sexuality and kingship where the king himself likely saw no conflict at all.

³⁰⁸ Knowles, "Jonson in Scotland," 263.

³⁰⁹ Marcus, "City Metal and Country Mettle: The Occasion of Ben Jonson's *Golden Age Restored*," in *Pageantry in Shakespearean Theatre*, ed. David M. Bergeron (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press).

³¹⁰ Though, as Marcus notes, James required that his own Privy Council and personal household remain in London, an exemption that presumably extended to the households of Anna and Charles as well (Ibid., 35-36).

problems—are all intimately related. As Neil Cuddy has shown, James, Parliament, and the City of London butted heads not only because of James’s governing style and lavish expenditure, but also because the main people to benefit from that expenditure were James’s Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, most of whom were Scots—before Villiers’s appointment, the one exception was Philip Herbert, earl of Montgomery.³¹¹ Thus, James’s profligacy was not merely a problem in itself, but because its scope was too small: it mainly benefited a coterie of Scots courtiers and too few English aristocrats.³¹² Accordingly, the masque celebrates James’s generosity, as Marcus suggests, but also speaks to more than just disagreements between James and his opponents outside the court. Also at issue in the masque are the Scots-dominated Bedchamber and its limits as a conduit of favor within the court. Somerset’s disgrace and the Overbury scandal threw these problems into relief and coincided with a partial solution, which came in Villiers’s ascendancy. As we will see, then, the masque does not merely try to smother the Overbury scandal or celebrate Villiers and the Bedchamber, as recent critics have suggested. It also showcases Villiers and the Bedchamber as a revitalized font of favor between James and the court.

As a masque, *Golden Age* is uniquely effective for such messaging because it is a real-time act of favor and service between James and his court. Typically, masques take this fact for granted or build it into their dramatic fictions early on. The result is a kind of ritualistic sharing whereby onlookers can commune with James and share the event with him. However, *Golden Age* engineers this experience only in the final movement of its

³¹¹ Cuddy focuses mainly on conflicts between James and Parliament over the Union of the Crowns. See “Anglo-Scottish Union,” 113-15, and “Revival of the Entourage,” 203-04.

³¹² For instance, in 1610, a former Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, Sir John Holles, submitted a formal complaint about the Scots Bedchamber to Parliament: “the Scottish monopolize his princely person, standing like mountains betwixt the beams of his grace and us” (quoted in Cuddy, “The revival of the entourage,” 205).

dramatic action, during the social revels. In its antimasque, by contrast, James gets to enjoy the event through his surrogate, Jove, while onlookers must endure a brief and uncomfortable moment during which the masque associates them with a fictive Iron Age, the Overybury affair, and a corrosive vision of royal service that, in turn, implicates courtiers' own motivations for attending the masque, which was ideally supposed to be an experience of royal favor. After this unconventional antimasque, *Golden Age* brings James and the court back together in theatrical experience and restores to the event a robust sense of royal and courtly communion. The agents of this restoration prove to be the court's own hierarchical structure within the masque event as well as Villiers and his fellow masquers. Ultimately, then, the masque uses theatre, court hierarchy, and James's male favorites as mechanisms for transitioning the court from an experience of royal alienation into a more conventional experience of royal bounty. Villiers and his fellow Gentlemen of the Bedchamber do not restore the Golden Age in any literal way, but they do remake the Banqueting House into "gladder grounds" where the court can partake of the masque as an experience of James's generosity.

JOVE IS PRESENT HERE

In the midst of the social revels, the masque dramatizes its own status as a real-time experience of royal favor and service, one wherein courtiers commune with James through their mere presence or dancing. On stage at this moment are the figures of Pallas, Astraea, and Golden Age, who sing with the help of four British poets: Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Spenser. Behind them stands a scene of refulgent natural splendor. Against that backdrop, Astraea allegorizes all ways the masque is an experience of royal power. She sings of the Banqueting House,

It is become a heav'n on earth
And Jove is present here:
I feel the godhead! nor will doubt
But he can fill the place throughout,
Whose power is everywhere. (214-18)

These lyrics hyperbolize basic realities of the masque event. James, or “Jove,” is indeed “here” in the hall and his canopied state is a central *cynosure* visible from “everywhere” in that space.³¹³ He suffuses the hall “throughout” and his “power is everywhere” because his presence makes the Banqueting House a realm where courtiers can pursue attenuated forms of intimacy and shared experience with their king. Relatedly, his presence also completes the hall’s hierarchical seating arrangements. Like *Astraea*, then, the court can literally “feel” James’s “power” because his presence energizes their embodied experiences of rank vis-à-vis one another. Royal “power is everywhere,” too, because the Banqueting House is part of Whitehall, because James built the hall, and because he funded the masque currently taking place inside.³¹⁴ In deeply practical ways, then, the masque is an experience of royal power because it wraps the court in a space and in an event that showcase James’s wealth, magnanimity, and capacity to produce lavish, large-scale, and communal festivity.

As she goes on, however, *Astraea* expresses how this experience of royal power is also an experience of royal favor. She sings of the hall,

This, this, and only such as this,
The bright *Astraea*’s region is,
Where she would pray to live;
And in the midst of so much gold,

³¹³ See Orgel’s foundational reading of the central state and hierarchized seating degrees in *The Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 10-11.

³¹⁴ *Golden Age* went up in James’s second Banqueting House. For a description, see Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: A History of the Royal Apartments, 1240-1998* (New York: Yale University Press, 1999), 75-90. On court masque funding, see Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 99-101.

Unbought with grace or fear unsold. (219-23)

As Butler and Lindley observe, Astraea's lyrics express an idealized vision of James's generosity.³¹⁵ According to Astraea, James's favor manifests as "gold," but it is not transactional. The court receives it "[u]nbought" and James doles it out "unsold." It is thus a disinterested act of "grace" that manifests James's magnanimity. However, Astraea's formulations do more than idealize royal favor in the abstract. In addition, they point to features of the Banqueting House that make it and the masque an arena of royal favor in real-time. When Astraea talks about living "in the midst of so much gold," she alludes to the royal "gold" that funded the Banqueting House and the event, the "gold" and gilding that adorn the hall's walls, columns, and ceiling, the "gold" material in the masquers' costumes, and the "gold" light that fills the hall.³¹⁶ Astraea's conception of royal favor is impossibly idealizing, then, but it dramatizes fundamental realities of the masque, wherein the court quite literally enjoyed a festive, interactive, and multimodal form of James's generosity.

Astraea invites the court to identify with her sense of the hall by pointing to it with a series of positive and "affective demonstratives."³¹⁷ As noted in Chapter 2, such demonstratives build community by layering emotion into referents and spatial relationships that speakers and listeners share in common. When Astraea declares, "This, this, and only such as this, / The bright Astraea's region is," her pronouns express a sense

³¹⁵ Butler and Lindley, "Restoring Astraea," 823.

³¹⁶ On the gilded and glittering materials that adorned the hall's interior and the masquers' costumes, see Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³¹⁷ As noted in Chapter 2, the term "affective demonstratives" comes from Mark Liberman, "Affective demonstratives," *Language Log* (Institute for Research in Cognitive Science at the University of Pennsylvania, 2008), <http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=674>, accessed May 27, 2015, and "Sarah Palin's distal demonstratives," *Language Log* (Institute for Research in Cognitive Science at the University of Pennsylvania, 2010), <http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=2240>, accessed May 27, 2015. It builds on Robin Lakoff's theory of "emotional deixis," or emotional rhetorical pointing ("Remarks on 'this' and 'that,'" *Proceedings of the Chicago Linguistics Society* 10: 345-56).

of wonder, joy, and gratitude that she gets to reside in the Banqueting House, because it is a place supposedly suffused with James's "gold" favor. Thus, her affective demonstratives imply the court's shared presence within the Banqueting House and also evoke part of that group's motivation for being there. As Martin Butler argues, masques always activated a salient form of courtly desire: individuals dressed lavishly, came to the hall, waited on James for hours, and, if they did not have an official invitation, risked being kept out, all because they wanted to enjoy a sense of courtly inclusion.³¹⁸ And as Astraea suggests, courtly inclusion does not just mean sharing space and theatrical experience with James, but also enjoying his "gold" generosity through the masque event itself. Thus, Astraea's affective demonstratives evoke a spatial and emotional reality that is fundamental to the masque. When she points out to "this" wondrous space of royal "grace" and royal "gold," she generates community by deictically evoking the audience's shared sense of location and their shared desire for royal favor.

As she prepares to kick off another round of social dancing, Pallas crystallizes Astraea's messages and expresses how the masque offers courtiers an opportunity to repay James's favor in real-time. She sings,

'Tis now enough. Behold you here
What Jove hath built to be your sphere;
You hither must retire.
And as his bounty gives you cause,
Be ready still without your pause
To show the world your fire.

Like lights about Astraea's throne
You here must shine, and all be one
In fervor and in flame;
That by your union she may grow.
And, you sustaining her, may know

³¹⁸ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 45.

The age still by her name;

Who vows against all heat or cold,
To spin you garments of her gold,
That want may touch you never;
And making garlands every hour,
To write your names in some new flower,
That you may live forever. (187-204)

Here, Marcus contends that Pallas points to the natural scene on stage and treats it as an image of the English countryside. By telling the court, “You hither must retire,” Pallas compels onlookers to return to their country homes, where James wanted his aristocracy to restore traditional English hospitality.³¹⁹ However, given the masque’s meta-theatrical and self-referential energies, an equally compelling possibility here is that Pallas points to the court in the hall—“Behold you here”—and affirms that space as a realm of royal favor. It is a “sphere” that James has built and in which he deploys his “bounty.” Pallas instructs the court to respond to that “bounty” by shining “Like lights about Astraea’s throne” and “in fervor and in flame.” These activities allegorize what the court is currently doing: sitting around James’s “throne” and dancing in splendid clothes that glitter in the hall’s candle-light.³²⁰ Pallas suggests that these activities will not just repay James’s favor, but provoke more in turn. She says Astraea will grant the court protection from “all heat or cold,” “garments of her gold,” freedom from “want,” “garlands every hour,” and immortality through poetry, i.e. “your names in some new flower.” And as with Astraea’s formulations, this vision of favor evokes basic realities of the masque event. In the Banqueting House, James has swathed his courtiers in “gold” and “garlands,” shielded them from “cold” outside, written them into the poetic “flower” that

³¹⁹ Marcus, “City Metal and Country Mettle,” 35-36.

³²⁰ On the splendor of masque-goers clothes, see Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 45. On the masquers’ costumes and the hall’s interior illumination see Ravelhofer’s *Early Stuart Masque* for her discussions of “Masque Costumes” and “Colours and Lights: The Costume in Motion.”

is the masque text, and involved them, if only momentarily, in favor that protects them from “want.”

Pallas magnifies her messages in a negative, spatial fashion. Throughout her song, she asserts the court’s coherence within the “sphere” of royal favor by moving away from it. Early Jacobean masques typically do this work through the proscenium, by calling masquers away from the dance floor, but with new scenic technologies at their disposal, Jonson and the masque’s designer opt to have Pallas ascend out of the hall, thereby performing the court’s integrity in vertical space, rather than horizontal space.³²¹ Similarly, Pallas asserts that integrity by imagining a global audience for the Banqueting House and contrasting the court’s current experience with the world outside. She tells the court to “show the world your fire,” and to “shine” in “fervor and in flame.” And in response, she asserts that Astraea will protect that group “against all heat or cold.” These rhetorical maneuvers are common in masques. As we saw in Chapters Two and Three, they show up in both *Blackness* and *Oberon*, where they dramatize features of the hall that are essential to its power as a shared space of court inclusion and royal generosity, namely its exclusivity, warmth, and illumination, which make it an object of desire for excluded courtiers, a dazzling nighttime cynosure, and space of shelter and vitality against the dark, cold world outside.³²²

When they celebrate the Banqueting House as an integral realm of inclusion and favor, Astraea and Pallas realize an experience that the court has been having since the very beginning of the masque—though, as I will show momentarily, this experience was

³²¹ Jonson deploys this technique through the proscenium in both *The Masque of Blackness* and *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*, in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), hereafter cited in text by line number. For this technique in *Oberon*, see the fairies’ call to the masquers amidst the revels (356-61). In *Blackness*, see the sea-maids and tritons’ call to the masquers after the ballets (277-83).

³²² In *Blackness*, Aethiopia makes a similar move when she constructs the Banqueting House as an empire that the world admires (219).

severely attenuated during the antimasque. As in all masques, the Banqueting House made royal centrality and court hierarchy mechanisms for inclusion in a protected arena of royal favor: courtiers had to embrace social stratification in the seating degrees around the state in order to get into and remain a part of the event. On at least one of the nights that *Golden Age* went up, the court could not have helped sensing this dynamic in a deeply topical fashion. In the midst of the Overbury scandal, James not only brought an Englishman into the Scots-dominated Bedchamber, but also disbursed Robert Carr's myriad titles and offices to other courtiers. Prominent amongst this group was William Herbert, the earl of Pembroke, who replaced Carr as James's Lord Chamberlain and was the first English aristocrat to hold that high-profile post.³²³ Against Carr, he represented an alternative channel for James's patronage. And as James's new Lord Chamberlain, his presence would have been palpable in the Banqueting House. He preceded James into the hall and his staff oversaw the masque event. They carried white staves as markers of their positions and in their conspicuous presence they signaled to the court an increased availability of royal favor for English courtiers.³²⁴

The other men who preceded and accompanied James into the hall signified in similar ways. Pembroke entered with ambassadors from France, Savoy, and Venice.³²⁵ In his courtly heyday, Carr had aligned with the Howards, his wife's family, who were generally pro-Spanish. And as Butler and Lindley observe, the ambassadors that attended

³²³ Victor Stater, "Herbert, William, third earl of Pembroke (1580–1630)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed May 27, 2015, www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/13058.

³²⁴ Jean MacIntyre notes the courtly significance of white staves in her discussion of Jonson's *Oberon*, where the young satyrs hope amongst other things to gain "ivory staves" from Prince Oberon ("Prince Henry's Satyrs," 97-98). Carleton notes the presence of the "white staves" inside and outside the Banqueting House in a letter to Chamberlain about *The Masque of Blackness* (quoted in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson [New York: Oxford University Press, 1950], 449).

³²⁵ Quaratesi, quoted in John Orrell, "The London Stage in the Florentine Correspondence, 1604-18," *Theatre Research International* 3 (1978), 174.

Golden Age “could scarcely have [made] a clearer or more dramatic announcement of the renewal of anti-Spanish, anti-Howard alignments at court.”³²⁶ After Pembroke and the anti-Howard ambassadors, James entered the hall with the duke of Lennox and the earl of Worcester.³²⁷ Lennox was a Scots kinsman of James’s and an established Gentleman of the Bedchamber while Worcester was an Englishman and James’s current Master of Horse.³²⁸ Accordingly, both men represented the most intimate echelons of James’s entourage and the most privileged recipients of his patronage. Of course, Worcester’s position as Master of Horse was not a Bedchamber position like Lennox’s, but it gave Worcester a level of royal access similar to the one Lennox enjoyed in the Bedchamber. As Master of Horse, Worcester accompanied James on his frequent hunts and sometimes acted as his secretary while in the countryside.³²⁹ Respectively, then, Lennox represented James’s ongoing commitment to keep Scots gentlemen in high-ranking household positions while Worcester signaled the king’s newly revitalized commitment to enfranchising English aristocrats, which the masque was soon to celebrate more explicitly by deploying Villiers as one of its principal dancers. Thus *Golden Age* concludes with a robust representation of royal favor and service that makes good on the image of expanded royal patronage that precedes its action.

³²⁶ Butler and Lindley, “Restoring Astraea,” 817.

³²⁷ Quaratesi, quoted in Orrell, “London Stage in the Florentine Correspondence,” 174.

³²⁸ R. Malcolm Smuts, “Stuart, Esmé, third duke of Lennox (1579?–1624),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed May 27, 2015, www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/67529, and Pauline Croft, “Somerset, Edward, fourth earl of Worcester (c.1550–1628),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), accessed May 27, 2015, www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/26005.

³²⁹ Croft, “Somerset, Edward, fourth earl of Worcester.”

YOU OFFENDING MORTALS

Normally, masque dramas opened in ways that either took for granted or made explicit meaning out of the experience of royal favor that inhered naturally in the Banqueting House, and that onlookers experienced so topically before *Golden Age*. A key element in this dynamic was a kind of ritualistic sharing whereby a masque invited courtiers to sense themselves engaged in the same festive event as James. On one hand, of course, the court never fully shared masques with James, because of the hall's hierarchized seating arrangements and the mandates of absolutist convention. This fact has been central to masque criticism since Orgel showed how it inhered in Jones's perspectival scenes, which gave James the best view in the house and stratified the court's visual access based on rank and favor.³³⁰ Within this hierarchizing experience, too, James must have engaged with the masque in unique ways, even in comparison with those high-profile figures that sat near him and enjoyed something like his viewpoint. Such figures typically included members of the royal family and European ambassadors, but regardless of their elevated status, they still could not have fully shared James's experiences because masques always singled him out for special praise.³³¹ They reminded him and the court that the event's spectacle and dancing derived from him and showcased his power in particular.

Regardless, masque inductions often start in ways that assume or overtly emphasize sharing between James and the court. In this way, they tap into the Banqueting House's containing integrity, decorative beauty, enveloping warmth, and universal illumination, all of which deemphasize the hall's hierarchizing elements and engineer

³³⁰ Orgel, *Illusion of Power*, 10-11.

³³¹ For instance, Anna sits with James on the state during *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, but the masque only builds her into its royalist panegyrics once, when it instructs a group of pages to dance so that their feet "always meet / In point to [James], and figures to express / The grace of him and his great empress" (292-94).

broad experiences of corporate splendor and shared presence in time and space. For instance, as detailed in Chapter 2, *The Masque of Blackness* is essentially a dilated moment of hospitable encounter that performs the court's integrity contra the shoreline and the masquers on stage. *Blackness* praises James as "Albion," celebrates his project for Union, and grants him magical powers over human appearance and mortality, but it generally treats the court and James as a singular entity being approached without (187). Similarly, *Oberon* is more aggressive than *Blackness* about praising James, and its fiction is more overtly about court structure, but in its opening moments sharing is still key. The scene and the satyrs playfully point up the hall's status as a special place for ephemeral dalliance and communal play. And even in its most hierarchizing moments later on, *Oberon* still invites the court to experience its action through and around James. As the king receives homage from Henry, *Oberon* signals to the court that it is a framing retinue and a corporate witness for royal power. It invites onlookers to sense their symmetry and stratified order in the seating degrees as precisely the thing that makes Henry's and James's transaction powerful as a display of princely integrity and kingly authority. As the Sylvan guard says, Henry's fictive obeisance celebrates James in particular, but is nevertheless an act of "homage to the British court" (254).

Golden Age opens in a way that seems at first to satisfy these conventions. When the proscenium curtain drops, it reveals a two-part scene that recreates the cosmological gap between heaven and earth in Ovid's Iron Age. In *The Metamorphoses*, the gods flee to Olympus during the Iron Age and abandon the earth because humanity has fallen into impiety, greed, and war.³³² There are no extant designs or rich descriptions for *Golden Age*'s visuals, but clues from Jonson's text and other contemporary reports suggest that

³³² Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 5-7.

the masque's opening scene showcases Ovid's heavens and his earthly Iron Age. First, Pallas appears amidst the upper stage in a "*chariot*" that slowly carries her downward (1).³³³ In the midst of her descent, just before the antimasquers appear, she describes a "tumult" emanating from a "cave" on stage, and then calls for a "soft cloud" to hide her (24, 28). Jonson describes this "*tumult*" as "*a clashing of arms*" (23). When the antimasquers appear, Jonson names their leader "Iron Age" and indicates that they dance to "*a confusion of martial music*" (32, 69). Similarly, Antonio Scarnafiggi, a Savoyard diplomat, reports that the antimasque was an image of "Mars," the Roman god of war.³³⁴ And after the antimasque, he reports, "Mars" disappears to reveal a "most royal palace."³³⁵ Later, the masque text indicates that this palace is transparent. Through its walls, Pallas points to the masquers sitting amidst faux "Elysian bowers" (125). When the palace opens to fully reveal those bowers, Jonson describes the scene as one of brilliant illumination, a "*scene of light*" (136). Scarnafiggi interprets it simply as the "golden age."³³⁶

Taken together, these clues indicate that the masque's opening scene comprises a glittering sky in its upper stage and a lower scene of disorder. The fact that Pallas hides herself in a "cloud" suggests that her "*chariot*" looks like a cloud itself, or that faux clouds surround it. By extension, then, Pallas probably descends from an upper stage similarly outfitted with cosmic or meteorological devices. In their upper stages, after all, masques frequently depict glorious and cloudy sky scenes, sometimes with architectural elements to house any figures that appear there. As for the lower stage, Jonson and Pallas indicate that it is a realm of "Iron Age" confusion and warlike action, and Scarnafiggi

³³³ Jonson writes his scene descriptions in italics. All quoted italics reflect his original text.

³³⁴ Scarnafiggi, quoted in Orrell, "London Court Stage in the Savoy Correspondence," 83.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

interprets the opening scene as “Mars.” These clues are telling when considered in light of masque design history and convention. For one, as a setting for antimasque, the opening lower scene must contrast subsequent scenes in form and spirit. Those later scenes show architectural order in a “royal palace,” cultivated natural splendor in “Elysian bowers,” and brilliant illumination in a “*scene of light*.” As contrast, then, the antimasque scene ought to show ruined architecture and wild nature. The scene’s “cave” suggests both elements, as caves often appear on masque stages amidst such settings.³³⁷ And popular Renaissance depictions of the Iron Age include both as well. For instance, Antonio Tempesta’s print of the Iron Age depicts martial conflicts taking place in a rustic wood with a cave in the foreground, a burning town in the middle ground, and a body of water and sea-battle in the distance.³³⁸ Tempesta’s images often inspired masque design and elements of his Iron Age resonate with other festival scenes from the middle decade of James’s reign, including the fortified port town and bay in *Tethys’ Festival* (1610), the overgrown ruins in *Prince Henry’s Barriers* (1610), and the rustic outcropping in *Oberon* (1611). Following these clues, then, the lower stage in *Golden Age* likely depicts a version of Tempesta’s image or a particularly ruinous mixture of wild nature and wrecked buildings, as in *Prince Henry’s Barriers*.³³⁹

Typically, such scenes offer the court two avenues for sharing theatrical experience and a sense of spatial coherence with James. For one, when deities appear amidst glittering sky scenes, they usually single James out for special praise while still

³³⁷ For instance, see Jones’s designs for *Prince Henry’s Barriers* and *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* in *Inigo Jones* (158, 165, 213, 217).

³³⁸ Antonio Tempesta, *Aetas Ferrea*, Biblioteca Casanatense, “Antonio Tempesta, opera diverse,” 20.A.II. 115, accessed online, <http://www.istitutodatin.it/biblio/images/it/casanat/20a2-115/dida/16.htm>, accessed May 20, 2015.

³³⁹ Inigo Jones drew on Tempesta’s work consistently when designing masques, especially when creating scenic landscapes. See John Peacock, *The Stage Designs of Inigo Jones: The European Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially his section on “Jones and Tempesta.”

treating the court as a coherent object of attention. In *Blackness*, Aethiopia performs both these functions. She identifies James as the magical figure who will blanch the nymphs white, but her primary purpose is to celebrate the hall and the court as “Britannia,” which she does using a string of affective demonstratives like the ones Astraea uses to identify the hall as a realm of James’s “gold” favor (219). In *Golden Age*, Pallas seems at first to add an active spatial dynamic to this effect. Jonson writes that she appears amidst a burst of “*Loud music*,” and then sings “*To a softer music*” as she descends (1-2). Accordingly, she draws attention into the scene’s upper reaches and then moves downward. And as she does so, she invites the court to sense its shared coherence around James in vertical space. Underneath Pallas, onlookers can experience themselves as a corporate object of divine descent organized both by her attention and her movement. Similarly, antimasque scenes like the one in *Golden Age* typically contrast the court and invite onlookers to feel coherent around James and against the proscenium. In this regard, too, masques often deploy antimasquers, such as the hags in *The Masque of Queens*, to act as physical, ethical, and sartorial foils for the court.³⁴⁰ They intensify the difference between scene and hall by behaving in ways that playfully oppose the glittering and ordered ethos of the group around James.

However, when Pallas starts to sing she subverts these conventions by associating the court with the Iron Age antimasque and linking both with the ongoing Overbury scandal. Immediately, she sings to the court,

Look, look! rejoice and wonder!
That you offending mortals are,
For all your crimes, so much the care
Of him that bears the thunder!

³⁴⁰ Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Queens*, in *Inigo Jones*, 130-53.

Jove can endure no longer
Your great ones should your less invade,
Or that your weak, though bad, be made
A prey unto the stronger. (3-10)

Here, Pallas turns the Iron Age scene and the whole court—except James, of course—into an allegory of the Somersets’ alleged crimes. And as Butler and Lindley observe, onlookers would have been primed by current events to hear Pallas’s words as a reference to the Overbury affair.³⁴¹ Just as the powerful earl and countess of Somerset allegedly murdered their lowly subordinate, Sir Thomas Overbury, so too does Pallas claim that the court’s “great ones” have preyed on their “weak” counterparts. These offenses, she goes on, have tried Jove’s patience, and he can “no longer endure” the court’s “offending.” This allegorical situation mirrors the current state of the Overbury scandal, as James would soon be presiding over the Somersets’ murder trials.³⁴² As their judge, James would have to enact a real-life version of the authority that his mythological surrogate, Jove, wields over the court and the fictional Iron Age. Thus, the masque dramatically reifies an actual and immediately relevant power asymmetry between James and his court. It associates onlookers with two disgraced and formerly powerful courtiers who are currently awaiting the king’s judgment for their alleged “crimes” against a lower-ranking courtier.

Pallas demands the court sense this association in the particular way that she addresses that group and constructs its relationship with the hall and James. As she descends, she sings down to onlookers and treats them like a singular entity, repeating “you” and “your” five times. She also invites onlookers to “Look, look!” around at one another and to see themselves as the unworthy recipients of Jove’s “care.” Thus, Pallas breaks from the way masques typically deploy divine figures. She does not address the

³⁴¹ Butler and Lindley, “Restoring Astraea,” 810.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 810.

court and James as a group. Nor does she address James directly, which means that the court cannot experience itself as a corporate witness for a transaction between her and the king. Instead, she acts as an emissary from James's surrogate, Jove, and she scolds the court on his behalf. Similarly, she constructs James's presence and the Banqueting House as a marker of the king's impatient condescension. When she tells the court to "Look" around at proof of that condescension, she implicitly points to the basic realities of the hall, where James is conspicuous in his elevated state and where the court sits amidst decorative and illuminated splendor. As outlined above, the end of *Golden Age* registers these things as positive markers of courtly inclusion and royal favor, but in the midst of the Iron Age antimasque they mark James's righteous superiority and patronizing "care." Thus, what ought to be a collective experience of court privilege around James plays out instead as a collective experience of subordination and guilt, one that the court cannot share with their king.

Critics have either not noticed how pointedly Pallas scolds the court at the beginning of *Golden Age*, or have been uncomfortable with the idea that her words might refer to a scandal so immediately relevant to James. Butler and Lindley, for instance, argue that Pallas's opening speech is aggressive in its talk of justice and reform, and that it alludes to the Overbury scandal, but they do not notice that Pallas directs her words at the court.³⁴³ Similarly, in their *Ben Jonson*, Herford, Simpson, and Simpson reject the idea that *Golden Age* deals with the Overbury affair based on the idea that Jonson would not have dared to reference that shameful event in a public performance before the king:

³⁴³ Butler and Lindley, "Restoring Astraea," 810-12. Butler and Lindley eventually do acknowledge Pallas's scolding tone, but see it mainly as a source of incoherence in the masque, something that Jonson could not balance with his attempts to celebrate the court and affirm its renewal in the wake of the scandal (819-23). Naturally, Marcus does not see Pallas speaking to the masque's audience, as her argument shows how the masque deals with wider issues outside the court. Accordingly, she suggests that Pallas's actions are directed at the Iron Age antimasquers, who follow her onto the stage and allegorize contemporary problems with Parliament and the City of London ("Occasion of Ben Jonson's *Golden Age Restored*," 36).

“after the humiliation in which the exposure involved King James,” they wonder, “what poet would have dared to point out such a moral and to declaim it to the King’s face?”³⁴⁴ Admittedly, Pallas’s admonishing tone is unprecedented in the larger genre. Normally, Jonson allows only the antimasque to verbally attack the court, as he does in *The Masque of Queens*. Pallas’s scolding is not surprising in itself, but because it comes from an induction presenter, because it associates the court with the antimasque rather than deriving from it. But as Jonson shows so brilliantly in *Oberon*, the court was never necessarily safe from association with a masque’s antic performances.³⁴⁵ The randy, playful satyrs in that masque romantically mirror the court’s own desire for royal favor, and they allegorically point up how such desire can manifest in inappropriate or frivolous ways, as when the satyrs want “pretty toys / To beguile the girls withal” (67-68).

And in *Golden Age*, the eventuality that Herford, Simpson, and Simpson suggest is so unthinkable does not in fact occur: Jonson does not remind James of his association with the Overbury scandal, but lifts him above it. As she admonishes the court, Pallas rhetorically evacuates James from the masque’s action, building layers of allegorical distance between him and the court. She not only speaks to the court on the king’s behalf, but also obfuscates his involvement in the masque’s action. Specifically, she refers to James only as Jove and she avoids pointing to him in the hall. The fact that she names James in this way is not particularly meaningful on its own. Masques often register James’s presence by referring to him as some divine personage. In *Blackness*, recall, James is “Albion” and “Neptune’s son” (187-88). However, Oceanus and Aethiopia

³⁴⁴ *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, ed. Herford, Simpson, and Simpson, 546. They also sight bibliographic evidence for their claims, but Scarnafaggi’s eyewitness account of the masque in 1616 discredits that evidence.

³⁴⁵ Lesley Mickel makes a similar argument in her discussion of Ben Jonson’s antimasques, which she claims propagated a “strategy of dissent” that Jonson used to simultaneously satirize, patronize, instruct, delight, and flatter his courtly audiences (*Ben Jonson’s Antimasques: A History of Growth and Decline* [Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1999], 2).

articulate those monikers in a deictic way, while pointing to James's in the state and describing his power over the microcosmic empire that inheres in the Banqueting House. In these ways, James and his mythological persona are one and the same. In *Golden Age*, by contrast, James is weirdly disconnected from Jove. The king is on the state, but Pallas does not point to him when she refers to his mythological surrogate. Instead, she moves and speaks in a way that suggests Jove hovers within the fictive sky scene in the upper stage. As critics have observed, this idiosyncrasy shows Jonson's desire to disassociate James from the Overybury scandal.³⁴⁶ But more importantly, it also complicates the court's ability to hear James incorporated into their experience of the masque's action. The masque invites James to see Pallas as his mouthpiece and to imagine the court around him in a position of subordination. For their part, the court can still see James in their midst, but must hear him involved in the masque through several layers of allegorical and rhetorical remove.

WEAPONS TO RUIN JOVE AND HEAVEN

As she continues to descend, Pallas says Jove will reconnect himself to earth and restore the Golden Age to court, but before those things can happen, antimasquers burst from the cave on stage. In some ways, they seem to perform the typical functions of antimasque: to organize the court and James in shared experience through contrast. Iron Age emerges first and then calls to "Avarice," who he identifies as the grandparent of all the evils he is about to call to the stage. These evils include figures such as "Fraud," "Slander," and "Treachery" (40-41, 47). Under his leadership, Iron Age wants his crew of evils to "ruin Jove and heaven" (62). In this way, they allusively plan to reprise the

³⁴⁶ Butler and Lindley, "Restoring Astraea," 813.

Titan's attack on Olympus, which follows the Iron Age in *The Metamorphoses*.³⁴⁷ According to Scarnafaggi, they look like "furious and enchanted knights," and Jonson indicates that they dance to "two drums, trumpets, and a confusion of martial music" (69-70). In their violent aims, martial costumes, and antic behavior, then, they perform the Iron Age's disorder. And through contrast they point up the audience's beautiful clothes, ordered arrangement around James, and relatively decorous behavior.³⁴⁸

Pallas affirms these dynamics in the way she responds to the antimasquers, but she does nothing to attenuate their allegorical association with the court, which she established moments earlier when she accused that group of "crimes" and aligned them with the Iron Age antimasque scene. Pallas verbalizes the antimasquers' threat and declares that she must "hide" from the Iron Age's "profaner eyes" (28). Then she conceals herself in a "soft cloud" (28). As non-antimasque figures often do, then, Pallas responds to the antimasquers as transgressing outsiders who emphasize the audience's decorous integrity through contrast. All the while, though, her words do not undercut her earlier assertions linking the court with the Iron Age. In a radical subversion of masquing convention, she demands that onlookers sense their own coherence threatened by an allegorical version of themselves. Meanwhile, James remains identified with the lofty Jove. Even on the brink of antimasque, *Golden Age* continues to involve the court in a theatrical experience of distance and alienation from their king.

³⁴⁷ Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, 6.

³⁴⁸ The emphasis here is on the phrase "relatively decorous," as behavior amongst masque audiences was not always calm and ordered. Ironically, Ben Jonson features in an anecdote that proves this rule. As noted earlier, he and his friend, Sir John Roe, were thrown out of a masque at Hampton Court during the revels season of 1603-04, probably Samuel Daniel's *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*. See Ian Donaldson, "Jonson, Benjamin (1572-1637)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed May, 11 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/view/article/15116>.

Thus alienated from James, onlookers see an antimasque performance calculated to further implicate them in the Overbury scandal. Pallas has already linked the Iron Age and that scandal, but she makes the connection more explicit as the antimasque commences. She accuses Iron Age and his followers of “insolent rebellion” and claims that their disordered “spirits” get stronger, or “rise,” along “with their counsels” (29-30). Counsel was central to service relationships in the Jacobean court, such as the one Carr maintained with James. As a servant with administrative and secretarial duties, Carr had a capacity for “counsel” that operated in multiple directions. As James’s representative he mediated between the king and other governmental administrators, including the Privy Council, and could thereby direct James’s ideas, prerogatives, and “counsel” outward into other areas of government.³⁴⁹ And as James’s intimate favorite in the Bedchamber, he could also offer personal “counsel” on politics and household issues.³⁵⁰ Accordingly, Pallas’s accusations speak directly to popular fears about the Overbury affair, in which observers saw a chain of corrosive influence stretching between the Somersets and King James.³⁵¹ Where her earlier accusations scolded onlookers for crimes directed downward through court hierarchy, against lowly or “weak” courtiers, her description of the Iron

³⁴⁹ Thompson argues that James’s Bedchamber functioned partly as a response to “a crisis of government growth” and the “increasing administrative complexity of the state,” which outgrew James’s singular capacities (“Institutional Background to the Rise of the Minister-Favourite,” 16). In the midst of this problem, James and other European monarchs doled out responsibilities to their favorites and intimate attendants, which often just involved the drudgery of day-to-day governmental administration and household management. But with Carr, Thompson argues, the quasi-secretarial favorite became especially powerful in his own right. In 1612, James made Carr his acting secretary of state on top of his position as Lord Chamberlain.

³⁵⁰ To modern observers, this state of affairs might seem laden with the possibility for corruption that Pallas attaches to it, but it was highly functional for James. As quasi-politicians, the royal favorites served as lightning rods for political criticism and partly shielded James from the ill will of the Privy Council, Parliament, and English public. In this way, the Bedchamber may actually have offered James a greater degree of political agency and policy-making freedom. See Cuddy, “Revival of the Entourage,” 217, and Thompson, “Institutional Background to the Rise of the Minister-Favourite,” 19.

³⁵¹ Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal*, and Butler and Lindley, “Restoring Astraea,” 812-13.

Age associates onlookers with crimes directed upward, at the people from whom they might desire favor and to whom they might aspire to offer “counsel,” namely James.

The antimasquers bear Pallas’s accusations out with gusto. As “furious and enchanted knights,” their costumes evoke a perverse version of knighthood, and thus a perverse version of royal service. James knighted men when elevating them to high-ranking positions in his household, as he did for George Villiers in 1615, and he made strategic socio-political calculations when naming his servants to the chivalric Order of the Garter.³⁵² Moreover, as Butler and Lindley have shown, the antimasquers clearly allegorize James’s former favorite and the Overbury affair in the evils that they personate, such as “Avarice,” and in the way they explicitly threaten James’s mythological surrogate, “Jove.”³⁵³ Of course, as Herford, Simpson, and Simpson suggest, it is not immediately clear that “Avarice” makes sense as the principal evil attached to such an allegory. Sir Thomas Overbury, after all, was considerably less wealthy and powerful than the Somersets, and he was not murdered for his money.³⁵⁴ Allegedly, though, the Somersets conspired against Overbury because he opposed their marriage. And as a dynastic alliance between the reigning royal favorite and a powerful aristocratic house, that marriage was indeed a vehicle for monetary gain and other potentially

³⁵² See Cuddy, “Revival of the Entourage,” 214-15. James knighted Villiers immediately before naming him a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and he did so conspicuously, in a staged moment of impromptu ritual in Queen Anna’s Bedchamber. Soon thereafter, Villiers stood with James as he presided over a procession for two new Knights of the Garter. One of the new Garter knights was a member of the Knollys family, and he rode with a train of Howards. The other new Garter knight was Sir Thomas Erskine, the Viscount Fenton, James’s Groom of the Stool, and one of Villiers’s supporters. The display was intended to celebrate Villiers, the new royal favorite, and Fenton, one of James’s longest-standing Bedchamber servants, while also showcasing James’s conciliatory approach to the Howards, whose fortunes had recently waned with the outbreak of the Overbury scandal.

³⁵³ Butler and Lindley, “Restoring Astraea,” 810.

³⁵⁴ Herford, Simpson, and Simpson argue that one of all the Iron Age evils, “Treachery” is indeed suggestive of the Overbury affair, but claim that “the context making Treachery the child of Avarice steers clear of any personal interpretation. Overbury was not murdered for his money” (*Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, 546).

corrosive energizes that show up amidst Iron Age's train, including not just "Avarice," but also "Ambition, Pride," and "Treachery" (45, 47).³⁵⁵ Thus, as much as the antimasquers act as a foil for the court's coherence and beauty, they also associate the court allegorically with a real-life drama of corrupted royal service.

In spatial terms, the fictional threat that Iron Age sets up between his crew and Jove's lofty "heaven" resonates with English attitudes toward the Scots Bedchamber more broadly. They even employ the same geographical metaphor: mountains. For their part, the antimasquers take the place of Ovid's Titans, who scale Olympus and attack the gods after Astraea flees the earth in the Iron Age. Ovid writes, "the Giants essayed the very throne of heaven, piling huge mountains, one on another, clear up to the stars. Then the Almighty Father hurled his thunderbolts, shattered Olympus, and dashed Pelion down from underlying Ossa."³⁵⁶ Similarly, in a formal complaint to Parliament in 1610, Sir John Holles remarked, "the Scottish monopolize [James's] princely person, standing like mountains betwixt the beams of his grace and us."³⁵⁷ Mountains do not function in precisely the same way in these two texts, but the association between Olympus, the Titan's mountainous siege engine of Pelion and Ossa, and the dysfunctional Scots Bedchamber are clear. For Ovid, the gods reside on lofty Olympus while the mountains of Pelion and Ossa are mechanisms the Titan's use to attempt transgressive access to that divine space. For Holles, "the Scottish" wall James's favor off from English courtiers like

³⁵⁵ As another interpretation of these allegorical evils, too, they might point not just to the Somersets' alleged actions, but to Overbury's. As Carr's principal favorite, he opposed the Howard alliance partly because it stood to attenuate his own influence and intimacy with Carr. Keeping his patron away from the Howards, then, was a strategy Overbury may have used to maintain his own wealth and power, which in turn made him a viable object for accusations of "Avarice," "Ambition," "Pride," and "Treachery." On Overbury's motivations for opposing the Carr-Howard match, see Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal*, 50-56.

³⁵⁶ Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, 6.

³⁵⁷ Holles, quoted in Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 205.

mountains blocking out the sun. In both formulations, then, mountains are both a means of cordoning off divine or royal space and a means of attacking or misusing that space.

With Overbury and the Scots Bedchamber thus linked to the Iron Age and the court, *Golden Age* goes on to expand its antimasque so it implicates the court by more than allegorical association. Iron Age calls his attendant evils to “Rise, rise then up” and commands Avarice “teach them all our pyrrhic dance” (49). He wants to use that “dance” to “triumph” over “this enemy so great” (50-51). He then explains to his followers that if they can “defeat” Jove, they will be “the master of the skies / Where all the wealth, height, power lies” (52, 54-55). Thus, Iron Age’s evils enact a grotesque version of rising “up” in royal favor and his most important follower, “Avarice,” evokes in negative terms the benefits at the heart of James’s relationships with his favorite servants. Where the king and his retinue were supposed to operate in mutual reciprocity, “Avarice” evokes the possibility that courtiers might pursue royal patronage simply out of greed.³⁵⁸ Moreover, in using “pyrrhic dance” to attack “Jove and heaven,” the antimasquers pervert a strategy many male courtiers used to attract and sustain James’s favor: dancing. And the realm that Iron Age imagines attacking is an allegorical version of the Bedchamber itself. In Whitehall and other royal spaces, the Bedchamber is precisely “Where all the wealth, height, power lies.” In these ways, Iron Age does not just enhance the court’s allegorical associations with Carr and the Scots Bedchamber, but incriminates any courtier who might overstep themselves in their attempts to gain or maintain royal patronage.

Thus, even if onlookers are unwilling to hear themselves implicated in Somerset’s brand of corrupted royal service, Iron Age demands that they investigate their own

³⁵⁸ *Golden Age* develops this ideal formulation in the midst of the revels, when Pallas and Astraea construct the Banqueting House as an arena of James’s “bounty” (190) in which the court organically responds by “sustaining” Astraea with their “fervor,” “flame,” and “union” (195-96). On these ideals of royal service, see Butler and Lindley, “Restoring Astraea,” 819-23.

motivations for pursuing James's favor in the Banqueting House. As he riles his followers up for their "pyrrhic dance," he asks a round of pointed rhetorical questions:

Which of you would not in a war
Attempt the price of any scar
To keep your own states even?
But here, which of you is that he,
Would not himself the weapon be
To ruin Jove and heaven? (57-62)

These questions come after Iron Age makes the masque's first deictic reference to James. Unlike Pallas, that is, he does not speak of "Jove" as though he hovers unseen in the upper stage, but identifies Jove as "this enemy" sitting in the hall. Similarly, Iron Age identifies the antimasquers' location as "here," and by masque convention this pointing reference must indicate the Banqueting House. Playfully, he registers the antimasque's threat as something that is not abstract, but alive to James and the court in the Banqueting House. As Pallas and Astraea celebrate during the revels, courtiers participate in masques partly because they want access to James and royal favor, which is to say the "power" and "wealth" that Iron Age locates in the metaphorical "skies" and "heaven" of Whitehall, the Banqueting House, and the Bedchamber. In his rhetorical questions, then, Iron Age invokes the desires that bring the court to the masque. And he suggests they involve an inherent potential for corruption and ruination. In this way, his questions are not directed at the crew of eleven evils, but at the court they allegorically represent. *Golden Age* involves the court in a grotesque vision of the relationship they currently have with James in the Banqueting House, where any of them might "the weapon be / To ruin Jove and heaven."

Ultimately, this inverted masque experience coalesces in the antimasque dances, which represent a nadir in the masque's campaign to dissociate the court from James. Normally, when antimasquers dance, they fully realize their own power to organize king

and court through contrast. When this event happens in *Golden Age*, however, the audience has been linked with the antimasquers in multiple ways. When they watch that martial crew dance, then, the court is primed to see their actions as physical manifestations of the threat they themselves pose to both the king and to the masque's integrity. Dance had the power to provoke such a response because, as noted in Chapter 3, it was fundamental to the way the masque manifested royal favor and service. Just as the masque was a large-scale gift that James offered his court, dance was the primary way courtiers served James in turn. Later in the masque, Pallas will say as much when she tells the masquers to "give those light and airy bounds / That fit the *genii* of these gladder grounds" (145-46). In this directive, MacIntyre argues, Pallas requests the high-flying dance style that especially delighted King James, and that courtiers such as Villiers used successfully to curry royal patronage.³⁵⁹ Accordingly, as they watch the "furious and enchanted knights" dance, the court sees a perverted version of the very behavior that many of their own number will later enact in the revels as a form of royal service.

Thus, *Golden Age* works to engineer a particular kind of courtly *communitas* that derives from shared abjection and universal distance from James. Where masques typically differentiate James's and the court's theatrical experiences only in degrees of visual access and socio-political centrality, *Golden Age* differentiates them in kind. Specifically, Pallas makes it such that the king and the court do not just encounter the event from separate visual vantage points or separate positions within the court's socio-political hierarchy, but from radically separate positions in the event's ideologically meaningful action. James gets to be Jove while the entire court is a homogeneous group of "offending mortals." Of course, these fissures between king and court are playful and

³⁵⁹ MacIntyre, "Buckingham the Masquer," 62. Villiers famously used his dancing skills to please James during the performance of Jonson's *Pleasure Reconiled to Virtue*. See Busino's account of the masque, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 283.

fictional, and on their own they might not be particularly meaningful or powerful, but they dramatically reify two powerful spatial mechanisms for distancing the court from their king: the royal state in the Banqueting House and the Bedchamber. Normally, that elevated platform simply gives James his ideal viewing position and symbolizes his authority. At the beginning of *Golden Age*, however, it morphs into a visual and spatial reminder that James gets to experience the masque as the removed Jove while the rest of the audience must sense themselves linked to the Iron Age and the Overbury affair. And as such, it localizes in the Banqueting House a theatrical version of the distance that the Bedchamber maintains between the king and the court in day-to-day life. *Golden Age* leaves onlookers to experience collectivity as a form of shared corruption, universal subordination, and unbridgeable distance between their group on one hand and James on the other.

JOVE'S SEMIGODS

As fictive “semigods” and agents of Golden Age restoration, Villiers and the other masquers do not re-tether James and the court in any literal way, but re-establish the masque as a shared experience of favor and service. The masque prepares onlookers for this eventuality when Pallas previews the masque’s fictive Golden Age. Since Jove “can endure no longer” the court’s bad behavior, she sings,

[He] therefore means to settle
Astraea in her seat again,
And let down in his golden chain
The age of better metal.

Which deed he doth the rather
That Envy may behold
Time not enjoyed his head of gold

Alone beneath his father. (11-18)

Here, Pallas evokes the “golden” scenic revelations and costumes that the masquers will later bring into the hall. Thus, she indicates that the masquers’ fictional role as Jove’s “semigods” will have a corollary in the masque’s salubrious social realities. Specifically, she indicates that they will magnify the event’s decorative splendor, illumination, and vitality, which will manifest in their “glorious palace,” their dazzling “Elysian bowers,” their brilliant “*scene of light*,” their glittering costumes, and the dancing that will set those costumes off.³⁶⁰ As Pallas and Astraea demonstrate during the revels, such spectacles and activities help make the masque an inclusive experience of royal generosity. Accordingly, as Pallas asserts the masquers’ fictive capacity to enact divine reconnection, she also evokes the real ways they will enhance the masque as a shared experience of James’s favor.

Pallas makes this dynamic more explicit when she says Jove’s restored Golden Age will attract outside “Envy” (16). In this formulation, she previews the enveloping experiences of collective beauty, inclusion, warmth, contained integrity, and favor that she herself will layer into the masque’s social revels later on—as she will do, for instance, when she tells onlookers to “show the world” their “fire” so Astraea will “spin” them “garments of her gold” to shield them “against all heat or cold.” As in that later moment, Pallas here anticipates the “Envy” of the outside world in order to make social meaning out of the hall’s architectural and decorative qualities. Masques make this rhetorical maneuver all of the time, but in *Golden Age* Pallas does so specifically when looking forward to the gentlemen masquers. Accordingly, she makes Villiers and other Gentlemen of the Bedchamber agents of social cohesion and positive group affect in the

³⁶⁰ On the visual and aesthetic interaction between costumes and masque lighting, see Ravelhofer’s *Early Stuart Masque* for her discussions of “Masque Costumes” and “Colours and Lights: The Costume in Motion.”

Banqueting House. And thus she implies the masquers will bring into the Banqueting House an augmented experience of royal favor and collective inclusion. In *Blackness* and *Oberon*, of course, Anna, Henry, and their fellow masquers perform a similar function, but in those masques they augment positive dynamics already in play. In *Golden Age*, by contrast, Villiers and the other principal dancers will restore to the hall a form of experience that has been attenuated since the masque started.

The antimasque dances pave the way for such experience. Even as they constitute a low point for the court, they also perform a powerful preparatory function for the masquers. Specifically, they vindicate the masquers from association with Carr and also use him as a scapegoat for the larger and longer-running controversy over Bedchamber staffing.³⁶¹ That controversy, recall, derived from James's near total refusal to open the Bedchamber to English courtiers. Villiers was a major exception to this rule and he offered English aristocrats a new in-road to James's patronage. By featuring Villiers and other Bedchamber gentlemen as masquers, then, *Golden Age* does not simply eschew the old favorite by valorizing the new; it also uses the old favorite as a stand-in for the larger staffing controversy that Villiers helped to quell. As we have partly seen, then, the Iron Age and his evils speak and act in ways that evoke popular criticisms of the Scots Bedchamber. As a troupe of evils assaulting "Jove and heaven" in order to keep their own "states even," they playfully represent the way Scots monopolized James's favor and partly stymied the court patronage system that flowed from him. Thus, rather than develop and confront the Bedchamber staffing controversy as an issue in its own right,

³⁶¹ When viewed through the lens of Robert Carr's alleged crimes, *Golden Age* looks precisely as Butler and Lindley see it, as a ritualistic attempt to eschew the former royal favorite and his wife ("Restoring Astrea," 819). However, this reading of the masque misses out on the ironic fact that *Golden Age*'s masquers are Gentlemen of the Bedchamber and erstwhile peers of Carr's. Thus, the masque's Golden Age heroes come from the very socio-political entity that enfranchised Carr, that helped precipitate the Overbury scandal, and that was currently enduring its own form of controversy.

the antimasque allegorically yokes that larger and longer-running problem to the Overbury affair. That scandal, after all, created a convenient and compelling scapegoat, because it was more localized in scope, more immediately traumatic, and more acutely in need of processing and amelioration.³⁶² Thus, when the antimasquers playfully disperse, they pave the way for Villiers and his fellow dancers to appear as uncorrupt conduits between James and the court.

In this regard, the masque banishes its antimasquers in a unique way calculated to make further symbolic space for the masquers. Before *Iron Age* first appeared, Pallas declared that she would eventually “frustrate all with showing but my shield,” which presumably carries the image of Medusa (31). In one version of the Gorgon myth, Athena transformed Medusa’s hair into snakes and made her gaze turn people to stone after Poseidon raped her in one of Athena’s own temples. Subsequently, Perseus decapitated Medusa and took her head as a weapon while Athena adopted the Gorgon’s image on her breastplate or shield. In *Golden Age*, then, Pallas uses her Gorgon-headed shield on the antimasquers. She cries, “Die all that can remain of you but stone, / And that be seen awhile, and then be none” (77-78). Jonson’s stage directions indicate simply that the antimasquers “*metamorphosed and the scene changed,*” so it is not totally clear how the antimasquers transformed. Most likely, they retreated into scenic apparatuses that enveloped them in or revolved to replace them with faux statues. Such a maneuver would simply have reversed a technique for revealing principal dancers, who sometimes appeared on masque stages within statues or columns that revolved, parted, or lowered to showcase their human inhabitants.

³⁶² On the Overbury scandal as a source of collective courtly “trauma,” see Butler and Lindely, “Restoring Astraea,” 816.

Regardless of how *Golden Age* achieved the effect, however, it makes literal and thematic space for the masquers' appearance. Rather than summarily banishing the antimasquers, as was more typical, Jonson and the masque designer go out of their way to turn them into stone first. Subtly, this maneuver evokes and deepens the antimasquers' transgressive significance. In *The Metamorphoses*, Athena punishes Medusa because of an act of sexual and spatial transgression, because Neptune raped the young maiden in Athena's temple.³⁶³ And the first time Perseus uses her head as a weapon, he does so in response to another spatial transgression. After Perseus defeats the sea-monster Ammon, rescues Andromeda, and secures her hand in marriage, Andromeda's father, Cepheus, invites Perseus into his home for a banquet. Andromeda's uncle, Phineas, desires her and is disgruntled at her sudden attachment. Accordingly, he starts a fight with Perseus, thereby transgressing the laws of domestic hospitality and defiling his brother's home. After murdering and fending off attackers, Perseus turns Phineas to stone with Medusa's head.³⁶⁴ Through its mythological associations, then, the antimasquers' transformation points up the fictional threat they pose to the socially sacred space of the Banqueting House and, by extension, the threat that Carr and the Scots gentlemen pose to James's Bedchamber.

More importantly, however, this transformation polices transgressive movement in royal space in a way that implicitly sanctions the masquers' impending appearance. When masques utilize such transformations, they typically do so in the opposite direction, by revealing principal dancers. Conversely, *Golden Age* transforms its antimasquers into stone and keeps them on stage before banishing them outright. This maneuver is significant because it halts a perverse version of the dancing that Villiers and other male

³⁶³ Ovid, *The Metamorphoses* 81-84.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 85-90.

courtiers did in order to gain royal favor, the sort of dancing that the *Golden Age*'s principal courtiers are about to perform within moments of the antimasque itself. Of course, masques abruptly halt antimasquers, typically by banishing them from the stage. But *Golden Age* uniquely makes a point of displaying its antimasquers in a state of calcified suspension. This unconventional bit of theater signals something unique about the Iron Age and his evils. Dancing does not merely symbolize their threatening nature. Rather, the threat they pose to the masque and to "Jove and heaven" inheres in their dancing. Subtly, *Golden Age* preemptively celebrates the masquers' "light and airy bounds" by overtly policing the antimasquers "pyrrhic dance" and weighing them to the ground in stone.

As the antimasquers fully disappear from the scene, *Golden Age* previews the shared experience of inclusion and favor the court will enjoy during the social revels. The Iron Age scene disappears and reveals the "royal palace" that Scarnafiggi describes in his report. Based on set-designs from other mid-Jacobean masques, the "palace" itself was probably a romantic Palladian structure painted in perspective on a scenic shutter, perhaps resembling the "Cupid's Palace" that Jones designed for an unknown masque circa 1619-20.³⁶⁵ And as Pallas will indicate later in the masque, the gentlemen masquers sit behind it in "Elysian bowers" that evoke Ovid's Golden Age. In one way, this new scene emphasizes elements of the hall and masque event that organize king and court in shared space and theatrical experience. The scene augments the Banqueting House's interior beauty and mirrors the court's coherent splendor in the hall. It is also a liminal space, with two groups poised conspicuously on either side: the masquers within, and the court without. By generic convention, onlookers know the masquers will soon emerge

³⁶⁵ For instance, see Jones's palace designs for *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* (1611), in *Inigo Jones*, 212-219, his classical city street view for *The Vision of Delight* (1617), in *Inigo Jones*, 274-75, and his "Cupid's Palace," in *Inigo Jones*, 328-29.

from the scene, descend for their ballets, and then draw out increasing numbers of courtiers for social dancing. But for now, both groups sit on opposite sides of a threshold, waiting on the cusp of an encounter. Like the faux hospitable meeting in *Blackness*, this encounter offers king and court an opportunity to sense shared unity in space against the prospect of incorporating other people into that unity.

More complexly, this scenic revelation also brings the king and court closer together in experience by offering them a singular object of anticipation: the gentlemen masquers and, amongst them, the new royal favorite, George Villiers. For his part, James probably anticipated the masquers because he was enamored of Villiers and because he enjoyed watching his favorites dance.³⁶⁶ Pallas signals this fact later when she sends the masquers out to “give those light and airy bounds” (144-45). Here, MacIntyre observes, Pallas commands two different kinds of dancing, one involving “graceful turns and shuffles” and the other involving high-flying leaps and capers.³⁶⁷ Both were appropriate for masques, but James especially liked the latter, and George Villiers was famously good at it.³⁶⁸ For their part, the rest of the court probably anticipated the masquers for a variety of reasons, the most basic of which aligned with James’s. The masquers were attractive, accomplished dancers and their coming performance constituted the highlight of the masque event.³⁶⁹ Also, their costumes were splendid. Scarnafiggi reports their

³⁶⁶ Knowles, “Jonson in Scotland,” 259-60, Lanier, “Fertile Visions,” 330-32, and MacIntyre, “Buckingham the Masquer,” 59-62.

³⁶⁷ MacIntyre, “Buckingham the Masquer,” 62

³⁶⁸ Again, see Busino’s description of Villiers in *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 279-284. In addition to noticing how Villiers responded to James’s call for more vigorous dancing and appeased the king’s anger, Busino also takes care to note how exemplary Villiers’s dancing was: “We counted 34 capers in succession cut by one knight, but none matched the splendid technique of the Marquis [of Buckingham]” (283).

³⁶⁹ As Barroll observes, the one element of the masque that most persistently concerned contemporary observers was the identity of the events’ principal dancers (*Anna of Denmark*, 101). See also Ravelhofer’s *Early Stuart Masque* for her extensive discussion of “Theatre Dances” and dynamics of “Discipline” and “Pleasure” in masque dances. In general, Ravelhofer shows how masque dances took up the lion’s share of

chivalric outfits “were enriched with both gold and silver and were judged to be worth three hundred pounds sterling each.”³⁷⁰ Thus, they were objects of anticipation not just because of their impending ballets, but also because they were especial objects of visual delight.

In the masquers, then, onlookers have a splendid mirror and an object of anticipation that attenuates the power asymmetries from the antimasque and fosters a renewed dynamic of theatrical sharing. Both king and court can collectively marvel at the new scene, see it as a reflection of their corporate splendor, and anticipate the masquers while, at the same time, the precise nature of their responses must differ. After all, the gentlemen dancers come from the royal Bedchamber and their costumes are theatrically amplified symbols of privileged status. As “knights” decked out in “gold and silver,” that is, they evoke the chivalric facets of royal service and the lux sartorial benefits of royal favor, such as gifts of clothes and cloth.³⁷¹ Because of its inhabitants and faux bowers, too, the scene evokes the private Bedchamber and the Privy Garden, two coveted spaces of royal intimacy. Thus, the scene presents James with an image of the authority and privileged intimacy he enjoys with his favorites. Meanwhile, it presents the rest of the court with a vision of royal power and patronage mediated through the Bedchamber and its staff, just as those things are in the day-to-day life of Whitehall. Yet, as the scene affirms experiential and political asymmetries between king and court, it does so while simultaneously trying to provoke shared theatrical delight and anticipation, rather than a stratifying sense of subordination and guilt. As in the real life of Whitehall, the

a total masque event and constituted on of the event’s most valued, anticipated, and work-intensive elements.

³⁷⁰ Scarnafaggi, quoted in Orrell, “London Court Stage in the Savoy Correspondence,” 83.

³⁷¹ On clothing and cloth as rewards for royal service, see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18-32.

Gentlemen of the Bedchamber mediate between king and court, offering them a mechanism for sharing theatrical experience.

The masquers will enact their mediating power later, when they descend to dance. When a masque's principal dancers move onto the dance floor, the event typically narrates their movements as a transaction with King James. Thus it is in *Blackness* and *Oberon*, when the dancers descend into the fictive light of James's radiance or perform obeisance to James and Anna in state. In such moments, the rest of the court becomes a secondary object of approach. They witness the transaction between the masquers and the king, and can sense themselves approached by the masquers inasmuch as they sit around James. Thus, the masquers affirm the court's status as a "train" framing James in the hierarchical seating degrees. In *The Golden Age Restored*, however, the choir on stage suggests that the masquers appear, not to approach James, but to act as his emissaries: they are his "semigods" sent back to earth to restore the Golden Age. Sitting where he does, James is still an object for the descending dancers, but the masque does not acknowledge this reality nor build it into theatrical action. Accordingly, the masque demands that the court encounter the masquers in precisely the way they ought to encounter the Bedchamber and its staff in real life: as proxies of James's power and channels of royal favor, which the court can only experience at a remove, through the conduit of the Privy Lodgings.

HOW WITHOUT A TRAIN?

The masque does not send the masquers out to dance right away, but goes on to establish hierarchical structure as the social mechanism through which the court will access royal favor in the revels. In this way, it does not merely set up a theatrical context

for the masquers' fictive heroism, but continues organizing the court around them in a way that mirrors their actual function in court life. Once the masquers have been revealed in their "Elysian bowers," Pallas calls the figures of Astraea and Golden Age down to join her. They appear as Pallas did earlier, and as they descend, they ask a series of questions about Jove's intentions and the court's worthiness:

Astraea & Golden Age. And are we then
To live again
With men?
Astraea. Will Jove such pledges to the earth restore
As justice?
Golden Age. Or the purer ore?
Pallas. Once more.
Golden Age. But do they know
How much they owe
Below?
Astraea. And will of grace receive it, not as due? (89-99)

As they descend, Astraea and Golden Age dramatically realize the audience's subordinate relationship with James, and they require onlookers to hear and see themselves approached once more as the objects of condescending "grace." James, meanwhile, can continue experiencing the masque's classical deities as proxies of his own power. These dynamics remind the court that, as much as they now share an object of anticipation and attention with James, their encounter with that object must still be different. Poised within the scene, the masquers stand to unify king and court in theatrical experience, but they also affirm the asymmetrical nature of their relationship and their respective encounters with the masque. As agents of Jove's "grace" they simultaneously mediate between king and court and also reify the hierarchy that holds them apart, just as they do in the real life of Whitehall.

This experiential difference between king and court is broad, comprehending just James on one hand and the rest of the audience on the other, but the masque also tries to

amplify hierarchical differences between individual audience members as well. As noted previously, all masques pursue this strategy to a certain extent through their perspectival scenes and hierarchical seating arrangements. But in *Golden Age*, this experience is unique because it theatrically manifests the Bedchamber's capacity to organize courtiers in layers of royal access. The scene on stage, after all, represents a spectacular version of the Bedchamber and Privy Garden. Accordingly, getting a good view of the scene is not just a matter of appreciating its perspectival effects, but also appreciating the symbol of royal favor depicted there. Thus, the masque activates a powerful spatial and social reality in court life: just as the Privy Lodgings organize courtiers in stratified experiences of distance and proximity relative to James, so too does *Golden Age* organize courtiers in a similarly stratified experience vis-à-vis the handful of Bedchamber staffers on stage. Thus, the masque invites the court to encounter the gentlemen dancers, not with promiscuous universality, but in the sort of hierarchized way necessary in an absolutist court where royal favor is a coveted and limited resource.

Moving on, though, *Golden Age* also invites onlookers to experience hierarchy as an effective social reality that will enable the masquers to appear and fully restore the hall as an inclusive arena of royal favor. Once Astraea and Golden Age have descended, Pallas welcomes them and invites them to "reign" (105). However, Astraea and Golden Age are concerned and they wonder, "how without a train / Shall we our state sustain?" (106-07). In response, Pallas calls down a troupe of English poets to "wait upon" Astraea and Golden Age: "Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate," and "Spenser" (116, 118). Given the masque's relentless concern with symmetry and mirroring between court and stage, it is likely that the poets array themselves to either side of the goddesses after they have descend. And once assembled, they help Pallas call the masquers to dance. In a practical sense, then, the poets are theatrical human resources. They add to the brilliantly costumed

group on stage, augment the goddesses' trio with four new singers, and then help them initiate the masque ballets in song. But they have a more complex role, too. As a "train" for Astraea and Golden Age, they mirror the court in both form and function. They reflect that group's ordered arrangement and dramatize their socio-political duties vis-à-vis James. Like the poets, the court in the Banqueting House is a "train" that sustains King James through collective theatrical and social endeavor. According to the ethos of the masque, at least, courtiers participate in the event as a hierarchized body that watches royal power manifest on stage and reflects that power back at James through sartorial splendor and hierarchical positioning in the seating degrees.

By symbolic extension, the poets translate the court's hierarchical arrangement into meaningful action when they help Astraea, Pallas, and Golden Age call forth the masquers. That action transforms the masque into the broad and inclusive experience of royal favor that Pallas promises when she anticipates the Golden Age. For instance, just before the scene opens to reveal the masquers, Pallas draws her companions' attention to where those figures sit "far within the shade" of the scene's "bowers." Then she calls on her fellows to "wake" the gentlemen from sleep:

[*Pallas.*] These must we join to wake, for these are of the strain
 That justice dare defend, and will the age sustain.
Choir. Awake, awake, for whom these times were kept,
 Wake, wake, wake, as you had never slept. (128-31)

Here, Pallas and the choir deploy a set of affective demonstratives that point to the masquers and to the court's present moment in time. Their pointing phrases—"these must we join to wake" and "these times were kept"—express desire and urgency, dramatize the masque's ephemerality, and build fictive tension into an otherwise conventional transition from antimasque to masque ballets. Moreover, they invite the court to share these emotions by attaching them to referents that onlookers already see and understand,

which is to say the masquers and the group's limited time in the Banqueting House. As always, then, Jonson uses "emotional deixis" to layer social meaning into the event's basic realities.³⁷² Where onlookers know to anticipate the masquers as the figures who will quite literally "sustain" the rest of the event through social dancing, Pallas and her fellows try to translate that anticipation into shared desire and ephemeral urgency, which in turn implies collective value for the present moment and foreshadows the egalitarian *communitas* that will dominate the social revels.

The masque deploys substantial theatrical resources to make this scenario of shared desire and collective value a viable option for court experience in real-time. The choir that calls the masquers is the largest that has sung in the masque so far and it thus fills the hall with unprecedented musical profusion. As Yi-Fu Tuan argues, music has a spatial quality: it reverberates above and behind listeners, where they cannot see, and reminds them of their location. In the Banqueting House, then, the choir augments the court's awareness of their location and gives sonic life to the hall's integrity and expansiveness.³⁷³ Similarly, the palace frontispiece opens to reveal the masquers' "bowers" in a blazing "*scene of light*," which enhances the hall's interior brilliance and decorative beauty. In turn, the goddesses and poets on stage translate that visual brilliance into more musical experience as they lyricize the light and scenic profusion revealed behind the palace frontispiece. For instance, *Astraea* and *Golden Age* sing,

Astraea. Now peace,
Golden Age. And love,
Astraea. Faith,
Golden Age. Joys,
Both. All, all increase. (137-41)

³⁷² Lakoff, "Remarks on 'this' and 'that,'" 345.

³⁷³ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 15.

These auditory, scenic, and lyrical effects fulfill Pallas's promises from earlier in the masque. By musically and visually magnifying the Banqueting House's size, coherence, and splendor, they enhance those qualities of the masque event that create a shared experience of corporate splendor and royal favor.

THE GLADDER GROUNDS

Within this broad social experience, the masquers are a fulcrum. As they descend to the dance floor for their initial ballet, they transition *Golden Age* from its induction into the dancing that will dominate the event's remaining hours. Accordingly, the masque constructs their movements as an act of royal service and the hall as an arena of favor: they are the "*genii*" of the Banqueting House's "gladder grounds," where they "give those light and airy bounds" that are especially pleasing to King James. As their ballets proceed and as they take out court ladies for the revels, too, the masque continues to frame their actions in these terms. Throughout, the masque builds onlookers and their various modes of engagement into its fictions. From the stage, the goddesses and poets suggest that onlookers partake of and beget royal favor simply by watching the masquers dance, and they later suggest that the mixed-gender revels fully restore a fictive Golden Age of royal favor to the Banqueting House. In these ways, the masque moves toward Pallas's and Astraea's concluding messages about the hall as a coherent "sphere" of James's "bounty." Rhetorically, *Golden Age* insists that masque dancing, spectatorship, service, and favor all reinforce one another in a magical cycle, one that suffuses the Banqueting House with James's "gold" favor and makes it into a place where Astraea can "feel the godhead" of James's presence.

As a program for enjoying royal favor, these rhetorical formulations seem facile, but the masque layers them into actions and space already replete with shared experience and shared meaning. On one hand, if dancing is an act of royal service and the hall an arena of royal favor, then only part of the court gets to fully partake of those experiences on the central and privileged space of the dance floor. There, in the midst of the choreographed ballets and the social revels, the masquers show off their centrality and their intimacy with James. They eventually bring increasing numbers of courtiers to join them on the dance floor, but they remain conspicuous as a costumed coterie of privileged royal favorites. And the inclusive revels that they initiate do not—and cannot—fully incorporate the whole court. In many ways, these facts seem to belie the masque’s messages about dancing and spectatorship as broad, shared experiences of royal favor. On the other hand, though, Villiers and the masquers signal new or burgeoning court realities in which many onlookers would have had an actual social and political stake: eschewing the Somersets and the Overbury scandal and the subsequent opening of royal favor, which depended on the related fact of Villiers’s own ascendancy. And in the midst of the ballets and revels, the masque celebrates these realities while also dramatizing mechanisms for positive group experience and *communitas* that inhere naturally in the Banqueting House, the masque event, and dancing.

Villiers and his virtuosic dancing skills are at the center of this dynamic. In Orazio Busino’s account of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, Villiers appears to have singlehandedly rescued the masque from disaster, sustained the event as a pleasant group experience, and provoked positive affect from both James and the court. In the midst of that masque’s mixed-gender revels, Busino reports, James suddenly cried out, “Why do

not they dance? What did you make me come here for? Devil take all of you, dance!”³⁷⁴ He didn’t exclaim because there was no dancing going on, but because he wanted a different quality of dancing. At the time, Busino explains, the gentlemen masquers “were tired and began to lag,” which suggests their “bounds,” so to speak, were not as “light and airy” as James liked to see them.³⁷⁵ Then, in response to James’s command,

[Villiers] sprang forward, and danced a number of high and very tiny capers with such grace and lightness that he made everyone admire and love him, and also managed to calm the rage of his angry lord. Inspired by this, the other masquers continued to display their powers one after another.³⁷⁶

This account points to some of the vagaries and risks that could crop up during masques, namely physical fatigue and royal displeasure. It also shows the genre’s capacity to generate fellow feeling. Busino states that Villiers elicited admiration and “love” from the court.³⁷⁷ More implicitly, too, he hints at relief spreading throughout the Banqueting House once Villiers managed to “calm” James down. Most importantly, however, Busino’s account demonstrates how singular courtiers and small groups, such as Villiers and his “other masquers,” could engineer broad and positive experiences within the hall. Critics such as Knowles, Lanier, and MacIntyre might suggest that such performances were primarily transactions between the king and his favorites, or that they

³⁷⁴ Busino, quoted in *Inigo Jones*, 283.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁷⁷ Similarly, Tom Bishop argues that masques gave courtiers opportunities for displaying “charisma,” a kind of ineffable mixture of attractiveness, charm, and physical prowess that royals and aristocrats cultivated in order to center themselves within court culture, to attract affection and loyalty, and to curry favor with their superiors. As Bishop argues, however, taking part in a masque, especially as a principal dancer, was necessarily a risk, because it opened the courtier up to pseudo-public display, where he or she might falter, lag, or displease his or her audience. See Bishop, “The gingerbread host: tradition and novelty in the Jacobean court masque,” in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

communicated something about James's agenda to the court.³⁷⁸ At the same time, though, they were also mechanisms for sustaining the masque event and generating salubrious social effects.

Golden Age telegraphs this fact to the court when it sends Villiers and his fellow dancers out onto the dance floor. The choir tells them,

Move, move then to these sounds.
And do not only walk your solemn rounds,
But give those light and airy bounds
That fit the *genii* of these gladder grounds. (142-146)

Here, the masque conflates several mechanisms for engineering group experience. For one, it deploys objects of anticipation that the court shares with James, the masquers, and it encourages the court to witness their dancing as a display of royal service and favor. As we have already seen, the gentlemen dancers are the "*genii*" of the dance floor, privileged by James's patronage, and they pay that privilege back to the king by dancing in ways particularly suited to the "gladder grounds" of his favor. Thus, as onlookers enjoy the dancers' performance, the masque invites them to feel themselves partaking of royal intimacy, if only by proxy. In this way, of course, the court seems to function as a sort of corporate voyeur, as though passive spectatorship is the only way they can access the communion of favor taking place on the dance floor. However, the masque demands that courtiers hear themselves participating in that transaction. Using more affective demonstratives, the choir points to "these sounds" and "these gladder grounds," two referents that the court already shares, and layers into those referents a sense of satisfied anticipation for the dancers' "solemn rounds" and "airy bounds." In this way, major

³⁷⁸ Knowles, "Jonson in Scotland," 264-65, Lanier, "Fertile Visions," 332-35, and MacIntyre, "Buckingham the Masquer," 62-64.

facets of the court's ongoing experience in the hall become structuring principles through which the masquers enact their show of royal intimacy.

By identifying the dance floor as “these gladder grounds,” too, the masque also gives primacy to that space and the hall around it, rather than the stage, as the realm of James's restored favor. This maneuver is significant both for the Ovidian allegory that underlies it and for the way it reverses spatial dynamics from earlier in the masque. In *The Metamorphoses*, the Golden Age is a time when humans exist in a precise balance between spatial confinement and spatial freedom.³⁷⁹ They live within the bounds of their nations—traveling abroad is part of what precipitates the Iron Age—and within those bounds they range with unencumbered freedom, partaking of the land's natural abundance, much as Caliban does on his island before Prospero and Miranda arrive, and much as Montaigne's cannibals do in their native Brazil.³⁸⁰ As an inspirational source for the masque, then, Ovid's Golden Age evokes spatial dynamics that would have been appealing, but also foreign, to English courtiers. In contrast to his practice as king of England, James maintained his Scottish court like the nations of the mythical Golden Age. Within the structural confines of his palaces, that is, he lived out the private and public facets of his life in one contiguous suite of rooms that included a Great Chamber, a Presence Chamber, a Bedchamber, and a private Cabinet for work. No public-private distinction inhered in these spaces, and stratifications of access were much simpler than

³⁷⁹ Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, 5.

³⁸⁰ Michel de Montaigne, “Of cannibals,” in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965), 150-59. Montaigne describes the cannibals of Brazil as a hunter-gatherer society that lives in “repose and happiness” (158). Similarly, Caliban speaks of his island as a place where he once had total freedom and enjoyed the wide-ranging outdoor activities that freedom allowed him. See, for instance, the way he eagerly describes hunting and gathering for Stephano and Trinculo in William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999), 2.2.157-69. For a discussion of Caliban's relationship with the island and its positive, cannibal-like qualities, see Tom Lindsay, “‘Which first was mine own king’: Caliban and the Politics of Service and Education in *The Tempest*,” in *Studies in Philology* 113 (2016) (forthcoming).

those that inhered in James's English Privy Lodgings.³⁸¹ This is the sort of royal intimacy, Pallas implies, that the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber are entering as they descend to dance.

Thus, where *Golden Age* previously celebrated the masquers as the semigods who would restore such intimacy, it now suggests that the Banqueting House already contains the "gladder grounds" of James's favor. And in this way, the masque completely reverses the attitude that Pallas, Astraea, and *Golden Age* previously expressed with regard to the hall's horizontal register. As they descended earlier in the masque, their vertical movement and their admonishing tone encouraged onlookers to sense themselves organized below James in a collective position of subordination and guilt. In contrast, the court's arrangement in horizontal space now marks their presence within James's "gladder grounds," as though the dancers are not creating that space but merely activating it when they "give" the appropriate styles of dance. With their affective demonstratives, then, the choir invites onlookers to completely reimagine a spatial referent that has been fundamental to their experience of the masque so far. The dance floor was carpeted in green felt and here the masque treats it as an extension of the "Elysian bowers" on stage, inviting the court to imagine it as a refulgent lawn transported into the depths of winter and into the Banqueting House. Thus the masque encourages onlookers to sense their own in-the-round arrangement as a corporate bodily frame for that fictional *Golden Age* space.³⁸² After all, by sitting around it, the court makes the dance floor intelligible and meaningful as an open realm of action to be filled and moved around. And in this way,

³⁸¹ On differences between James's Scottish and English household see Cuddy, "The revival of the entourage," 176-80.

³⁸² On the different sorts of carpets that adorned courtly dance floors, see Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Court*, 85-86. Ravelhofer suggests that green was standard for court masques while floors may have been carpeted in black if dancing was to follow or precede the performance of a tragedy.

the masque fully restores to the court that which it spent the entire antimasque withholding: a comfortable and conventional sense of masquing space, one in which the Banqueting House can be taken for granted as a realm of inclusion and favor.

The masquers make good on this restoration when they perform their first ballet. As they dance, they not only perform service and favor in real-time, but simultaneously offer the court its first opportunity for that embodied sense of sympathy and unity that Ravelhofer suggests some onlookers might have felt as they watched masque dances.³⁸³ For onlookers unable, unwilling, or disinclined to enjoy the ballets in this way, however, the masque is at pains to construct other parts of their experience as marks of court inclusion and involvement in royal favor. After the first ballet concludes, Pallas, Astraea, and Golden Age interpret the court's reaction:

Pallas. Already? Do not all things smile?
Astraea. But when they have enjoyed a while
 The age's quickening power—
Golden Age. That every thought a seed doth bring,
 And every look a plant doth spring,
 And every breath a flower—
Pallas. Then earth unplowed shall yield her crop,
 Pure honey from the oak shall drop,
 The fountain shall run milk. (148-56)

This song verbalizes the faux natural abundance on stage and the hall's decorative splendor while allegorizing actual royal bounty in Ovidian and Virgilian terms. Accordingly, it dramatizes the opening of favor that Villiers represents on the dance floor and that the masque showcased so overtly in its opening moments, when Pembroke, his staffers, and the anti-Howard ambassadors entered the hall along with James's Scots and English friends, Lennox and Worcester.³⁸⁴ Thus, the masque suggests that royal bounty

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 107.

³⁸⁴ Carleton refers to the Lord Chamberlain's staff as "white stafes" (quoted in *Ben Jonson*, Vol. 10, 449).

and court spectatorship operate in a dynamic feedback loop. The “age’s quickening power,” or James’s favor, manifests in the hall and in the gentlemen dancers, it provokes the audience’s pleasure—“enjoyed” and “smile”—and then the audience’s spectating begets royal favor in turn. As they watch the masquers, their “every thought,” “every look,” and “every breath” create the Golden Age foison through which the masque manifests and allegorizes royal bounty.

On its face, this seemingly magical relationship between favor, dancing, and spectatorship is both simplistic and impossibly ideal, as it suggests that the court can simply think, see, and breathe the Golden Age into being. However, it nevertheless offers the court a mechanism for feeling involved in the masque’s fiction of restored favor. When the audience thinks, looks, and breathes in the hall, as Golden Age says they will do when responding to the new age’s “quickenning power,” they enact behaviors that have all along given them access to the Banqueting House as a realm of corporate splendor and group coherence. Since they entered that space, or since James and his retinue entered, courtiers have been able to look around at their resplendently dressed group stratified in space around the state. They have been able to observe the hall’s beauty and illumination, to sense its containing integrity, and to feel its warmth contra the world outside. They have been able to see signs of resettled royal favor and register the Somersets’ conspicuous absence. And they have been able to breath in the warm smells of candle smoke and other bodies—though, to be sure, such smells would have reminded courtiers of their shared presence in space, but would not necessarily have been pleasant. Pallas, Astraea, and Golden Age are being impossibly ideal, then, when they suggest that the court can create a golden arena of royal favor simply by thinking, looking, and breathing. But their ideas also speak to simple and already meaningful social experiences that the

court has necessarily been having since the event began. And they yoke those experiences into the masque's fiction of kingly generosity and corporate coherence.

More practically, and perhaps more powerfully, the masque also yokes those experiences to high-stakes issues in the life of the court. Pallas and her fellows remind the court of these issues when they go on describing the burgeoning Golden Age. First, Pallas tells onlookers that watching the gentlemen will bring about a time of ethnic balance and unity: "The thistle shall the lily bear, / And every bramble roses wear" (157-58). Respectively, thistles and brambles symbolize Scotland and the Stuarts while lilies and roses symbolize England and the Tudors. By building them into her preview of Golden Age profusion, Pallas invites onlookers to hear their engagement with the dancing as something that will bring an end to ethnic imbalance caused by the Scots-dominated Bedchamber. Similarly, the choir goes on to argue that the emerging Golden Age will be a time when the earth will know no "harmful weed," nor "barren fern, nor mandrake low, / Nor mineral to kill" (163-65). These noxious materials make sense as foils for the glowing foison that abounds in the earlier part of the song, and they also allude to the Overbury scandal. Specifically, they sound like the stuff of poison, which the Somersets and their accomplices supposedly used to murder Overbury. Hard on the heels of Scots-English unity, then, the engaged spectators will also bring about a time symbolically devoid of the violence recently enacted by the Somersets. Thus, Jonson's poetry tries to make the masque into shared experience that realizes new and deeply important court realities: the presence of a new English favorite in the Bedchamber—a rose to balance all those thistles—and the amelioration of recent traumas caused by the Somersets' disgrace.

Nowhere is this effect more palpable or literal than in the song that initiates the mixed-gender revels. After the masquers dance their second ballet, Pallas and the poets

tell them they must take the ladies of the court out to dance in order to fully restore the Golden Age. Specifically, the poets sing that the masquers and their female partners will bring back a bygone time of chaste, neo-platonic eroticism, a time when,

The male and female used to join
And into all delight did coin
That pure simplicity
Then feature did to form advance,
And youth called beauty forth to dance,
And every grace was by,
It was a time of no distrust,
So much of love had nought of lust. (170-77)

Butler and Lindley show that this song looks backward at the disgraced countess of Somerset, who had been accused of sexual impropriety and licentiousness.³⁸⁵ But at the same time, it also constructs the gentlemen dancers as objects of desire and romantic dalliance for the ladies they are about to take out in the revels. More implicitly, it constructs them as potential marriage partners for those ladies, at least for the unmarried ones. Here, Lanier would contend that James wants to obfuscate his own same-sex desires and use his favorites to enhance his image as a font of national vitality and fertility.³⁸⁶ But the poet's song hints at a more complex relationship between the king, same-sex desire, and marriage. James encouraged or arranged advantageous marriages to enrich his male intimates, and aristocratic families pursued such marriages for their daughters, as a way to access royal favor.³⁸⁷ The Somersets' marriage was an example

³⁸⁵ Butler and Lindley, "Restoring Astraea," 818-19.

³⁸⁶ Lanier, "Fertile Visions," 327.

³⁸⁷ On James's interest in his favorites' marriages see again Peck, "Monopolizing Favour." Villiers himself benefited from an advantageous match. Two years after James created him Marquis of Buckingham, he encouraged his young favorite to ask for the hand of Katherine Manners, the daughter of the earl of Rutland and a substantial heiress. Manners was Catholic, however, and James insisted that she convert to the Church of England before marrying Villiers, which she did. See Lockyer, "Villiers, George, first duke of Buckingham."

of such an arrangement, with James's favorite attaching himself to the most powerful family at court. So, in eschewing lustful sexuality, the gentlemen dancers are not just abjuring the specter of the Somersets or celebrating a particular Jacobean mythos, but embracing a real mechanism of favor. Accordingly, while the latter half of the masque involves onlookers in an experience of royal bounty via the masquers, the revels are a time when onlookers can pursue or imagine accessing that bounty quite literally, either by dancing with one of James's Bedchamber servants, or by watching a female friend or family member do so.

In the midst of the revels, then, the masque pauses to tell the court that the restorative mixed-gender dancing has indeed worked, deploying the sorts of spatial rhetoric that we reviewed at the beginning of this chapter. "What change is here," *Astraea* sings, "I had not more / Desire to leave the earth before / Than I have now to stay" (207-09). The change that *Astraea* refers to is available to the whole hall: the dance floor is now full of resplendently dressed ladies dancing with James's male intimates.³⁸⁸ *Astraea* wraps this reality into the masque's fiction by declaring that it has made her unwilling to leave. Her desire to stay allegorically performs the return of the Golden Age and inverts the spatial dynamics that the masque deployed earlier to involve onlookers in a theatrical experience of distance from James: she now uses the hall's vertical register to express the value and beauty of the court, rather than its corruption and unworthiness. And most importantly, it offers onlookers and dancers alike an opportunity to experience the ongoing social dances in the terms laid out by the masque's drama. Where dancing encourages a sense of corporate sympathy between dancers and spectators, and muscular bonding between participants, *Astraea's* declarations give courtiers a dramatic frame in

³⁸⁸ Scarnafiggi reports, "in the golden age they performed a masque in which there were innumerable lords and ladies burdened with an inestimable treasure of jewels" (quoted in Orrell, "London Court Stage in the Savoy Correspondence," 84).

which to interpret those feelings. And that frame, of course, locates them in the “gladder grounds” of James’s favor, intermingled with the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber who have restored his bounty and his presence to the Banqueting House.

BRIGHT ASTRAEA’S REGION

In its final moments, *Golden Age* overtly conscripts the women of the court into its experience of revitalized contact between James and his aristocratic establishment. Ultimately, the masque suggests, James’s restored favor manifests in the mixed-gender revels, when men and women are joined in chaste pairs. Lanier sees this maneuver as a strategy of misdirection and cooptation: James bolstered his own image of paternal and kingly potency and obfuscated his homosexual desires, specifically for men such as Villiers, by enlisting female desire for those men. Lanier’s suggestion ignores the fact that James encouraged his male favorites to marry, namely as a mechanism for further advancing their courtly careers. But it does point up a larger issue in the masque that goes largely unmentioned in my own argument above. As critics and historians have observed at length, the Overbury scandal was as much about Carr and the Bedchamber as it was about Carr’s wife, Frances Howard. At court and in English culture generally, that scandal mobilized strong misogynistic sentiment that focused on everything from Howard’s behavior, to her sexuality, to her clothes.³⁸⁹ Accordingly, it would worthwhile to investigate the glowing vision of royal favor that permeates *Golden Age*’s final moments and consider the extent to which female courtiers were truly invited into that

³⁸⁹ See Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal*,” Butler and Lindley, “Restoring Astraea,” and Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind: Texts & Contexts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

experience. Such an investigation lies beyond the scope of my present study, but offers a fruitful avenue of research for this under-studied court masque.

Epilogue

On Twelfth Night, January 1619, Prince Charles, George Villiers, then the Marquis of Buckingham, and a handful of other male aristocrats appeared before the court in a masque designed by Inigo Jones. The masque's text and most of its designs are now lost, but one of Jones's scenic plans remains extant. Labeled "The Palace of Perfection" in Jones's own hand, the plan shows an elaborate cityscape and palace buoyed up amidst billowing clouds, surrounded by frolicking cherubs, and flanked by stately mythological figures.³⁹⁰ The cityscape within the clouds features majestic neo-classical structures in a long perspectival street-view, which culminates in what we can only assume to be the eponymous Palace of Perfection, a two-tiered structure comprising a colonnaded loggia and a slender tower. Beneath this scene, simplistic sketches of human figures show where Jones intended to place the Prince, the Marquis, and their fellow masquers: in tiered degrees where they would mirror the hierarchical and symmetrical order of the audience around James and Anna in the Banqueting House. As in all masques, this mirroring encouraged courtiers to sense themselves unified with and reflected by the glittering scene on stage.

The now-lost masque of 1619 proved to be the last occasion on which the Stuart's second Banqueting House would foster such group experience. Within a week, the hall burned to the ground. The structure itself had been a brick, timber, and stone building that James had commissioned within the first decade of his reign to replace the aged hall he had inherited from Elizabeth I.³⁹¹ After its destruction, the court's seasonal festivals

³⁹⁰ See "Unknown Masque," in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).

³⁹¹ See Simon Thurley's discussion of the second Banqueting House in *Whitehall Palace: A History of the Royal Apartments, 1240-1998* (New York: Yale University Press, 1999), 75-90.

moved to Whitehall's Great Hall. And Inigo Jones designed and oversaw the construction of the third and final Banqueting House, a grand Palladian building that would eventually stage the first masques of Charles I's reign, house Rubens's famous in-situ ceiling paintings, and, in a tragically ironic turn of history, serve as the venue for Charles's execution.³⁹² In its Palladian form, that hall reified the neo-classical architectural style that Jones displayed before the court in masque scenes, such as the Palace of Perfection. It also anticipated the splendid neo-classical images that would continue to appear on masque stages until England's Civil War.

In hindsight, then, the group that saw itself reflected in Jones's Palace of Perfection was poised on something of a tipping point in the masque's history. The second Banqueting House had hosted some of the most important festivities of James's kingship to date, including Prince Henry's masquing debut in *Oberon*, and Buckingham's first appearance as the new royal favorite in *The Golden Age Restored*. Thus, the Twelfth Night masque of 1619 offered the court a final opportunity to inhabit an important memorial touchstone, to experience an architectural arena that marked the group's continuity and social coherence through time. Yet, when the masque went, that very structure was soon to be a thing of the past, to go the same way that its predecessor had. And inside it, the court saw in Jones's neo-classical scene an architectural preview of the Palladian building that was to supersede it, both physically and in the history of the Stuart court and its festive culture.³⁹³ Though not completed until 1623, practically on the eve of James's death, the Palladian Banqueting House has since come to emblemize James's reign and his contributions to English culture. Indeed, as a Jacobean icon, the Banqueting

³⁹² Patricia Fumerton offers a compelling analysis of this irony in the introduction to her *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).

³⁹³ On the third Banqueting House, see Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, 82-90.

House is so powerful that historians sometimes suggest James intended it to inaugurate his English kingship, as though he had built it in 1603, when he first came to London, rather than 1623, when his reign was almost at its end.³⁹⁴

Just as the now-lost masque of January 1619 hovered in a transitional moment in court history, so too did Jones's inchoate Palladian Banqueting House. As the Palace of Perfection suggests, Jones's hall was in many ways an architectural culmination of the Jacobean masques themselves. James's court masques often espoused Palladian ideals as a way to celebrate courtly group cohesion, as Oceanus did in *Blackness* when he invited the court to sense itself as a kind of large-scale Vitruvian man, a "221quaired circle of celestial bodies."³⁹⁵ James's masques also celebrated king and court by showcasing powerful courtiers and principal dancers in neo-classical scenes, as *Oberon* did in its temple-like palace interior, and as *Golden Age* did in its glittering palace frontispiece. Thus, the third Banqueting House brought into permanent and material being the social and architectural ideals that Jones and the court had long been celebrating within discrete masques. But at the same time, that structure would also prove to be a striking and palpable break from English architectural tradition. While English architects and builders inside and outside Whitehall had long been using neo-classicism eclectically, as one style amongst many, the third Banqueting House was entirely and coherently Palladian. Thus, Jones's hall did not merely look backward and reify some of the masque's pre-existing social and architectural energies, but also announced their cultural prominence in a bold, forward-looking way. It anticipated the architectural vogue for pure neo-classical style that eventually gripped England's aristocracy in the 18th century.

³⁹⁴ For instance, see Christy Anderson's review of Simon Thurley's exhibition, *The Lost Palace of Whitehall*, in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58 (1999): 201-04.

³⁹⁵ Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Blackness*, in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (106).

In its rich and transitional significance, then, the third Banqueting House offers a useful lens through which to reflect on and conclude the present discussion of space, time, and group identity in the Jacobean court masque. This dissertation opened by reflecting on the masque's special relationship with time: as an ephemeral one-off, each masque was framed outside of mundane day-to-day life and thus had a ritualistic capacity to shape and affirm group identity. In contrast to the masque's conspicuous ephemerality, however, each of the Jacobean Banqueting Houses was more formal, durable, and permanent than the one it replaced, as though James and his ministers sought increasingly lasting and integral places in which to frame and host the court's fleeting masque events. Indeed, Elizabeth had built the first Banqueting House specifically to be impermanent, but its final replacement proved to be so durable that it still stands as an architectural centerpiece of modern-day London. Thus, in conclusion, I want to speculate that Jones's Palladian Banqueting House was in part an architectural and material response to the masque's efficacious ephemerality. As a physical place, it offered the court its most durable and integral locale for its precious and fleeting moments of seasonal group play. It actualized the masques' impermanent neo-classical scenes in lasting space. And it solidified the masques' Palladian energies in architectural reality. It was, in essence, the masque and the court reified as place.

Tellingly, the third Banqueting House's style and history suggest that it was designed to foster precisely the same mix of group experiences that I have tracked through *The Masque of Blackness*, *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, and *The Golden Age Restored*: that interpenetrating mixture of ephemerality, stasis, community, hierarchy, dalliance, seriousness, fun, and power in which court masques always trafficked and through which they worked to shape court identity. For one, Jones drew inspiration for the hall from two ancient models in Palladio's architectural treatise, *I quattro libri*

dell'architettura, each of which had radically different socio-political purposes: the Egyptian hall and the basilica. As Simon Thurley reports, the Egyptian hall was traditionally a grand space dedicated to frivolity and entertainment while the basilica was a colonnaded building where judges presided over trials from special, framed alcoves.³⁹⁶ Hence, Jones's classical models for the Banqueting House reflected the masque's own social and ideological propensity to mix play and festivity with hierarchical ceremony and extended experiences of asymmetrical social relations. For instance, in its multifaceted classical origins the Banqueting House mirrored *Oberon's* especial concern for engineering simultaneously communal and hierarchical experiences around the dual centers of Henry and James.

Similarly, Jones originally constructed the Banqueting House with a rounded apse at its south end, where James and the chair of state traditionally sat. The apse evoked the framed alcove from which judges presided in the ancient basilica and it permanently marked the hall as a realm of royal power and hierarchy. But within a few years of the hall's completion, James had the apse walled off and replaced with a decorative archway and window. Thurley speculates that this change occurred because the apse's rounded shape did not jibe aesthetically with the square canopy that overhung the state.³⁹⁷ But in its architectural permanence, the apse also conflicted with the hall's spatial and functional flexibility, its capacity to house ephemeral one-time events. For the purposes of the masque, that is, James's canopied state did not always remain against the hall's southern wall but got moved or specially constructed so the king could sit in the midst of the seating degrees. By removing the apse, then, Jones reconciled a royalist imperative to celebrate Jacobean permanence with the hall's practical and flexible dynamism as an

³⁹⁶ Thurley, *Whitehall Palace*, 84.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

event space, where one-off masques came and went with each consecutive revels seasons. In its durable splendor, that is, the hall remained an architectural monument to royal power. But by removing the apse, Jones conceded to the equally powerful imperative to keep the hall open to ephemeral seasonal events. Thus, the hall reified the dual temporal energies of *Blackness*, which affirmed the supposedly ancient integrity of James's British empire precisely as it celebrated the nymphs' fleeting presence on the dance floor.

The fact that such a significant architectural decision revolved specifically around the canopied royal state points up another telling feature of the third Banqueting House's design. Thurley observes that Jones designed the hall to facilitate the hanging of large tapestries, grander and pictorial versions of the cloth that traditionally adorned James's state.³⁹⁸ In particular, the hall's lack of columns, its relatively small windows, and its cantilevered balcony all made it conducive to displaying wall hangings, a decorative choice that would have been more difficult in the second Banqueting House, which had larger windows and thick columns. Decked out in such material, the third Banqueting House resembled medieval and Tudor presence chambers, royal spaces that traditionally featured elaborate tapestries. Like the smaller canopy of state, then, the hall's tapestries contrasted sharply with its radically forward-looking neo-classical style, which English royals and aristocrats would eventually come to prize over and against the more medieval and eclectic styles of Tudor and early Stuart England. In its combination of decorative tradition and architectural newness, then, the hall balanced between stasis and change in precisely the way that masques did, as in *Golden Age* when socio-political scandal and the rise of a new royal favorite got cast as the permanent restoration of a bygone age.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

The mixture of socio-political energies that characterized the hall's conception and construction also pervaded the attitudes that Jones and James seem to have had about what sorts of experiences courtiers were supposed to have inside it. For his part, Jones envisioned the new Banqueting House as a particularly lavish masquing venue, an arena for both stately royal spectacle and elaborate group fun. He indicated as much when he took the Egyptian hall as part of his inspiration and when he designed a placard for the building saying it was to house "festive occasions" as well as "formal spectacles" and "ceremonials" for "the British Court."³⁹⁹ At the same time, Thurley argues that James and his ministers envisioned the new Banqueting House as a large-scale presence chamber where the king could conduct the more ceremonial and formal workings of state, such as ambassadorial receptions and meetings with Parliament.⁴⁰⁰ As evidence, Thurley points to the fact that James commissioned the famous Rubens ceiling while the Banqueting House was still under construction. In the end, Charles had to oversee his father's commission, but the fact that James wanted the painting installed suggests he no longer intended the Banqueting House as a place for masques. As Thurley speculates, the king would have known that the masques' numerous candles and torches could damage the ceiling canvases. Even as it was coming into being, then, the third Banqueting House actualized the energies of collective frivolity and ceremonial seriousness that circulate through both *Oberon* and *Golden Age* as they transition from royalist panegyrics into sustained moments of communal dancing.

And as it was with the hall generally, so to it was with the Rubens ceiling in particular. Rubens did not complete and install his canvases until the 1630's, over a decade after James's death, but in retrospect they reflect exactly the Banqueting Houses's

³⁹⁹ Inigo Jones, quoted in *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 84-97.

and the masque's complex socio-political functionality. The paintings depict James in various attitudes, each one celebrating a particular facet of his kingship, such as the union of the Scots and English crowns, which James effected in his person and Privy Lodgings staff, if not in more robust legislative ways.⁴⁰¹ On one hand, and as Thurely argues, the paintings made the hall look and feel like a presence chamber, a space where hierarchy, power, and royal grandeur were necessarily the most important socio-political energies. In this way, the canvases' strictly royalist imagery stood in contrast to the masque's egalitarian and communal functions, just as their presence on the hall's ceiling made that space unusable as a venue for nighttime masques. As a visual affirmation of Jacobean power, that is, the ceiling canvases proclaimed the hall as an arena of political might and serious state-craft that, unlike the masque itself, could not much accommodate frivolity and social play.

But on the other hand, Rubens's images were essentially masques realized as paintings. Each of the canvases looks like it could have been inspired by one of Jonson's masque dramas or by one of Jones's scenic designs. For instance, the canvas above the Banqueting House's entrance, "The Union of the Crowns," shows the baby Charles I being brought before James by Athena and human personifications of England and Scotland. Meanwhile, oval panels to either side of the main canvas show the Virtues defeating the Vices, Hercules defeating Envy, and Athena defeating Ignorance. Any or all of these images would have been entirely appropriate as the stuff of a masque conceit, and many of the same figures who appear in Rubens's canvases also appear on the masque stage, such as Hercules, Athena, and human personifications of England. Like the canvases more generally, these images are royalist and ceremonial, but as decoration for

⁴⁰¹ "Details of Rubens' canvases," Historic Royal Palaces, accessed July 27, 2015 <http://www.hrp.org.uk/BanquetingHouse/stories/PeterPaulRubenspaintedceiling>.

the Banqueting House they are also playful in the complex way that all masques were playful: they offered king and court an extended opportunity to experience themselves dressed up in the sorts of mythological and allegorical trappings through which they liked to play out their own individual and collective sense of self, as Jonson did when he invited James to hear himself incorporated into *Golden Age* as the mythic Jove.

Ultimately, the Banqueting House's fate as a masquing venue was both paradoxical and fitting. As James may have anticipated, Rubens's elaborate ceiling paintings prompted Charles to stop hosting masques inside the Banqueting House.⁴⁰² And in their place, Charles dedicated the hall to only the court's more serious, ceremonial, and hierarchical state events. It is ironic, then, that the Banqueting House became unusable as a masquing space at precisely the same time that it architecturally and visually reified key components of the masque form, and at the same time that it offered that form its most durable and lasting home. And yet, it is also appropriate that the hall ceased to work as a masquing venue when it did. Many parts of the hall that jibed so well with the masque's spirit were also features that especially expressed the form's investment in permanence, power, and social stratification. For instance, Jones may have drawn on Palladio's Egyptian hall as a source of inspiration for the Banqueting House, but its grand neo-classical splendor was first-and-foremost an architectural representation of royal stasis and power. The Banqueting House, we might say, ended up looking and feeling more like Palladio's basilica than the traditional ancient party space of the Egyptian hall.

In the end, then, the final Banqueting House could not accommodate the masque for both practical reasons having to do with the Rubens ceiling and more abstract reasons having to do with architectural style and socio-political energy. As we have seen,

⁴⁰² See Thurley's discussion of the Banqueting House and Masquing Room under Charles I in *Whitehall Palace*, 94-98.

masques worked to shape group identity by gathering and celebrating the court in conspicuously ephemeral events that circulated dynamically through experiences of vertical hierarchy and egalitarian community, royal permanence and social change. And a space that aggressively foregrounded monarchical power and courtly stasis, while certainly in keeping with the masque's hierarchical elements, was incommensurate with the form's equally important investments in ephemerality, community, play, and dalliance. As though aware of this issue, Charles and Henrietta Maria moved their masques into a space much less like the Palladian Banqueting House and much more like the masquing venue that James had originally inherited from Elizabeth, that impermanent party space built especially for occasional, seasonal use. The Masquing Room, as it has since become known, did not survive as the Banqueting House did, but in its impermanence—indeed, its planned impermanence—it suggests that conspicuous ephemerality was ultimately the masque's most important feature, that the form was powerful and efficacious precisely because it did not last, because the group experiences it offered to the court were not and were never intended to be the stuff of “every night.”

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